

Romans 3 : 27, Romans 4:8 - Justified By Faith – 26 June 2011

I like us to continue our journey in the book of Romans and so, if you have your Bibles, please turn with me to Romans 3. Romans, 3, we have been journeying along in these theological masterpiece by the apostle Paul. Every believer must be grounded, I believe in the words of Paul, in the book of Romans. I believe every church needs to have its right foundation in the book of Romans. It's interesting after 20 over years, we are coming back to our foundations, because this is really where we rise or fall isn't it?

So let's turn our Bibles to Romans chapter 3 and I like us to read the verses 27, all the way to Romans 4:8, Romans 3:27-4:8.

1. The Importance of “Justified by Faith”

Paul says:

27 Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. 28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. 29 Is he the God of the Jews only? Is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: 30 Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith. 31 Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law. 4:1 What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? 2 For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. 3 For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. 4 Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. 5 But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. 6 Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, 7 Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. 8 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.

This is a message from the book of Romans. Romans is really about the righteousness that God would give to man and how God would redeem and save man unto himself and that is the message we would hear this morning.

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There was a young mother who was speaking to her three-year-old daughter and in that conversation, the little girl used a word the mother never expect her to use. She mentioned the word 'salvation'. The mother was surprised. How could a three-year-old girl be able to comprehend or even hear about the word salvation and so she asked her daughter, "Dear, where did you learn the word salvation from?" The little girl said "Well, mom, we heard it and saw it in the movies." Her mom said "Which movie." The girl said "That one lah." Somewhat impatiently, "The 101 salvations." I think, we are more familiar with the 101 Dalmatians then we are about the concept and teachings of salvation.

The Bible however, is the book of salvation. The God we preach on, the God we know and believe and trust in, is a God of salvation. I think there is no greater, more important message than that of salvation, that God offers to sinful man like you and I and that's what Paul seeks to teach in the book of Romans. He tells us in Romans 1 that I am to preach the Gospel because he is not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone which believeth. So, Paul here is giving us the message of salvation, how sinful man may be made right with God.

I am not sure about you but for me, I'm always amazed at the advertisements for detergents and for washing powder. They are always the same, they are so stereotyped isn't it, it's always the same storyline. The kids are playing in the park, in the muddy pool and they comeback with their shirts stained with mud. Daddy would spill his orange juice on his shirt during breakfast and mummy will be the exasperated, forlorn figure, who is wondering, what should I do and often times, you would see the mom with the hands on her hips and her head tilted to the side and wondering, what should I do. And it is at this point, that there would be a sparkle and then, the cheerful jingle, and there will be tada!, the magic detergent.

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It always goes like this, it never changes after decades of advertisements, it is still the same storyline. I wonder is it because the marketing people are not creative. It cannot be. But, for the advertisements for detergents and soaps and so on, it is always the same because it works. It appeals to the consumers, it appeals to the buyers, it appeals to the housewives because they can really know what it feels like when the clothes are dirty and they could not get rid of the stains. And when they see the sparkle and they hear the jingle and they see the smile on the wives or the moms face, and they say, this is it, this is the brand I will buy when I go shopping tomorrow.

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Maybe Paul is thinking the same way. He starts off in the book of Romans in chapters 1-3, describing the sinfulness of man. He doesn't tell us about salvation until he has first told us and describe to us the guilt, the condemnation, the filth and the stain of men. And it is at chapter 3 that you see the sparkle and you hear the cheerful jingle that it is God's righteousness that would be given to us. It is when man cuts that forlorn, helpless figure, hands on our hips and our heads tilted to the side and say "What can I do to be saved?" That Paul now says, "This is the solution from a great and good God. You would not be saved by your efforts, because you can't, but God is going to provide for you, salvation through his only Son, Jesus Christ. He is going to make you just. You are sinful, you stand to be condemned, you are guilty, but He is going to justify you. Why? because His Son is judged for your sins." and that has been and that really is the focus of all our thinking for the past few weeks, that God's righteousness and justification is given to man.

But how are we to receive this justification, how are we to receive the saving work of Jesus Christ? Paul says in the verses we have just read, verse 28 that he concludes that a man cannot be justified by himself, he cannot be justified by his own works, he cannot earn it, but a man is justified by believing, by faith, without the deeds of the law. And if you do not get it, he says again in verse 30, that it is God who will justify the circumcision and also the uncircumcision by the same way, faith.

28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

And then, he says in verse 3, a great hero of the faith, Abraham was deemed as righteous or was given righteousness because he believed in God.

3 For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

And verse 5, his faith, is counted for righteousness.

5 But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

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Beyond the shadow of a doubt, the passage you have just read is about how you and I, can be justified by faith, it is about justification by faith, to be made just, to be made innocent and guiltless before a holy and righteous God and how are we to enter into that blessed state, it is by faith in Jesus Christ alone.

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There are several things I want to share with you this morning about being justified by faith.

1. The Importance of “Justified by Faith”

Let's consider the first of all, the importance of being justified by faith. It is absolutely vital that we grasp and we embrace the teachings of Scriptures here. It is absolutely fundamental to Christianity that we should realize justification is by faith in Jesus Christ alone, there is no other way. You take out justification by faith and you have no more Christianity. If you play angry birds, you shoot that bird against the whole stack of wood and whatever you have, you shoot this against justification by faith, the whole of Christianity collapses. Justification by faith is core and fundamental.

This is what John Calvin, the reformer says

John Calvin:

"Justification by faith is the main hinge on which religion turns"

It is really the fulcrum, the pivotal point of Christianity, takeout justification by faith, there is no salvation available for mankind.

In fact, it was Martin Luther who says

Martin Luther:

“Paul's teaching on justification by faith alone is the article by which the church falls or stands”

The devil has always set his sights on justification by faith. If there is one core teaching, he would seek to destroy and to blind us from, it would be justification by faith and he does it right from the start.

In the Bible, we are told that the message of the Gospel has been spreading successfully, first in Jerusalem and then in Judea and Paul now takes it to the further regions. That has been the birth and the growth of the New Testament church but soon enough, the devil comes in and seeks to destroy and disrupt the teachings of justification by faith. Turn with me in your Bibles to Acts 15. Acts 15 and I like you to look at these words because right from the start, the doctrine is under assault. Acts 15, somewhat at the end of Paul's first missionary journey, the Bible says, and certain men, which came down from Judea, talk to the brethren and said,

Acts 15:1

And certain men which came down from Judea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.

Paul has been preaching, believe in Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved and then there are people who come along and say, no you need to add works, you need to add the circumcision after the manner of Moses. You see, the devil has his sights set on justification by faith.

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In fact, Paul treated this seriously and in the church at Galatia, there was great danger of error and compromise coming in and when he wrote a letter to the Galatians

“As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other Gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.” Gal 1:9

It is a strong statement. But that's how important justification by faith is, that there can be no other way.

All of us would be familiar with the term, the Dark Ages, from the 5th century to the 15th century. This was the period of darkness because the light of the Gospel is somewhat dimmed. For the first 400 to 500 years of Christian or church history, the Gospel has been spreading far and wide, because men and women had been preaching justification by faith. But somehow, it is lost as we entered the 5th century. It is lost in the guise of ritualism and formalism and instead of preaching the Lord Jesus as our Savior, man start to preach about morals, about rituals, about form and mankind enters 1000 years of what we call the Dark Ages. Justification by faith, is in a sense buried.

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But in the 16th century, a man like Martin Luther, by the grace of God, he discovered the vitality of preaching, of believing, salvation by faith in Jesus alone. And that's why he says, it is the article by which the church falls or stand.

The reformers cried out three things or three statements, three phrases. They are :

Sola?

Not Solar system, Sola what ? Sola Scriptura, in other words, the Word of God, alone, not the traditions of men. The Christian faith stands on the Word of God alone, not traditions.

Another Sola, you have? Sola means only, Sola Scriptura, the Word of God alone. Sola ? Sola Christos, Christ alone, yes, you can say that.

Sola Garcia, Grace alone, some more? The one I am looking for.

Sola Fide! Alright. By faith alone. And that is the rallying call of the reformers. You must have faith in Jesus Christ alone to be saved and thanks be to God for raising the reformers, Luther and Calvin, that you and I today have the privilege of being a believer of the Lord Jesus Christ because for 1000 years, it is all hidden in a very large extent.

But friends, is it gone, is this attack over? No, the devil consistently seeks to rob this away from the church. He seeks to disrupt the church from teaching justification by faith. I was told by some of our people that they have been to the churches in Indonesia, the Batak churches. These are the Batak people, there are the different tribes in Indonesia and one of the huge tribes that is there, are the Batak people, thousands, hundreds of thousands of people are Bataks. And to a Batak, you are born a Christian. In other words, they do not understand what it means to be born again. They do not know what it means to believe in Jesus Christ for salvation, because they believed that they are already born a Christian.

So, when our people went to preach the Gospel, that you need to be saved by placing their trust in Jesus Christ, it was literally the first time they have heard that message. They didn't know what it means to be justified by faith. In fact, I was told that when the leaders of the churches gather, they were discussing; I thought they would be discussing some chim, chim theology. But this is what they discussed. They were

asking, what would happen to you, when you die. Would you have the assurance of eternal life? And after a furious discussion, that was the conclusion they came out with:

"If I die before I got to bed, I will go to hell, but if I die after I am sleeping or when I am asleep, I will go to heaven." The rationale, the rationale is this. Before I go to bed and confessed my sins, I stand condemned. But, after I have confessed my sins, before I go to sleep or after I go to sleep, wait, wait, they confused me. (Laughter in the congregation). If I have confessed my sins, before I go to bed and when I sleep, I would be saved.

Do you know how scary that is? It's not one or two. It's thousands upon thousands of people who really believed in that. The Batak church in Indonesia was started some 150 years ago by a missionary called Nommensen and because of the preaching of the Gospel, thousands upon thousands came to know Jesus Christ and the Batak people were originally cannibals. If you live a 150 years ago with them, you are gone, you are their steak. But because of the grace of God, they were saved. But just fast forward 100 years, this is the state of the church there. Why? Because, the devil is hard at work, seeking to wreck the core fundamentals of Christianity away from us. This is what John MacArthur says :

John MacArthur:

“Justification by faith is, and has always been, the number one target of the enemy's attack. It provides the foundation of the bridge that reconciles God and man--without that key doctrine, Christianity falls.”

However the doctrine that the Reformers so painstakingly clarified, even spilled blood over, has become so muddled today that many Protestants barely recognize it.

(Added by Pastor : By the way, we are what we would call Protestants because we are those who believe in the reformers teachings of Sola Gracia, Fide, Christos, Scriptura. We are those who say, we cannot be following the traditions of man and believed that salvation is by works, we are the Protestants. But today, we can get so muddled and confused about justification by faith.)

“The superficial interests of the seeker church have caused doctrinal issues to be downplayed and deemphasized—what "unchurched" person wants to come hear about theology?”

(Added by Pastor : So, the preachers and the pulpit here, face that tide of pressure from the people to say, pastor, don't preach too doctrinally, give us the sensational, the motivational stuff. And that is the beginning of the downfall of the church. He goes on to add:)

“Under the influence of pragmatism, the seeker-sensitive movement has traded God-honoring doctrinal clarity and biblical purity for entertainment and motivational speeches.”

I think even in our church it is true, that when we come to doctrinal stuff, we say it is dry and meaningless for us. Pastor, preach to us motivational stuff, the exciting, the encouraging stuff. But my friends, it is the truth that sets us free. It is that line upon line, precept upon precept, that the church must be well acquainted with. The devil would want to pull that from right under our feet. But here we stand.

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I wonder what GLCC would be like in 50 or 100 years' time. I often have thoughts about that and I'm sure the devil also have thoughts about GLCC in 50 or 100 years time, how do I get them down, how do I pull the rug from right under their feet. Well, he says, let's go for justification by faith. This generation can believe in Jesus Christ but let's get the next generation and the generation that is after them, let them preach morals, let them preach motivation, but let them not come to Jesus Christ and I would have gotten them. I would have damned their souls to hell because there is no salvation under heaven by any other means.

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So this is of vital importance, justified by faith.

Paul tells us in verse 27, justification by faith means that there would be no pride before God and all glory goes to Him. He says in verse 27

27 Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.

Paul is saying that when man thinks he can be safe by his works, he will pride himself before God. He says, God, look at me, I have done so many good works, You got to save me. But, when it is justification by faith in Jesus Christ, there can be no boasting because that means man stands guilty and condemned, helpless and hopeless and

says "God, it is all Your grace." It is all about Jesus, justification by faith is vital because it brings glory to God alone.

No man, none of us can stand before God and claim any credit for our salvation. It is excluded by the law of faith and Paul goes on in verse 28 to say,

28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith (Added by Pastor: Is made righteous, guiltless, innocent, by faith and look at that) without the deeds of the law.

28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

There is nothing you can do that can add a single merit to your salvation. We stand, Sola Fide, in Jesus Christ alone, Sola Christos. And by the way, it is the same for Jews and Gentiles, there is no prejudice, there is no pride, there is also no prejudice, because he tells us, I will skip that, he tells us,

29 Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also:

30 Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.

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No man, whether Jew or Gentile, can claim any credit to our saving grace. And Paul goes on in verse 31, he clarifies a point that so often we may abuse. The question here is, if I am saved by faith, does it mean I can do away with the law, does it mean that I can dispense with the demands of Scripture, does it mean I can live a licentious sinful life since it is all done by Jesus Christ? Paul says, no, not at all.

Do we then make void the law through faith? (Added by Pastor: Is the law of God now irrelevant because you can place your faith in Christ, no, actually justification by faith establishes the law. You say in what way. Well, it establishes the law in the fact that we acknowledge the law is of a high standard and no man can meet it. That's why we need justification by faith. It establishes the law also in that we recognize that we can't do it but Jesus did it and Jesus paid the penalty for our sins. The demands of the law are fully fulfilled by Jesus Christ and He paid it all for us who in ourselves could not fulfill it.

31 Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.

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So, Paul here is giving us a series of questions and answers but the point I think he's trying to emphasize is that justification by faith is of utmost importance. It brings glory to God, it is the only way of salvation and it does not in any way contradict the teachings of the law. But let me move to a different train of thought by Paul.

2. The Illustration of “Justified by Faith”

In chapters 4, you have a turning point where Paul now illustrates justification by faith. He is going to tell us that the teaching of justification by faith is not a new concept or a novel idea. There is nothing strange or unusual about it. It has always been the case, it has always been the teachings of Scriptures and it has always been this way by which the saints of the past are saved. There is no contradiction. And Paul now, if I may ask you, if he were to choose someone to illustrate justification by faith, to add credibility to what he will say, what kind of guy would he choose? Choose an obscure guy whom most people don't know about? No, he would certainly choose a very well-known character and who is the person he chose? Remember the verses you read, he chose Abraham.

Now, Abraham undoubtedly is one of the great figures of history. By the way, Islam, Catholicism, Judaism, Christianity could trace their roots back to Abraham, no doubt a great man of history. But more importantly, the Bible tells us that Abraham is the father of many nations, he is called the friend of God in the Bible and large amount of Scriptures is dedicated to the life of this one man. So, he is a great illustration, he is a great example. If Abraham was justified by faith, then I think it seals the case, no one could fault the case thereafter. But you know that Abraham himself was not a godly man in the beginning. He was never born a Christian. In fact, the Bible tells us he was born in the Ur of the Chaldees, he was in the family that worship idols. He was an idol worshiper, he was an ungodly man. But how did Abraham, this ungodly man, turn out to be one of the fathers of faith. How was he saved, how was Abraham justified? Same way, by faith and not works. Paul says in verses 1-3:

1 What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? 2 For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God (Added by Pastor : He can't glory before God because he has no works that could stand God's holy eyes, so Paul says what does the Scripture says, what

does the Bible says about the justification of Abraham) . 3 For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

Test, where is this verse taken from? It is said in the Scriptures, but where? I had to offer a bribe in the first service, whoever is able to get this answer, gets a candy. I will take it from my son and give it to you. Very good, Genesis, alright, let's turn your Bibles to Genesis 15. Excellent, you know, this is a beautiful passage and we will look at it in more detail in a while. But let's first look at Genesis 15, you can't not find Genesis, this is the first book of the Bible. (Laughter in the congregation) and turn to Chapter 15 and I like to read to you this very romantic scene. It's a very romantic scene.

Abraham had just concluded a war, it's in the middle of the night and God appeared unto Abraham. So, it is a touching scene to Abraham.

Genesis 15:1-6

After these things (Added by Pastor : After the war and so on) the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram (Added by Pastor: He's not yet called Abraham, alright) : I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. [2] And Abram said, Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus? [3] And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir. [4] And, behold, the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. [5] And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. [6] And he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

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Beautiful story which we will come to you in a while. But here the Bible tells us, how was Abraham declared righteous, how was he justified. Abraham believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness. The word counted, is an accounting term. It means to credit, to put into the account of. To deposit. How many of you here do Internet banking, can I see by a show of hands? No need to be shy, I don't know your number. (Laughter in the congregation). Raise your hand, I won't know it's all right. Coming to Internet banking. Not a lot ah! Strange, alright, I do Internet banking and I get nervy when I do Internet banking. I mean, paying the bills is often a bit more straightforward, but when I'm told to transfer money to some individual account, I

get nervous. Why? Because I'm scared that when I key in the account number, I may key in wrongly and instead of going to someone I know and I intended it to be, I give it to someone else. So what I do, every time when I do Internet banking and fund transfers, I will check many times. Check here, check there, check here, check there, check until I am very satisfied with it, but even then, I'm still very kiasu and concerned that I transfer my money to someone, some crook or someone I do not know. So, what I do, I thought I am very clever lah. But what I do, I will always transfer one dollar. (Laughter in the congregation). After I transfer one dollar, I will give you a call. Hey, can you check whether you received that one dollar and only when they say yes, then I transfer the rest of the amount over. Otherwise, it is very scary leh. (Laughter in the congregation). You transfer your money to some unknown account because you key it in wrongly.

You know that is what it means for God to count, account, credit, to put into our account, His righteousness. We did not earn it, we did not deserve it, that crook, oh, not that crook lah, the other person whom I deposit the account into, he did not earn it. I simply mistakenly gave it to him. But in the case of righteousness from God, it is freely given to us. You know, even up till today, I receive credits from people. My dad, regularly credits money into my bank account. (Congregation's goes Wah!- Laughter in the congregation) I'm talking about Heavenly Father lah- don't know, I'm also talking about my earthly father. He think that being a church worker, full-time staff is like living like a mouse in the church and so he's concerned, are you okay, are you okay so without words he got my bank account number and every month just deposits, credits into my account. I don't help him in his business, I don't really play a role at all but he credits. In a very simple way, that reflects the way God gives us His righteousness. It is freely given to us.

Paul goes on to say in verse 4,

4 Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.

You know, if salvation is not credited to us by grace, then we are saying, God, I am saved because I worked for it and God has to give us salvation because He is indebted to us. But God forbids, God doesn't owe any man salvation. Salvation is grace, not debt. Nobody earns it, you are given it, you received it.

So, Abraham, that supreme example, is the same. Though a great man eventually, he was not saved because of his inherent greatness but because of God's grace. And verse 5 seals it isn't it?

But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly,

5 But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

What is Abraham in God's eyes? Ungodly, because there is no man godly in God's eyes, no man who can reach His standards.

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That is the way God justifies, He justifies the wicked, He justifies the ungodly. You don't have to come and say, "God, I am good enough now for You" or "God, I have tried to clean up my act over all these years, now You can save me." No, God justifies the ungodly. He credits the righteousness of His Son into your life account. Abraham was saved by faith, justified by faith, without the deeds of the law.

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Now a question I have for you, and this is going a little bit deeper but it is helpful. Abraham's belief in God, was it a general vague and woolly faith or was it a specific faith? Did Abraham simply believe that there is a God, that there is a good God and a Holy God and a wonderful God and an eternal God and that is it, Abraham got saved because he believed in the existence of a good God.

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When we read the Bible, sometimes we can go away with such superficial conclusions isn't it? Oh, Abraham believed God so there are lots of people in this world that believe God but are they really saved? Is that what faith is all about?

I want to share with you what Scripture teaches about that and we go back to Genesis 15. In Genesis 15, there is a very unusual phrase and those who have been learned in Scriptures will be able to pick up that special something that will be helpful in the understanding of the specificity of that phrase. You look at verses 5 and he says

It says, he brought him forth abroad, out into the open and said, look, look towards heaven and look at all the stars if you are able to number them at all: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. 6. And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

Gen 15:5,6

5 And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.
6 And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

There is a phrase, that is special, that is unique, that I hope you will be able to tell me. Which phrase would that be? Thinking, thinking, today is thinking day. Actually every Sunday, every time we come to the Word we must think. Sorry, someone says Lord, no, not that word. The Lord here is Jehovah, Yahweh, the Tetragrammaton. Another phrase, try, come, come, come. Someone says, believed in the Lord. It's what we have been preaching, it's true, but that is something special, something else special. Seed, what's so special about seed? Come on, what's so special about seed. By the way, you are right, it is the seed. But what is special about seed. Huh, mustard seed, very creative. No, this one has no reference to mustard seed. Very good, Carol, don't you think the English, she's English by the way, British, so they are particular about English. But don't you think that is something wrong about the English here. Look at the starsssss (pastor emphasizes the plural) and then it says, twinkle, twinkle, little stars, and then God says, so shall thy seed be. Wouldn't Abraham be thinking, hey, what's wrong, He tells me to look at the stars, but He tells me my seed. It doesn't make sense. Maybe to us, it doesn't make sense, but to Abraham, it makes absolute sense.

Can anyone tell me what is the significance of the singular form of this word "seed", because, it refers to the confidence, Phyllis, you have got it, it refers to the....., come, I need a brave soul to say it, it refers to the Savior or Messiah. Now, who tells you so, what is your proof, what is your basis, can't it be that it is just poor language of English or..... who tells you that this is the promise about the Messiah? Okay, Genesis 3, maybe you can use that, maybe, but, there is something even clearer, anyone? This one, I will treat you to lunch, (Laughter in the congregation) just tell Joshua later. Anyone? There is a beautiful verse, okay I don't have much time, so I won't tarry too long, but, anyone else, give it a shot, lunch, on me. No, no, Genesis 3:15 is an okay reference, but there is one that is clearer. All of us know John 3:16, but that's not the verse. You should know Galatians 3:16. Look at Galatians 3:16 it says here,

Now, you are not imagining things, this is exactly what Paul says and it takes a theologian by Paul to be exact about it. Scripture is absolutely precise, that is what I really admire about the Word of God. It is not fudgy, it is not fuzzy as well, it is absolutely precise and Paul says to the Galatians church, "Now to Abraham and his

seed were the promises made. He did not say And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ."

Gal 3:16

Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.

So, when God appeared to Abraham on the night in Genesis 15, God is saying, Abraham, so shall thy seed be. There will be a descendant from your loins, who will be the Savior and through Him, the whole world, all nations will be saved and that would be an innumerable number, like the stars that you see in the heavens.

God is promising to Abraham the Messiah and Abraham is not Dumbo, is no Dumbo. Don't think the Old Testament saints have low IQ, please. They grasped it, we didn't get it at least from my questioning, none of us would have seen it, but Abraham saw it. Abraham believed in God, not that he is just, generally God or good or great, but he believed that God would save him and the others through the Messiah. He believed it, he saw it.

Now, just to add weight to this argument, there is another verse. This one, I will treat you to, okay lah, cake, cake, cake. I was almost going to say, buffet lunch, but cake at our coffee corner. If there is someone who can tell me another verse in Scripture that points us to the fact that Abraham believed specifically in the coming Savior, besides Galatians 3:16.

Someone says Hebrews 11, no, they look for a heavenly city, right, he believed maybe that Isaac would be resurrected, but there is another one that is absolutely crystal clear, Abraham look forward to the Messiah. Okay, I will spare you the agony and I will save myself 5 dollars. (Laughter in the congregation).

So short, so clear

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John 8:56

Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.

Wow! Jesus lived hundreds, thousands of years after Abraham died, but Abraham by faith saw the day of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, I don't think Abraham knew

everything about Christ. Certainly he didn't know a lot of details about His life but he knew and believed enough that God would send a Savior and he believed and it was then counted unto him for righteousness.

So, this is a beautiful illustration isn't it, from a man as great as Abraham that he was saved not as a general kind of vague faith but a specific faith in the promise of a Savior. The illustration of justification by faith.

3. The Implications of "Justified by Faith"

I have to close and I come lastly to the implications of being justified by faith.

And now Abraham is in a sense, put into cold storage for a while because the focus shifts to another great character. If you think about the Old Testament and think about great Old Testament people, number one you think about Abraham, number two would you may think about... Moses, besides him, another one? King David, alright, and that is the second example being highlighted.

6 Even as David (Added by Pastor : King David) also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works,

So, here it is, David is saved, is justified likewise, without his works. It is credited to him, that righteousness and this is the blessing.

7 Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.

8 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.

These verses, verses 7 and 8 are taken from Psalms 32, the Psalm when David wrote together with Psalm 51 when he fell into sin with Bathsheba and in the murder of his servant Uriah. And in the midst of this terrible sin, David wrote this Psalm and said "I am a blessed man because I thank you Lord that you do not hold these sins against me. I am blessed, because it imputes righteousness without works. You forgive my sins and you covered my sins."

6 Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works,7 Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. 8 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.

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What are the implications of justification by faith; you don't stand on their own performance anymore, but you can be assured of your own salvation because of what Jesus Christ has done for you on the cross. Have they been times in your life where you are unsure about your salvation and you wonder, after you have sinned, will God still accept me?"

My friends, God accepts you not because of who you are but because of who Jesus is and what He has done and if you stand on that righteousness, if you believe and receive Christ into your life, salvation is reckoned to you not because you are deserving it but because Jesus has deserved it on your behalf. And that is a blessed man indeed. The word blessed means to be supremely happy, to be contented and secure, such is the blessing of knowing and believing and standing upon justification by faith. Your sins are forgiven. The word forgiven means literally sent away. You know how it is in the Jew's history. They have to offer a sacrifice and that goat will be leaned upon by the high priest, it is a symbolic way of saying that the sins of the nation are transferred onto this goat and this goat is now sent into the wilderness, never to be seen again, a picture of how God sends our sins away, never to be seen again.

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The Bible tells us our sins are forgiven, sent away, our sins are covered, is covered under the blanket of God's righteousness. I am told that if we go to Alaska, some of you have been to Alaska before. If you have been to Alaska, there is a city called Nome and it is a filthy city because they don't have garbage dumps. Things are just thrown all over the place, debris, wooden stuff, scrap metal, even dead bodies. And when tourists go to Nome, they are disgusted, they shake their heads and said, what is all this mess, why don't they dispose it properly somewhere? But they don't realize, that for most part of the year at Alaska, Nome, the whole place is covered by a crystal or a snow white layer of frost and snow and all this garbage is not seen because it is beautifully covered.

In the same way, our sins are covered, except it is not covered for a season, it is covered for evermore.

The Bible tells us, 8 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.

If you read the Bible carefully, the word "not" there in the Greek is a very strong "not". It is a word that means, "really never", is the word with a double negative in

the Greek. It is the strongest denial therefore. The King James could do better if they translated it, "to whom the Lord will never, no, not at all impute sin."

The blessing of the forgiveness of God is justification by faith. My friends, there is only one way for eternal life, there is only one way for us to be made right with God. There is only one way whereby man can stand as just and innocent and guiltless before the Holy, Mighty God and that is, he must be justified by faith in Jesus Christ. Have you, come to Christ?

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I close with this illustration. There was a jester, a clown and he was called upon to perform for a great king. This king is rich, he has all the money in the world to do all that he wants but all this king wants is to laugh. He loves to laugh and so this jester came along and made him laugh like he never laughed before. And so the king says, well done, I enjoyed your show, I am going to hire you from now on and I am going to give you a baton because you are the most foolish man I've ever seen. And if you should meet another foolish man, more foolish than yourself, then you pass him the baton also.

Several years have passed and the king now lies on the death bed about to die. He calls for the jester, for him to perform one last time so that he can die laughing. The jester performs, he laughs and the jester at the end of the show came to the king and say, "My highness, where are you going to go?" The king says "I don't know but I think it is going to be a long, long journey." The jester then asked him "My highness, have you prepared yourself for this long journey?" The king says "No, I have never even thought much about it." The jester then took out the baton from his back pocket and gives the king the baton. The king says "Why do you give me this baton?" The jester says "Well, to the world, I am a jester, I am a clown, I am a fool but I only fooled around with the things of this world. You are the greatest fool, because you fooled around with the things of eternity."

My friends, don't be robbed of the privilege of coming to know Jesus as your Savior today. There is only one way, Jesus said I am the Way, the Truth and the Life, no man comes to the Father but by Me. Would you place your trust in Christ alone, Sola Garcia, Scriptura, Fide stands still today? Let's bow for a word of prayer.

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Father, we thank you for the crystal clear teaching of Scripture, we thank you we need not be in two minds about this. Salvation is offered to man, to be received by faith in Christ alone. So work in our hearts this morning that each and every one that is gathered here, would be convicted of our sinfulness, would realize our helplessness and run to Jesus for salvation and life. We do pray today, that You would call Your children to the saving knowledge that you may be glorified. Father, we pray too for your church, that you will preserve Your church in this world, that we would not depart from the core teaching of justification by faith. We pray in particular for GLCC, that we would not detract into moralistic teaching alone but that we would stand firm upon the major tenets of Scriptures. So, God preserve us, guard us against the wiles of the evil one. And may this church be kept pure, faithful, holy unto your return. We thank you and we pray all this things in Jesus' name amen. God bless.