

Building on the Foundation

Chapter 6

In the 10th chapter of Romans, Paul lays out a general context that there is a righteousness which is by faith and no longer by our own works. A righteousness that is by faith in God's provision. That is how we partake of the seventh day. That is how we enter into blessing and sanctification. We can receive an enlightenment by the influence of the Holy Spirit, we can have a revelation from God and we can see the kingdom, but we cannot really be changed from being earthy until we enter into the kingdom. This is something that we only can do willingly. God, although all powerful, will not force his purpose on mankind. On that basis, we are going to take a look in Romans the 4th chapter.

We have the story of Abraham in the book of Genesis and we have many references by Paul to Abraham's story for our benefit. Let's look at Romans the 4th chapter, reading from the 1st verse through the 10th verse. What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? For we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. How was it then reckoned? When he was in circumcision or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.

We have here a story that Paul wants to use from Abraham's experience to illustrate the process in which God desires to deal with all mankind. Paul quotes David's observation of God's blessings. Paul writes of the blessedness of any man unto whom God imputes righteousness without works. Here is evidence of a righteousness not established by the law because the righteousness of the law is based on your works. The law says if you keep the law, then you're righteous; if you violate it, then you're unrighteous. But David, although living under the law, understood that in God there is a blessedness that God does not impute unrighteousness to man. Both in the 6th verse and in the 8th verse, he talks about a man who is blessed in two ways. In the 8th verse, it says, Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. This word "impute" means hold man accountable, so we can reread that verse and it says, Blessed is the man to whom

the Lord will not hold sin accountable. In the 6th verse, it says, Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will account righteousness, and it's done by trust. This means that God's plan includes giving to man a righteousness which is not and cannot be earned, and that requires having set aside his sin.

Trust is the operating principle of those who have faith, so I want to take a look at what the significant difference is between trust and the law. When God gave Israel the law through Moses, he said if you do these things you shall live. When Moses came off the mountain with the tablets and read them to the children of Israel, they responded to Moses's reading by saying, All that God has said will we do. So, the righteousness which is of the law is based on performance; it's based on works. But the righteousness which is of God is not based on our performance; it's based on God's performance. When we accept Christ as our offering, we have a righteousness that is accounted to us by trust, so we experience in a very real way the blessedness that David referred to.

Abraham received this benefit in his relationship with God without performing anything but just trusting God. Abraham had not yet been circumcised. The first thing is that he blesses and the second thing is that he sanctifies the seventh day. Now, we are looking here at Paul teaching with Abraham's experience and David's witness concerning blessedness. This is the blessedness that is referred to in Genesis when it said God blessed and sanctified the seventh day. We have already recognized that the seventh day is Christ and that God is wanting to draw all things that he created into Christ. The benefit of that relationship in Christ is that there is blessing and sanctification available. The requirement for this blessedness was not works but to be joined to God's working by our faith.

That makes being joined to God properly a very important thing to our experience of the seventh day. We join him by ceasing from our works. It says that he ceased from his works and we need to do the same. What happens when we are in a right standing with God is we join ourselves to him and his work instead of having to work ourselves. The same faith that brought blessing also brings the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. When we're established in our own works, we're not being changed. We are actually being strengthened in that natural man. We might change our behavior, we might change how we look to others, but we cannot change what we are.

If we really have a clear vision of what God is seeking in this hour, we would see God is not just looking for people to be good, God is not just looking for people to be saved – he certainly is interested in people being saved – but he is not just looking

for that. He is looking for people that will give themselves to the work of God in their lives, so they're actually changed as to what their heart desires.

The exhortation is if you are Christ, if you belong to Christ, then set your affections upon things that are not on the earth. The real need that the world has is not just to be saved, but what the world really needs is a testimony of saviors. The world does not believe what it cannot see, so the job of us who do trust is to bring forward a manifestation of the work that God has performed in our lives. This is not something we can receive by it being given to us on our account; it cannot be done by receiving the benefit of what another has done for us. There is no way that our feet can be on the path of sanctification without the sacrifice that Jesus made for us. It is necessary and it is foundational, but there is more than just that that God is looking for. The benefit of what he did for us is the blessedness that David talked about and we receive the benefit of it as a gift, but the sense of sanctification is something we have to offer ourselves for God to do to us. It is still the provision of God, but it isn't something that is done for us. It is something that is done in us.

This is the same kingdom principle we mentioned earlier when Jesus said, Unless you're born again, you cannot see the kingdom of God. We benefit by the sacrifice that is made for us by Jesus, but Jesus did not leave our responsibility to the kingdom of God at just seeing it. He didn't say seeing the kingdom is enough, but when we enter into it, it's because we become subject to the laws of that kingdom. We now hold ourselves accountable to a different way of living. Being righteous, God can progress from that foundation to sanctify us so that we can actually be what Matthew 5:48 says when it says, Be ye therefore perfect even as your father which is in heaven is perfect.

Reading Romans 4 in the 22nd and 23rd verses, speaking of Abraham, Therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him but for us also. Paul was using Abraham's experience to teach us our responsibilities to the Lord, that it worked for Abraham by faith, and the way it works for us is also by faith. In the first four verses of Romans 10, we read, Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believes. What Paul is saying here is that we who have been justified by Christ have come to the end of performance, that Christ is the end of the law. The righteousness now of Christ is not of the law but of faith.