

Romans 3:27-4:25 (DDC) – August 2, 2009

Recap:

- As we've talked about... when the Apostle Paul was penning the book of Romans... he was painstakingly methodical and extremely logical in his presentation.
- So before we dive into the text... we are going to spend some time walking through the progression of thought in the first 3 chapters.

(pause)

- I wanted to start with a story.
- When Paul was writing the book of Romans he was in Corinth which was an exceedingly wicked City.
- And no doubt this caused Paul to reflect on the nature of man.
- Reminds me of....

Story about sitting in college and realizing that everyone is going to fail me

Then realizing that man is not good

Story about how I was watching TV show about a serial killer

Realized how the same motivations that motivated him motivate me

- And I remember being kind of being appalled as the reality sunk in over the years... that no one is good. – *Example that the good person doesn't exist (ex. TV Shows)*

(pause)

Chapter 1

- Well starting in Chapter 1 Paul begins (in a very detailed manner) pointing out universally the lostness / sinfulness / darkness that is all of humanity.
- The theological term is “the depravity of man”
- And he does this by pointing out three things
 - 1. God's Wrath
 - That we have betrayed God (turned from him) and now deserve the wrath of God
 - 2. Man is left without excuse

Example ...

- 3. The progression that humanity has followed.

(pause)

- And Paul is vivid in his description of this downward spiral that humanity has followed.
- --use verse-- He describes us as:
 - Gossips, slanderers, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil,
 - Foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless.
 - He even goes as far to say that we are haters of God.

(pause)

- As I mentioned before... this is observable to us.
- We can look around and see this is true.

(pause)

- So Chapter 1... Paul points out...universally man is sinful (depraved, deserving of God's wrath).

(pause)

Chapter 2

- Now... moving to Ch.2...
- It's one thing to say from a big picture standpoint the world is depraved (as Paul does in Ch.1).
- But... when I say that you personally are a sinner ... what are the natural reactions that pop into our head?
 - Part of us says... yeah I can see that a bit
 - But it's tough not to start thinking about the good things we do and weighing them against the bad things.
 - "I get angry at people... but you know I go to church... etc"

(pause)

- And this type of thinking would be compounded when we talk about the Jew (who was part of Paul's audience here).
- God had given the Jewish people the written law.
- They believed they were made righteous by following the law.
- And this is identical to what a lot of churches and religions teach.
 - That we can be made righteous by doing good things.

(pause)

In fact I'm amazed at how often I find myself doing this...

- So in Chapter 2 Paul addresses the religious man...
 - the Pharisee
 - The person who believes if they are good enough God will overlook their sin.
- By the way... you see the progression here?
- Paul starts by pointing out the depravity of man holistically (in Ch.1)
- But then hones in on the people who would feel like they are exempt from that group.
- And Paul points out a couple things to them:
 1. Perfection is the standard.
 - For those who obey God completely comes blessing.
 - But those who don't obey God completely comes wrath.
 - That's the standard

(pause)

- 2. Well Paul goes on to make it clear... no one follows the Law completely
 - And he uses some great examples.

- But the point is simple... all are deserving of God's wrath
- You personally are deserving of God's wrath.
- That's the point of Ch.2

(pause)

So...

- Ch.1 lay's out the indictment against man (universally)
- Ch. 2 lay's out the indictment against all men (specifically)
- That brings us to Chapter 3 (which is a really important chapter)
- It's a transition chapter in the book of Romans.
- Paul makes several important points in Ch3.
- Of which Ch.4 hinges upon several of these points.

Chapter 3

- First in Ch.3 Paul brings this indictment against man to a crescendo by quoting the Old Testament
 - What a great way to hammer home the point.
- It says in Ch.3 verse 11... through 18

Rom 3:10 ... "None is righteous, no, not one;

Rom 3:11 no one understands; no one seeks for God.

Rom 3:12 All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one."

Rom 3:13 "Their throat is an open grave; they use their tongues to deceive." "The venom of asps is under their lips."

Rom 3:14 "Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness."

Rom 3:15 "Their feet are swift to shed blood;

Rom 3:16 in their paths are ruin and misery,

Rom 3:17 and the way of peace they have not known."

Rom 3:18 "There is no fear of God before their eyes."

- Wow
- Paul spent almost 3 chapters and his point is clear.
- None is righteous, not one.
 - Not you... not me
 - Not mother Teresa... not Hitler
 - All stand guilty in front of a holy God.

(pause)

- In fact the Bible says our best efforts..... are like filthy rags
 - Speaking of menstrual rags
 - A vivid picture
 - It's discussing and that's our best efforts
 - We are not righteous creatures
 - We are not inherently good... as pop psychology would tell us
- (pause)

*Listening to Chuck smith talk about depravity of man
People saying but what about an innocent child
His response: Is a child so innocent?
Do you have to teach a child to lie?*

- It's our nature.
 - None is righteous... no one is good.
- (long pause)

- Well Paul shows in brutal detail that we are not good.
- But... Paul knew the tendency for people say:
 - "If I just obey and do more good... then maybe then I will be better in front of God."
- And this would have been compounded for the Jews because they had been given the specific written law.
- So Paul address the Jew that would say "I will find salvation through the Law."
- He says

Rom 3:19 Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law [**which is all of us... as Paul says in Ch.1**], so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God.

- In other words it is the **law** that condemns the whole world.
- It goes on to say:

Rom 3:20 For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.

- The whole purpose of the law was to show us that we are sinful.
 - The best analogy of the Law that I've come across is comparing it to a mirror.
 - It allows us to see who we really are.
 - If God didn't give us rules...you wouldn't realize that you refuse to keep God's rules.
- (pause)
- So the Law is intended to show us what we've become.
 - That we might be able to see that there is something inherently wrong with us.
 - That the fall in the garden wasn't a simple slip up... but it changed the core of who we are.
 - It transformed us.

I like to think about it this way.

In the fall... our first father Adam was in a full intimate relationship with God.

That's something I'm convinced we can't really understand

*To be in relationship with something so pure, and innocent, and kind, and yet so powerful
A relationship which was*

...

- We went from creatures who glorified God... to creatures who desire to glorify ourselves.
- But in our self centeredness now... we don't realize what we've become.
- That we've become enemies of God.

(pause)

- In Galatians 3 it says the law is a school master that teaches us who we are.
- And who are we?
- We are who Paul has been describing.

(pause)

- So the law was given not to save us.
- The law can't save us.

(pause)

- The law as given that the trespass that we do by nature would increase.
- And thus make it easier to see our true nature.
- Huge point there.

(long pause)

So the rational thus far is:

- Ch.1 lay's out the indictment against man (universally)
- Ch. 2 lay's out the indictment against all men (specifically)
- The first half of Ch.3
 - Concludes all men are guilty before God
 - And shows that the law was given to help us see that.

(pause)

- So... now the question is... what do we do?
- We see that we are bad; we see that we deserve God's wrath.
- The law has done it's job.
- Ok Paul... what do we do now?
- Is that the end of a very depressing story?

(pause)

- Thankfully no.
- After showing us our depravity Paul puts in the clutch and begins showing us Justification.
- Justification being a legal means that we can be declared righteous.
- Not just forgiven.... but actually called righteous.
- As those sin never happened.

(pause)

- And Paul shows this righteous comes from God and is apart from the law.

- Meaning it is apart from anything we can do.
(pause)

- And this is described in Ch.3 vs. 21-26.
- It is one of the shining points in the Bible.
- It is a transition point in the Book of Romans.
- Thus far Paul beating us down... and brutally removing the hope we have... that perhaps we personally can fix our standing in front of God.
- But... next God tells us.... three transformational ideas in these verses:
(pause)

- The ideas in Ch.4 are built on these ideas.
- So we will be spending a little time summarizing the main ideas behind these verse.

1. In Verses 3:20-23 - We have a hope.

- There is a way out of this situation that we are in.
- And the way out was promised and written about in the Law and the prophets.
- The way out is Jesus.
- Paul makes it clear... if we want to be righteous... it comes only one way... by having faith in Jesus.
(pause)

- And Paul is careful to point out that is separate from what I do or don't do.
- Which makes sense....
 - If our good deeds are like menstrual rags...
 - We've already done enough damage
 - Whatever we do... good or bad... we offend God.
- Our hope is in Jesus alone.
- Not is something we can do.

Story about me in my dad's office realizing... my only hope is Jesus

- We have hope.. that's the first thing communicated here.
- Next, Paul tells us:

2. In Verses 3:24,25 - This hope came at an unthinkable cost

Story about failed abortion at 8 months and the little girl lost her arm... public uproar

- We feel righteous anger when we hear something like this.
- Right?
(pause)

- Now... How do you think God feels about that?
- More than that... how do you think God feels seeing everything, everyone, all the time
- The multiplied millions
- All the attitudes, actions, imaginations, motives...
- And... even more than that... God sees what it does...
 - he sees little girls losing arms ...
 - He see's marriages destroyed
 - People hurt
 - His name ultimately defamed...

(pause)

- So my question to you is...
- If you were God.... and you saw everything... not just the botched abortions and little girl's loosing their arms.... BUT EVERY THING.
- Would you be mad??

(pause)

- The answer is of course YES
- I got mad just hearing that story.
- And think about it... we get mad and were not even close to being perfect
- The anger that God feels is unimaginable.

(pause)

- But what happens next is unbelievable.
- God the son... Jesus left eternal communion between the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit.
- He left his eternal Glory.... the Bible tells us he shed his glory (the theological term is call the kenosis)
- And he was incarnated into the form of a man.

(pause)

- Now God becoming a man in it's self is unthinkable.
- It shows the humility and love that God posses.
- But what happens next is incalculable in cost.

(pause)

- God took the anger and wrath that he righteously feels.
- The billions upon billions of sins, and betrayals, and atrocities.
- And he hurled his wrath upon his incarnated son Jesus who died as a substitute for us.
- His blood flowed that the price might be paid

(pause)

- And some would say... how could he absorb all that wrath... he was only on the cross for a few hours.

- Well the Bible says in Revelations Ch.13 that Jesus was slain before the foundations of the world.
- There is a mystery there that I don't know that we will ever grasp.
- It's amazing and it's wonderful... and it's beyond what we can possibly imagine.
 - God paying for every sin

(pause)

- It's free for us.
- But the actual cost... is unimaginable!!

(pause)

- And the word Paul uses here as he describes this is propitiation.
- Jesus was the proportion between the Father and us
- He absorbed the wrath.

(pause)

- And in doing so...

3. In Verse 3:26 - The purpose of all of this was to solve a divine dilemma

- Read with me Vs. 26
- What was the purpose...?

Rom 3:26 It was to show his **[God]** righteousness at the present time, so that he **[God]** might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

- So here is the dilemma
- God is love... it says in John
- And he loves us immensely
- But in John also tells us God is light and in Him there is no darkness

(pause)

- He loves humanity
- But he also seems humanity
- And he won't create a shadow in himself... to overlook our darkness.
- God's not going to taint his righteousness by doing an unrighteous act in overlooking sin.
- It would be against his nature.

(pause)

- So what does he do???

(pause)

- What he does is he hurls the wrath upon himself... upon Jesus
- That way God is both the Just... and the Justifier

(pause)

- Jon Courson in describing this had a great example:

Story about a Judge in (California?) who pronounced judgment on his son for reckless driving... but also came and paid the 1000 fine

- This kid's Dad was both Just... and was the justifier.
- Now imagine... the father writes out the check.
- What do you think would happen if the boy said... nope... I don't accept the gift?
- If the Dad was wise he would say... ok.

(pause)

- That is why at the end of verse 26 it says that God is the just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

- Like the son in that example we must accept the gift through faith.

(long pause)

- Now.... we are to verse 27 which is the beginning of the text we are studying today.
- As I mentioned before the verse we are moving into are completely predicated on the rational thus far.

(pause)

So...:

- Ch.1 lay's out the indictment against man (universally)
- Ch. 2 lay's out the indictment against all men (specifically)
- The first half of Ch.3
 - Concludes that man is guilty before God
 - And that the law was given to help us see that.
- The second half of Ch.3 shows us
 - We have a hope
 - And this hope came at an incalculable price
 - And it solves this divine dilemma
 - By God both being just... and becoming the justifier

(pause)

- So then in Vs.27 Paul asks a great question.

(pause)

Rom 3:27 Then what becomes of our boasting? [**can we boast that we are righteous now? Paul answers... and says**] It is excluded.

- After going through the rational thus far... it makes sense
- How in the world could we boast?
- We have nothing to boast in except Christ.

Story about hero.... getting interviews... etc. The savee isn't on the tour.

- Likewise when we get to heaven... it's not going to be about us.
- It's going to be about Jesus.
- Our savior.
- Jon Courson says... when we get to heaven it's not going to be halleluME... it's going to be halleluiah.

(pause)

- Boasting is excluded.
- Paul Goes on.

Rom 3:27 ... **[Why is boasting excluded?] By what kind of law? By a law of works? [in other words is it excluded because it's another rule we are under. Paul says] No, but by the law of faith.**

- I think what Paul is getting at here is this.

Story about when I catch a glimpse of what Jesus has done... can't help but praise Him.

- And thus boasting... naturally is excluded.
- By the law of faith.
- That's the way faith works.

(pause)

- Paul concludes in Vs 28.

Rom 3:28 For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law.

- In other words how could you boast?
- You are justified by faith... not what you've done.
- Not by following the law.

(pause)

- If it were by following the law it would be only for the Jew right?
- So Paul poses the question.

Rom 3:29a Or is God the God of Jews only? ...

- In other words is this for the Jews only?
- He goes on and replies:

Rom 3:29b ... Is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also,

Rom 3:30 since God is one--who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith.

- The circumcision representing genealogical Jews

- And the uncircumcision representing the non Jew
- Paul says whether you are a Jew or a Gentile.... you can be justified by faith.
- This hope we talked about is open to all.

(pause)

- So... the Jew might ask... what about the Law?
- Was that just a waste of time?
- Does faith... nullify the law?
- In Vs. 31 Paul says....:

Rom 3:31 Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the law.

- So one might ask.... are we discounting the law?
- Paul says no no no
- We establish the law... as we talked about earlier.

(pause)

- The intent of the law was never to save.
- The purpose of the law Gal. 3 says was to be a school master showing you that you are a sinner
- If you study the law... you will come to one conclusion.
- I'm a sinner.

(pause)

- Understanding this point is fundamental because Paul will tell us in Romans 7 that in Christ we are now dead to the law
- The Law doesn't die.... it is perfect and it is still powerful
- We die... through Jesus.
- And because we have died... the law has no power over us.
- And thus we enjoy complete freedom.

(long pause)

- So... Paul's been saying some rather fantastic things here up to this point.
- Let's retrace the logic before we hit Ch.4

(pause)

- Ch.1 lay's out the indictment against man (universally)
- Ch. 2 lay's out the indictment against all men (specifically)
- The first half of Ch.3
 - Concludes that man is guilty before God
 - And the law was given to help us see that.
- The second half of Ch.3 shows us
 - We have a hope

- A hope that came at an incalculable price
 - It solves this divine dilemma
 - By God both being just... and becoming the justifier
 - Thus there can be no boasting.
- And Ch.3 concludes with... this is all in accordance with the Law.
 - We're not changing what has been written.
 - This doesn't nullify the Law... it upholds the law.
- (pause)

- Now... as we move to ch.4 there is a saying that I think helps me see what Paul is trying to show in Ch.4
 - The saying is "If it's true it's not new... and if it's new it's not true."
 - Get that?
- (pause)

Story about people coming around and trying to sell us at work their "new" process..

- There is nothing new under the sun Solomon writes in Ecclesiastes.
 - If it's true... it's always been true.
 - If someone comes to you and says we have this new understanding... RUN
- (pause)

- But that would put the reader of Romans in an interesting spot.
 - These ideas that Paul is presenting would have sounded totally new and totally radical.
 - The idea that it's not about:
 - religion
 - Or trying harder...
 - Or keeping the law...
 - You mean a man is pronounced righteous by just believing?
- (pause)

- You can almost picture someone in Paul's day reading this and saying... give me a break... "this sounds like a cult"
 - Sounds like some guy has some "new" understanding.
 - And "If it's true it's not new... and if it's new it's not true."
- (pause)

- Well now what Paul does in Ch.4.
 - He says... what I've been teaching in the previous chapters... may sound strange... perhaps even like heresy
 - BUT it's not new at all.
 - He goes on to say.... It's always been this way!!
- (pause)

- Paul shows in Ch.4 that Righteousness.(our salvation)... is not by what a man does... but it is simply by believing.
- It's not by trying... it's by trusting.
- And it's always been that way.

(pause)

- To prove this is not new... he pulls out two of the big guns in Hebrew history.
 - He goes back to Abraham the father of the Hebrew racial family
 - And David was the founder of the Hebrew Royal family
- After making his argumentation in Ch.3 that it is Justification (salvation) comes simply by just believing not the law... he says I will prove it to you through history!!

(pause)

- And that brings us to Ch.4

Rom 4:1 What then shall we say was gained by Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh? **[So Paul says... what about Abraham]**

Rom 4:2a For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, ...

- If Abraham was justified by what he did (his good works) he would have reason to be proud and boast.

Rom 4:2a ...but not before God.

Rom 4:3 For what does the Scripture say **[In other words... what has God communicated to us regarding this... the Scriptures say]**? "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness."

- For Paul's first example here he says... look at Abraham
- If you recall Abraham felt the calling of God on his life...
- And he picked up everything and followed God not knowing where he was going.
- Did God declare him righteous then? No

(pause)

- Abraham offered his only son as a sacrifice because God asked him to.
- Did God declare him righteous then? No
- Because that's not how it works.

(pause)

- Instead Paul shows when God did declare him righteous.
- It was in Gen. Ch.15. Vs.6
- God said Abraham "I'm going to give you a son and his offspring is going to be like the sand on the sea shore. I'm going to do a mighty thing."
- And in Gen. 15 that it says Abraham believed God.

- And in believing God's promise it was accounted to him as Righteousness.
(pause)

- Abraham was saved when he just believed and trusted God.
- Exactly as Paul has been teaching happens to us.

(pause)

- In Verse 4 Paul explains further.

Rom 4:4 Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due.

- If Abraham was made righteous because of works.
- God in effect would be paying off a debt
- "I've don't this lord... now you owe me"
- But the Bible says God will be a debtor to no man.

(pause)

- Rather...

Rom 4:5 ... to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness,

- In other words... it's not about what I can do.
- In fact it's insulting to God to say that it is about what I do.

(long pause)

- Remember... in Ch.4 Paul is showing that these are not new ideas.
- Next Paul pulls out Old Testament Big Gun number 2... David
- Starting in Vs.5

Rom 4:5 ... to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness,

Rom 4:6 just as David also speaks of the blessing of the one to whom God counts righteousness apart from works:

- Paul's saying listen to David as an example of this truth.
- Listen to what David says:

Rom 4:7 "Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered;

Rom 4:8 blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin."

- David didn't say blessed is the man who follows the law
- Blessed is the man who is good enough
- No.
- He said Blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin.

(pause)

- It's interesting too that this is one of the Psalms that was written after David had his affair with Bathsheba
- David knew... no man will be justified through works.
- But happy is the man whose sins are covered.

(pause)

- Exactly as Paul has been teaching.
- This is not a new idea.
- Paul makes that point very clear.

(long pause)

- Well now.. someone could say... Ok you've proved your point.
 - Justification apart from works
 - Using Abraham and David...

(pause)

- But wait Paul... they are both Jews...What about the gentiles?
- If you recall in Ch.3 Paul makes the point that Justification is available to all Jew and Gentile.
- Is that a new idea?
- Next Paul addresses that.

(pause)

Rom 4:9 Is this blessing then only for the circumcised [**the Jews**], or also for the uncircumcised [**the Gentiles**]? We say that faith was counted to Abraham as righteousness. [**that's what it says in Gen. Ch15 vs. 3**]

Rom 4:10a How then was it counted to him? Was it before or after he had been circumcised?

- See the question he is posing?
- Exactly when was Abraham declared to be righteous?
- That's the real question.

(pause)

- To the Jew circumcision was everything.
- It proved your Jewishness... your religiousness... your worthiness
- There was no distinction between Jew and Gentile before Abraham circumcision

(pause)

- So Paul says wait a minute.
- When was Abraham pronounced righteous?
- Was it before or after he was circumcised ritually.
- That's the real question.

(pause)

- And the answer is:

Rom 4:10b It was not after, but before he was circumcised.

- Abraham was declared righteous as an uncircumcised man.
- It goes on in Vs 11...

Rom 4:11 He received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised.

- Circumcision was given as a sign of what had already happened.

Rom 4:11 The purpose was to make him [**Abraham**] the father of all who believe without being circumcised, so that righteousness would be counted to them as well,

- You see... Paul is saying Abraham is the father of all those who believe God.
- He was pronounced righteous before his circumcision... then Circumcision was given to him as a sign and a seal of the promise.
- It didn't confer righteousness... it confirmed righteousness

(pause)

- Circumcision is like Baptism.
- It's an outward sign of an inward belief.
- You could be baptized a thousand time... that doesn't save you...
- Belief is the basis for salvation

(pause)

- At the heart of the issue here is... it's hard for us to understand that it's free.
- We want to prove that we are worthy.
- We have a tendency to want to set the alarm clock a little earlier... work a little harder.
- So we can feel like we deserve this gift.

(pause)

- So it's interesting...
- With Abraham that painful act... of tearing away the flesh... circumcision.
- That was not what made him righteous.
- And it's not what makes us righteous.
- Tearing back the flesh and cutting it away is not what makes us righteous.

(pause)

- So... Abraham is the father of the uncircumcised believer..
- But he is also...

Rom 4:12 ... the father of the circumcised who are not merely circumcised [**not just the Jews who went through the circumcision ritual**] but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.

- So whether circumcised or not the true family of Abraham is one that walks in the footsteps of Abraham and believes God.

Rom 4:13 For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith.

Rom 4:14 For if it is the adherents of the law [**so the do gooders, the law keepers, religious people**] if they are to be the heirs faith is null and the promise is void.

- You see... the promise was in regards to faith.
- If someone were to be saved through the law then the promise is null... void.
- It's not the law that saves.

Rom 4:15 For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law there is no transgression.

- Remember we talked about the purpose of the law.
- It does not save.
- Doing good does not save.
 - Paul is hammering that point home.

(pause)

- Paul explains further in Vs 16

Rom 4:16 That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring--not only to the adherent of the law but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all,

- It depends on faith... in order that the promise may rest on grace
- The promise does not rest on me.
- If it did it would leave me constantly worrying what if I screw up.
- No... instead it rests on grace.
- And in doing so the promise can be guaranteed

(pause)

Rom 4:17 as it is written, "I have made you [**speaking of Abraham**] the father of many nations"--in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.

- Who does the promise rest on?
- Through faith it rests on God's faithfulness.
- It's God who gives life to the dead.
- It's God who can redeem us.

(pause)

- And so the promise does not rest on us.
- It rests on the grace of God.

(Long pause)

- Well... here in Ch.4 Paul has shown 2 things so far.
- First... is that righteousness through faith is not a new idea.
- And second, that this righteousness through faith is offered to both the Jew and the Gentile.

(pause)

- But... something we should be asking ourselves at this point is:
 - What is this thing called faith made of?
 - What does it look like?
- So far we haven't been given a specific description of faith.
- We only been told that it means we believe.
- But if we read in James it says that even the demons believe.
- So... faith must be more than just a sterile belief.

(pause)

- Well what Paul does next in this last section of Ch.4 is give us a snap shot of what Abraham's faith looked like.
- If that doesn't peak your interest... I don't know what will.
- It says in Vs.18... describing Abraham:

Rom 4:18 In hope he believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, "So shall your offspring be."

- In other words... When God said your offspring shall be as the sand on the shores.
- Abraham believed God despite the fact that it didn't seem likely to happen at the time.
- Paul goes on.

Rom 4:19 He [**Abraham**] did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb.

- Abraham's belief did not weaken when he looked at the circumstances.
- When he saw the obstacles.
- Instead:

Rom 4:20 No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God,

Rom 4:21 fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised.

- This is key.

- Notice the word distrust in Vs.20
 - The NIV translates it unbelief.
 - But the ESV's translation is a bit more literal and I think clears up a little confusion in my mind.

(pause)

- When I say that I believe something it can mean really two things.
- First... I can say I believe it... from a knowledge standpoint something has a high likelihood of being true... thus I believe it.
- Completely knowledge based.

(pause)

- Well secondly when I say I believe something... It can mean that I believe it to the point that I trust that it is true.
- And I will make decisions based on it being true.
- See the distinction.

(pause)

- One belief requires trust.
- The other requires nothing.
- For faith... as Abraham as an example here... implicit in his belief was trust.
- He trusted God.
- Thus as it says in Vs. 20 "No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God."
- Trust is integral to faith and belief

(pause)

Rom 4:22 That is why his faith was "counted to him as righteousness."

Rom 4:23 But the words "it was counted to him" were not written for his sake alone,

Rom 4:24a but for ours also. ...

- The fact that Paul can go to Old Testament scripture to prove his point here is intentional.
- God recorded these words for us.
- So we can see that Paul is NOT making up some new religion here.
- Rather it is confirmation that this is what God always intended.

(pause)

- But... in second half of Vs. 24 Paul makes a final and important distinction between Abraham and us.
- For us... as apposed to Abraham... it says:

Rom 4:24b It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord,

Rom 4:25 who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.

- So what's the distinction?
- It has to do with the object of our faith.
- And this goes hand in hand with dispensational theology
 - Which some people don't agree with.
 - So that might be a fun topic to discuss afterwards.

(pause)

- But... If you look back in Ch. 3:vs 24-26 Paul shows the offering of Jesus as the atoning sacrifice is the basis on which God forgives the sins of both the Old Testament and New Testament saints.
- However Jesus has not always been the object of saving faith.
- Case in point would be Abraham.
- Abraham did not know or believe specifically that Jesus Christ would come and die for him.

(pause)

- What Abraham believed (as we just read) was God's promise at that time.
- That he and Sarah would have a child despite their old age.
- And in history past... God's promise during a certain dispensation of time, whatever that promise might be, was the object of a believer's faith.
- For our first parents (Adam and Eve) it was the proevongelain given in Gen. Ch3
 - That out of Eve's children would come one who would crush the head of Satan.
 - That is the promise they were given.
- So the object of their faith was the promise... but it was Jesus who was the basis for their salvation.
- That make sense?

(pause)

- Now today we are in a unique spot.
- The basis of our salvation and the object of faith are one.
- In dispensational theology this is call the church age.
- It's the final age before the end of

(pause)

- And in this age Jesus Christ alone is our object of faith.
- All God's promises are focused in and through Him.
- And so... it is faith in Jesus, and faith in him alone, that saves today.

(pause)

- Paul draws attention to that distinction at the end of Ch.4.
- And does that to keep people from vering off in the that idea that we just need to believe in God.
- It is more specific than that.
- We must have faith in Jesus.

- He is the key.
(pause)

So when you think about Romans think:

- Ch.1 lay's out the indictment against man (universally)
- Ch. 2 lay's out the indictment against all men (specifically)
- Ch.3 lays the ground work for Justification through faith in Jesus.
- And Ch.4 shows us that... these ideas aren't new.

Challenge:

- Paul spent a fair amount of text accentuating the point that the righteousness that God offers is apart from the law.
- This week I would challenge you to analyze how often you feel good or bad based on your actions.
- And then question your motives for feeling good or bad about your actions.
- Is it because you want to please God and screwed up.
- Or is it because you feel less worth of the gift he has given you.

(pause)

- If you find yourself wanting to feel worthy (which is all of us) ... I would urge meditate on the first 4 chapters of Romans.
- I guarantee you... when you realize how free we are as Christians... it will drive you to praise.
- It's how faith works... it's the law of faith.
- It will blow you away.

Closing Prayer

- Next week