

Romans 4

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Tape #8121
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Let's turn now in our Bibles to chapter four as we continue our journey through the Word of God. Now Paul has introduced in chapter three the subject of justification by faith. That is, I stand before God righteous. Not by the works that I have done. God does not account me righteous because I don't smoke. I don't drink. I don't go to dances. I don't go to shows. God doesn't count me righteous because of my works. And my works have nothing to do with my righteousness. God counts me righteous because of my faith and trust in Jesus Christ. And God accounts my faith for righteousness. That is because I believe in Jesus Christ, God looks at me as righteous. For God sees me in Christ Jesus. And thus He sees me in the righteousness of Christ, which is imputed to me because of my faith in Jesus.

So in chapter four Paul is going to illustrate this truth to the Jews from two of their main characters in history. Men that they traced their background to, Abraham and to David. The two heroes of the Jewish faith.

So beginning in chapter four he speaks concerning Abraham, *What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh?* Now Abraham is the father of all who believe, but these are the physical descendants of Abraham, pertaining to the flesh. What has Abraham discovered or found?

²*For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.* If God justified Abraham because of his works. Then Abraham could boast in his righteousness. He could be begin to elucidate or express his works. He would tell about all that he had done. And he would point to them and he would boast of them. See I'm righteous. Look at what I've done. Now Paul declared in the previous chapter concerning the righteousness which comes by faith, God justifies those who believe in Jesus. He said where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith. So because I'm justified by my faith in Jesus Christ, I can't really glory or boast in my works. that which I have done or that which I am doing for the Lord. The sacrifices that I have made. The amount of money I've given or whatever. I can't boast in those things because they have nothing to do with my righteous standing before God. All I can do is glory in Jesus Christ. Now that's God's purpose. That no flesh should glory in His sight. Therefore any kind of boasting that I may do of sacrifices that I have made for Jesus or things of this nature, are completely wrong because I'm trying then to get people to say, oh, isn't he wonderful. And you know our wicked, horrible flesh likes people to think that we are wonderful. It likes for people to think that we are really deeply spiritual. And so we so often do things to sort of emote a sort of spirituality. The way we react or respond many times. We're trying to give off, a "Oh, I very spiritual." You know even the tone of voice and even the way you say, ooooo brother, you know. And you can do things that sort of you know, exude, an ooooooh. And then you let off subtle little hints like, the other morning I was awakened by the spirit, I don't know time it was. I know it was still dark. And I had the most glorious time having the spirit of God ministering to me. I was just in ecstasy and all. We can just let people know that we always get up before daybreak and spend time with the Lord before we begin our busy schedules. And people say, oh my, isn't that wonderful. He's so righteous. But you see, it's not of works. That doesn't make me more righteous. It's no more righteous to get up at four o'clock in the morning that it is to get up at eleven. That has nothing to do with your righteousness. We are accounted righteous because we have believed in Jesus Christ! So what did Abraham discover? If he were justified by his works then he would have whereof to boast to glory but not before God. He wouldn't be glorying in God, he would be glorying in his works.

³*For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."* That is his believing the promise of God as God showed him the stars and said as the stars of the sky are innumerable, so shall thy seed be. And Abraham believed God. And God accounted his faith for righteousness.

So, ⁴*Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt.* You see, the moment you work for somebody, that puts them under obligation to you. If you have worked for eight hours, they owe you. So if

you have been contracted to work for minimum wage and you put in eight hours, that person then owes you then approximately forty dollars. That's the law. If they don't pay you, you can take them to small claims court and get a judgment against them. They owe it to you. They become a debtor to you. Now if I could do so many works to be righteous. If God would specify, okay, you know, an hour a day in prayer, ten chapters a day in the Bible, witnessing to five people, and so forth, then if I would do those things then God would owe me, God would be in debt to me because Lord, I done this work for you. So that makes God a debtor to me, but God will be a debtor to no man. So because my righteousness is by faith, it is of grace. God doesn't owe it to me, but God has imputed it to me because of His grace. And so it is by grace that I stand before God, righteous, not by works.

Now having said that, Paul declares: ⁵*But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness.* To him that does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, that faith is accounted for righteousness. Does that mean then that I have a free ride, a free ticket, it doesn't matter what I do as long as I believe in Jesus Christ? Yes, as long as you believe in Jesus Christ, your belief will be manifested by your works. But the works don't make you righteous. They don't save you. But they are the fruit of that faith and belief in Jesus Christ. So we see a beautiful balance between Paul and James. And so that is why I choose to take James at this time on Thursday nights, so that we get the balance. Paul tells you that God accounts us righteous by our faith in Jesus Christ. And he is right. But James tells you that a true faith in Jesus Christ will be manifested by works, if it is a true faith. That it will be displayed or demonstrated by works that are in keeping with what you believe. You see, I may say that I believe in certain things, but if my works don't line up with what I say I believe, then there is reason to question, do I really believe it? You see if I said I believe someone has planted a bomb in this pulpit tonight, that is set to go off in two minutes. It's going to blow this place apart. And if I just kept talking to you, you'd say oh he really doesn't believe it. And you would be right. I mean if I really believed it, I'd say everybody out of here, you know! There are exits all around, you know, get out of the place. It's going to go up! And I'd be out the back door. You see, wow, he really believes it. So your works come from your faith and they prove the genuineness of that faith. But it isn't the works that make me righteous, it's just because I have that righteousness through faith in Christ because I have a true belief in Him. I believe that He died for my sins. I believe that I am destined to spend eternity in the glory of His kingdom with Him. I believe that He loves me so much that He gave Himself. And thus I respond to that love. And to the belief that I have. It's in harmony and shows the faith.

Now, he quotes David, Psalm thirty two, ⁶*just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works:* For David said:

⁷*"Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, And whose sins are covered;* David had committed a horrible sin. The sin had compounded. It went from adultery to murder. When David was faced with his guilt, he confessed his sin. He said, I have sinned. The prophet said unto him, and God has forgiven your sin. And so David wrote, Oh, how happy is the man whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.

When David was praying about his sin (Psalm 51:1-4, 16-17), asking for God's forgiveness, he prayed for the mercy of God. Have mercy upon me, O God. According to the multitude of your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions for against Thee and Thee only have I sinned. And then he said, You don't really want sacrifices but a broken and a contrite heart, You won't turn away. So David came and received the forgiveness. Not on works that he did. He has broken the law of God. The law of God was condemning him, but he appealed to the mercy and the grace of God. And then he wrote (Psalm 32:1-2), Oh, how happy is the man whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.

But then he went one step further. Now we can all speak of the blessedness of the man whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sin is covered, but he went one step further. And not all have taken that next step. He said, ⁸*Blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin."* How happy is the man to whom God does not impute iniquity. You who are believing in Jesus Christ. You have come to put your trust in Jesus Christ. God does not impute iniquity. That is, God doesn't count your sins. John said, if we say we have fellowship with God and we walk in darkness, we lie and know not the truth, but if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have this fellowship one with the other and the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses us. Actually, it's present perfect tense is continually cleansing us from all sin. There is a continual cleansing. God doesn't impute sin. I may do something that I feel horrible. Oh, how could I have done that? Oh, that is so terrible. Oh, I am so

miserable. I hate myself. And I'm going on, but God doesn't even impute it. He doesn't put it down on the record. He doesn't keep an account of it. We sort of unfortunately think of God many times as Santa Claus. That is you know, you go ahead and tell Him everything you want and if you are a good boy, you get it and if you are a bad boy you'll get the sticks. Because He is making out a list and He's checking it twice. And He's going to find out who is naughty and nice. And He'll reward you according to your deserve that which you are deserving. But not so with God. God is not making out a list. God does not have any charges against you, who believe and trust in Jesus Christ. Oh, the blessedness of the man to whom God does not impute iniquity. The man that God isn't keeping any account of. Your wrong doings or whatever.

You know, so many times we're going around with that guilt complex, because all of us are sinful. We're all living in this body of flesh. And as long as we are living in this body of flesh, we have these fleshly desires. We can't escape them. That is why when we get to the eighth chapter, Paul will say we're groaning and travailing waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God to which the redemption of our bodies. We so often feel that guilt. And Satan presses it upon us.

But again in chapter eight, Paul said, who is he that condemns? It is Christ who has died. He rather has risen again and is making intercession. He is your attorney. He is your representative. He is your mediator. Now if you had an attorney that would say, judge, this guy is a crook. He's horrible. You know, you can't believe how bad he is. You would fire him! You want an attorney that's going to represent you. Well judge, he really didn't intend to do that, you know. It was just one of those little things. You want him to represent you in a favorable light. And so Jesus Christ, our mediator. He is not condemning us. You remember He said to the women that neither do I condemn you. The one taken in adultery. To Nicodemus, He said (John 3:17), God didn't send me into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Me might be saved. And He that believeth is not condemned. Oh, how happy is the man to whom God does not impute iniquity. I love it!

So he then going back to Abraham in verse nine, said, ⁹*Does this blessedness then come upon the circumcised only, (Is it only for the Jews who have gone through the ritual of circumcision? Or is this blessing of God not imputing sin, God forgiving our iniquity, covering our sin? Is this only for Jews or those that are circumcised? Or is it for the Gentiles, too?) or upon the uncircumcised also? For we say that faith was accounted to Abraham for righteousness.*

¹⁰*How then was it accounted? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? (And he answers) Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised. (When did God say and God accounted his faith for righteousness? (Abraham believed God and God imputed his righteousness because of faith. It says it in chapter fifteen in the book of Genesis. When did God give to Abraham the sign of the covenant that he made with him? It was in chapter seventeen, a few years later. So Paul is pointing this out. God made this glorious promise to Abraham before he was ever circumcised. Therefore the promise is to all, Jew and Gentile alike. This blessedness of God covering, forgiving our sins, our transgressions and not imputing iniquity to us, but accounting our faith for righteousness, it is unto all, not to just the Jew, but unto the Gentile alike.)* ¹¹*And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while still uncircumcised, (It came later but God had already imputed his faith for righteousness.) that he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also, (In order that this principle of righteousness by faith alone, might be given to all men, accounted to all men, Abraham becomes the father of all of those who believe in the promises of God, Jew and Gentile alike.)*

¹²*and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of the faith which our father Abraham had while still uncircumcised. (So we look to Abraham as our father also. As the spiritual children who believe and follow his example of faith in the promises of God, we then become children of Abraham, thus we are heirs to all of the promises that God made to Abraham and to the Jewish people. A lot of times people say well that was to the Jews. That was a promise that God made to the Jews. Well, you see, because we are the children of Abraham, we also are the heirs of the promises that God made to Abraham because he is the father of those who believe.)*

¹³*For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. So the ordinance did not make him righteous, keeping the ordinance because that came after God imputed righteousness. And Abraham lived a couple hundred years, at least, before*

the law was ever given. So it could not be by the law that Abraham was declared righteous. Because there was no law that was given at that time. The law followed afterwards.

¹⁴*For if those who are of the law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise made of no effect,* ¹⁵*because the law brings about wrath; for where there is no law there is no transgression.* If the state of California would declare that we have no longer any speed limits on the freeways, then the Highway Patrol could not pull you over for speeding, because there is no law against speeding. You can't break a law that doesn't exist. So where there is no law, there is no transgression. You haven't transgressed because there is no law that says you shouldn't. So he is pointing out that by the law comes judgment when you violate it. But where there is no law, there is no transgression of the law, because there is no law. The law worketh then judgment.

Going back to Deuteronomy chapter 29:20, the time of the law. The Lord said, "The LORD would not spare him; for then the anger of the LORD and His jealousy would burn against that man, and every curse that is written in this book would settle on him, and the LORD would blot out his name from under heaven. ²¹And the LORD would separate him from all the tribes of Israel for adversity, according to all the curses of the covenant that are written in this Book of the Law, ²²so that the coming generation of your children who rise up after you, and the foreigner who comes from a far land, would say, when they see the plagues of that land and the sicknesses which the LORD has laid on it: ²³'The whole land is brimstone, salt, and burning; it is not sown, nor does it bear, nor does any grass grow there, like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim, which the LORD overthrew in His anger and His wrath.' ²⁴All nations would say, 'Why has the LORD done so to this land? What does the heat of this great anger mean?' ²⁵Then people would say: 'Because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD God of their fathers, which He made with them when He brought them out of the land of Egypt; ²⁶for they went and served other gods and worshiped them, gods that they did not know and that He had not given to them. ²⁷Then the anger of the LORD was aroused against this land, to bring on it every curse that is written in this book. ²⁸And the LORD uprooted them from their land in anger, in wrath, and in great indignation, and cast them into another land, as it is this day.'" So He is declaring to them that the law brings the wrath of God, that is, the violation of the law of God. And so this righteousness does not come by keeping the law. The law brings the wrath of God. The law worketh wrath, for where there is no law, there is no transgression. Christ is the end of the law to those who believe. You see, the law was a schoolmaster to bring me to Jesus Christ. It was intended to show me my evil. It was intended to show me how rotten and sinful I am. How much I deserve the wrath and the judgment of God. So that I would flee to the mercies of God and cry out to God for His mercy. Once it has brought me to God and to this relationship in Christ Jesus, where I am crucified with Christ, then the law has no further jurisdiction over me. It can't make me righteous. It brings the wrath of God.

¹⁶*Therefore it (the righteousness) is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed,* (In other words, because it is a righteousness by faith, it becomes sure. The grace of God. And the purpose is that there might be the assurance. You might have assurance. You see if God accounted you righteous because of your works and your good deeds, keeping the rules. We've got this list of rules and you keep these and you'll be righteous. And if God then accounts you righteous by your keeping of these rules, what happens when you break the rules? You are unrighteous! And thus your righteousness is always a tenuous thing. You may be good for four days out of the week. And then the fifth day blow it royally. And so if my relationship to God depends upon my good works, then my relationship to God is tenuous. Sometimes I can fellowship with Him and sometimes, I cannot. Because I don't always keep the rules. I don't always keep the law. So God has made it by grace so that it is sure. It's certain! It doesn't depend upon my faithfulness to God, but it now depends on God's faithfulness to me! And because this relationship depends upon God and His faithfulness to His word, hey, I've got a sure relationship! I can come any time. The door is never closed. When I have failed miserably I can still come, the door isn't closed. God isn't imputing iniquity to me. So that it might be sure. God has put the responsibility on His faithfulness to His word, not upon my faithfulness to keeping a set of rules. Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed.

not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all ¹⁷(as it is written, "I have made you a father of many nations (Not just to the Jews. Abraham is a father of many nations.)") in the presence of Him whom he believed--God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did; Now here is an interesting thing about God. He can speak about things as existing even though they don't exist, because He knows they are going to exist. You see, He is eternal. He's omniscient. He knows what's going to be. So He often speaks of things as existing before, in time, they have come into existence. He can do that because He knows they are going to be. So that He spoke of Abraham's seed before Abraham ever had any children. Through thy seed shall all the nations of the earth shall be blessed. Well, he didn't have any children but God spoke to him as though he had children because God knew that he was going to give him Isaac. So God can speak of things that don't exist before they exist because He knows they are going to exist. That's what is so thrilling about God's speaking of my sanctification and my being glorified together with Christ. He speaks of it as though it were already though it isn't quite yet, but He knows it's going to be. So I find great assurance when God speaks about my being glorified together in Christ. All right! God said it! Why? I'm not yet there. But God knows that I am going to get there. And so he can speak of it as existing, though it doesn't yet exist because God knows He is going to do it! And He sees it as an accomplished fact. I in my own weakness and my limitation see the progression and the growth. And I am struggling, you know, in all of this. But God sees it as already as accomplished and speaks of it as an accomplished fact.

So Abraham, God promised he would be the father of many nations, ¹⁸who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, "So shall your descendants be." (It was the promise of God so it gives hope! I mean, he had hoped for so many years to have a child. Now after so many years, you sort of give up hope. But against hope, he still believed in hope. God said it. Now human reason would tell me it can't be. But God said it! And God can speak of things as existing before or even when they don't exist because He knows they are going to exist. So God spoke of his seed. So against hope he believed in the hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to what was spoken. You see, it was based upon what God had said. If God said it, it's certain. It's sure. So shall thy seed be. God said that.)

¹⁹And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb. The implication is that he was impotent and that Sarah had gone through the change of life. But he didn't consider that difficulty because he had the word of God. And God spoke of his seed as existing. So he knew that his seed was going to have to exist. You see, in the case of when Isaac was born and had grown up, when God said, "Abraham." He said, "Here I am." He said, "Take now thy son, thine only son, Isaac, whom thou lovest and offer him as a sacrifice on a mount that I will show you." So Abraham gathered his servants and he took Isaac and they began to journey. For three days, they journeyed from the area south of Hebron to Mount Moriah. When they finally came to area of Mount Moriah, he said to his servants, you wait here. I and the lad will go and worship God and will come again. And Abraham started up Mount Moriah with his son Isaac. And he said, "Dad, we've got the wood for the sacrifice and we have the fire, but where is the sacrifice?" And Abraham said, "God will provide Himself a sacrifice." So when they came to the top of the Mount, Abraham bound his son Isaac, placed him on the altar, raised the knife. You say, how could he? His only son whom he loved? The Book of Hebrews gives us a fascinating commentary. It's again Abraham's faith in the word of God. God said through Isaac thy seed shall be called. Isaac didn't have any children yet. So he knew that God's got a problem. And he believed, we are told in Hebrews that he believed that God would raise Isaac from the dead in order to keep His word. That's how much Abraham believed and had confidence in God's word. To the extent that he believed in the resurrection, God will keep His word to Isaac, thy seed will be called and thus God will have to, if necessary, raise him from the dead in order to fulfill God's will. But I know that God will! So he was willing to offer his son in that faith in the promise of God and so God, You have a problem. And You can solve it by raising him from the dead. Of course, God stopped him, and said behold there is a ram caught by its horns in the thicket there. Offer the ram and God said, now I see that you won't withhold anything. You've passed the test, Abraham. And thus with blessing I will bless thee and multiply thee. And He reiterated the promises to Abraham. And Abraham called the name of the place, Jehovah Jireh. For he said the Lord will provide. And in the Mount of the Lord is shall be seen. He prophesied. And

thus on that very Mount, two thousand years later, God gave His only Begotten Son whom He loved to be the sacrifice for our sins. Abraham was only playing out a drama that would unfold two thousand years later when God on Mount Moriah gave His Son as a sacrifice.

So Abraham believed God. God's promise that you will be the father of many nations. Through thy seed all of the nations of the earth will be blessed. All right. I don't have any children but I'm impotent. Sarah's gone through the change of life, but no problem. I've got God's word. That faith in the word of God! And so the first key to faith was putting out of his mind the difficulty, the problem that existed. And for us it is so important that we not dwell upon the difficulty of the situation. The more you concentrate on your problem, the bigger it gets and the more impossible it seems. So you really can't focus on the problem. You need to focus on God who is greater than any problem you'll ever face! God who is able to solve every problem. And thus it's a redirecting of our focus. Not on the problem but on the greatness of God.

When my mother was dying of cancer, living with us. We were taking care of her in those last days. Sort of repaying a debt for all of the years that she took care of me. Not really repaying but just a small return for the tremendous investment that she made. And I would look at her, sit and talk and pray with her. A woman who was a gift of God. Whom I loved so deeply. And I was sort of awed by the power of cancer. To take a healthy, vibrant life and to reduce it. To sap the strength. And I saw and was awed by the power of these cells to choke out life. Cancer! A word that strikes terror in people's hearts. And I was so overcome by the power of cancer. One morning when I went into the room and sat at the end of the bed. Weeping inside. Praying for her. I knew that she was suffering a lot. I said God, I'm no hero, but I'm willing for a day to take her suffering. And I wish today that you would just take away her pain, put it on me. Let me bear it for just one day. Just to give her a day of relief. Stop this suffering. And Jesus came and stood beside me and said, "Chuck, that is a foolish request because I bore the suffering for her." And I said, "Oh Lord, how true. Forgive me for my folly." And in that moment I saw no longer the power of cancer to suck out a life, but I saw the power of Jesus Christ! That cancer, what are a few malignant cells? What are they to the power of Jesus? The Creator of the universe. And my focus turned from the cancer to Jesus. From the power of cancer to the power of Jesus! And I realized that it had no power against Jesus. And as I was just having this tremendous spiritual experience, my mother said, Ooooh, the pain is gone! God touched her in that moment. She never experienced from that moment on any more pain. I also said, Lord, she is yours! I thank you for the fact that I have been able to share a lot of years with her. I've been blessed by her life. But if you want her, Lord, she wants you. I'm not going to hang onto her Lord. I mean it's going to hurt like everything. But she belongs to you and if you want to take her, that's fine. But, Lord, not with pain. Not with suffering. And the Lord took her shortly thereafter. But we were willing to release her because she was always His anyhow. She was just on loan to us. And it was just a, one of the most remarkable spiritual experiences of my entire life. I've never felt Jesus closer. I knew that he was standing right beside me as He spoke to me. A remarkable experience! But it came at an extremity, where you know you've come to your own limitations. Where you just are reaching out because you are desperate. The Lord was there and He touched. We need to focus on Him. On His power. Not upon the problem. That's the first key to faith.

The second, ²⁰*He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief*, He didn't question how God's going to do it. Well, I don't know how God can ever do that. And he didn't waver or stagger at the promise of God, *but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God*, Abraham was praising God for a child before Sarah was ever pregnant. He was giving glory to God.

This is where we so often fail. Years ago when we were pastoring in Carona. A very small church. I was working in Alpha Beta to support the family in order to continue in the ministry. And my wife's mother died in Phoenix. We had to go down to Phoenix to care of the funeral and all of those things. So it took a couple of weeks to get everything all squared away. I had notified the manager of Alpha Beta that I would be gone. And he gave me the time to go. When I came back I went in and reported. And he said, well, Chuck, we got a call from the union. You can't go back to work until you take care of your union dues. While I was gone they had lapsed and so I hadn't paid them. So I went over to the union to pay the dues. The gal said you have a fifty dollar fine because of your late payment. I said well, I only have money for the payment. I don't have money for the fine. She said well, we're sorry but we can't reinstate you until you've paid the fine and the dues. I said, but you don't understand, I don't have the money to pay the fine and I can't get the money if I not working. Well, she said, I guess that's your problem because you've got to pay the fine before we can let you work. And so we

argued over it for awhile. And she won. And so I was unable to work because I didn't have the money to pay the dues and the fine that had been levied. So our debts began to pile up. And for the first time in my life I got a letter that said, you know, your payment is past due. I had always felt that I had wanted to honor God by always making payment on time. To be very careful with finances. That I not put God in a bad light. You know he's a preacher. He doesn't pay his bills. So I was very careful about that. I've always sought to be. For the first time, I got a letter that said your payment is past due. I was so troubled by it. I woke up at four in the morning. I couldn't sleep. All I could think about is all of these bills that I owe. And I don't have a cent to pay them. I don't have any money. What am I going to do? And my mind was turned on. I couldn't sleep. So I just carefully rolled out of bed so I wouldn't wake up Kay. And I went out to the living room. I got out all of the bills. I totaled all of them up. It came to \$416. And I sat there, discouraged, dejected. Alpha Beta market wanted me to go into managership. They had offered me to train for managership. They said you won't have to belong to the union. Claude Edwards, the president of Alpha Beta was once a minister. And I had found favor with the men of Alpha Beta. I still see some of them who were my bosses in times past. We have a great relationship. They respected my faith in Christ and my diligence in work. They wanted to move me into management. So I thought, well, I guess this is it. I just can't support the family and be a minister. So I'll go to work for Alpha Beta. I'll go into management. And I'll support the church. Maybe I can teach a Bible class and you know, I'll be a good Christian business man. The sun came up. Kay and the kids woke up. She fixed breakfast. We went in and sat down at the breakfast table and looked at my beautiful children, three of them. And boy when you don't have money, you really feel the responsibility. You know, I'm a failure. Here's kids dependent on me for their food and everything else and oh my, you know. But you know that's all right. I'll go full time with Alpha Beta. The one thing that they required is that I give up the idea of the ministry because they didn't want me to be divided in loyalties. The phone rang. I answered it. They said, Chuck how are you doing? I said, oh great. How about you? They said oh, we are doing fine. We talked for a little bit. They said, well, yesterday afternoon we placed a check in the mail for you. We sent it special delivery, air mail, so it should be coming sometime today. So we just wanted you to be watching for it. I said, oh, praise the Lord, that's wonderful! And then they said, it's for four hundred and twenty five dollars. When I hung up, I grabbed Kay and waltzed her around the kitchen. I mean. You talk about Habbakuk said, leaping for joy and spinning. I mean that was me. Ooooh, I going to be able to pay off every debt and even have a little money left over. Oh, Lord! You're so wonderful. Oh, I love You! I was just so excited. After about an hour when I had cooled down a bit, the Lord spoke to my heart. He said, what are you so happy about? I said, Oh, Lord, you are too much. I can't believe. I'm going to be debt free. By the end of the day, I'll have everything caught up. Oh Lord, you are so great. He said, how do you know they are going to send it? I said, Lord, let's not kid about stuff like this. I know these people. I've known them for a long time. They are good friends. And they are people of their word. I trust them, Lord. They wouldn't call me and say something like that if they hadn't done it. I believe them, Lord. And I trust them. Then he hit me. He said, you had My word this morning when you woke up and four o'clock, sitting there adding up all your bills. I didn't see you jumping up and down and waltzing your wife around the kitchen. Down in the mouth, discouraged. And yet you have My word. Now you have the word of man and you are all excited. Who do you really trust more? Hey, what can you say? Oh, Lord, You know, I trust you, Lord. I've got Your word, thank You, Lord. No, no, He's got you. You're nailed. All you can do is repent. Forgive me, Lord, I wasn't trusting Your word. Had I been trusting your word, I would have been waltzing her around. I would have been rejoicing. Forgive me, Lord for not believing Your word.

Being strong in the faith, he gave glory to God. He was acting as though he had it though he didn't yet have it because God said it, he knew he would have it! And finally²¹ *and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.* Is God able? That's the question. Can God do it? Is God big enough? Is God strong enough? Does God have enough power? Does He have enough ability? Is God able? And when you focus on God and on His power and His ability. And that's what the disciples did when they were faced with some problems, they came and said, oh, Lord Thou are God. You created the heavens and the earth and everything that is in them. You see, now we are getting our problem in perspective. We've got a problem here, Lord. But first of all, we're depending on You. You're the Creator. You've created everything heaven and earth and everything within them. So, my little problem is even more insignificant when I see it in the light of the greatness and the glory and the power of God. So it comes in focusing. Not upon the issues. Not upon the

problems. Not upon the difficulty. Not upon the impossibility, but upon the promise of God and the ability of God to keep His promise. Now unto Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think.

²²And therefore (Because of his faith.) *"it was accounted to him for righteousness."* ²³Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, ²⁴but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, God, by our faith in Jesus Christ and our faith in Him who raised up Jesus from the dead, God through that faith and because of that faith will impute righteousness to us. Apart from any ordinances of the church. Apart from any works of rules and laws, God will account our faith for righteousness.

Speaking of Jesus Christ, ²⁵who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification. So it brings you to Romans 10:9-10. That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. God's word.

Now, we are always faced with, "Will I believe God's word or not?" You see God says one thing and Satan comes along and says another. And Satan will seek to put you under condemnation. He'll say, you are a rotten sinner. You have failed so many times. You have no right to ask God for His help. You have no right to come to God. Look how many times, you've failed Him. You might just as well forget it. God's not going to forgive you. And am I going to believe Satan? Or am I going to believe God? Who said if I'll just confess that Jesus Christ is Lord and believe in my heart that God raised Him from the dead, I will be saved! That God will impute righteousness to me apart from my failings. God justifies the ungodly!

God said to Adam, "In the day you eat of that fruit, you will surely die." Satan said, "You won't die." Now Eve is either going to believe God's word or Satan's word. Satan is always contradicting what God has said. Oh, the promises of God, you can't believe that. And so the issue becomes, will I believe what God has said or will I listen to Satan and doubt the promises of God? And remain in condemnation, remain under that sense of guilt and unworthiness. Or will I just trust God and rejoice that God has given me his word. That I stand before Him, righteous, pure, holy. God sees me, complete in Christ Jesus, in the righteousness of Christ, which God has imputed to me through my faith and trust in Jesus. Great position! Because it is solid! It is sure! It doesn't change with my changing. It doesn't vary with my varying. It doesn't waver with my wavering. My relationship with God is certain! It is sure. It's established because it isn't predicated upon something so weak as me and my works! But it's predicated upon the work that Jesus Christ has wrought for me! God is resting in the finished work of Jesus Christ. We need also to rest in the finished work of Jesus Christ. To Him who worketh not but believes, God has imputed His faith for righteousness.

Father, we thank You for this wonderful position that we have in Christ Jesus. Oh, Lord how blessed we are. And how we thank You, Lord, for Your promises that You've given to us. Exceeding rich and precious promises whereby we become partakers of the Divine nature. And so now, Lord, fulfill in us Your Word. And Lord, help us to stand fast in that liberty wherein Christ has set us free that we would not be entangled again in rules and regulation as a basis for our righteous standing, but we will stand in the finished work of Jesus, who has paid it all. In His name we pray. Amen.