

Message: Romans 4:9-25

Message Date: October 5, 2025

Summary of the Sermon:

What does it truly mean to be blessed? Romans 4 takes us on a journey through the life of Abraham to answer that very question, and the answer might surprise us. The blessedness Paul describes is not reserved for a select group of people who have done everything right or checked every religious box. It is the blessedness of having our sins completely removed, not merely covered, and having the full righteousness of God credited to our account. The key that unlocks this blessedness is faith, and faith alone. Abraham received this gift while he was uncircumcised, meaning before any religious rite or work had been performed. This was not an accident. God deliberately arranged the timeline of Abraham's life to make an unmistakable point: salvation has always been about faith, from the very beginning. Whether we come from a religious background or none at all, whether we feel like we have a long history with God or are just beginning to explore who he is, the door is open to us equally. That is not a lowering of the standard. It is the grace of God meeting us exactly where we are and doing for us what we could never do for ourselves.

Title: Salvation by Faith Alone: The Legacy of Abraham and the Promise for All People

Sermon Summary:

Drawing from Romans 4:7-25, this sermon establishes that salvation by faith has always been God's singular design for all of humanity, regardless of ethnic background, religious heritage, or personal achievement. Using Abraham as the defining example, the pastor demonstrates that righteousness was credited to Abraham before he was circumcised, proving that no external religious rite or human work contributes to salvation. The sermon traces Paul's systematic argument through the book of Romans, showing how God first condemns all people, both Jew and Gentile, as sinners deserving of wrath, and then opens the door of salvation equally to all through faith in Jesus Christ. A secondary lesson emerges from Abraham's failure with Hagar, teaching that believers must not only pursue the right outcome but must pursue it through God's prescribed means. The sermon closes with an emphasis on the certainty and security of salvation grounded in faith, not works, and the full crediting of Christ's righteousness to every believer's account.

Key Points:

- Salvation by faith has always been God's method, predating the Mosaic Law and the rite of circumcision, as demonstrated by Abraham being justified before he was circumcised
- The blessedness of forgiveness and salvation is available to all people, both Jews and Gentiles, without distinction of background or religious heritage
- No work of any kind, including circumcision, baptism, church attendance, or moral goodness, contributes to salvation; faith alone in Christ alone is the basis
- Abraham serves as the father of faith for all believers because he demonstrated trust in God's promise before any formal religious system existed
- The Law of Moses was never intended to save anyone; its purpose was to reveal sin, declare the sinner deserving of wrath, and point humanity toward a coming Savior
- God's promise of salvation is certain and secure because it rests on Christ's finished work, not on human performance
- Believers must do the right thing the right way; pursuing godly ends through ungodly means is still disobedience, as illustrated by Abraham's choice to conceive Ishmael through Hagar

- Every person's sin, not any single ethnic or political group, is responsible for placing Christ on the cross; he was delivered up because of our offenses
- The righteousness of Christ is fully credited to the account of every person who places faith in him, with all sin removed and all condemnation lifted

Scripture Reference:

- Romans 4:7-25, with supporting references to:
- Romans 1:1-7
- Romans 1:13
- Romans 1:16
- Romans 2:1
- Romans 2:12
- Romans 2:15
- Romans 3:22
- Romans 3:29
- Galatians 3
- Genesis 15
- and Psalm 32:1-2

Stories:

- Abraham's justification before circumcision: God credited righteousness to Abraham through faith in Genesis 15, approximately 13 to 14 years before the sign of circumcision was given, establishing that no religious rite produces salvation
- Abraham and Hagar: Despite genuinely believing God's promise of a son, Abraham yielded to Sarah's suggestion to conceive a child through her maidservant Hagar, producing Ishmael through an act of fleshly impatience rather than faithful waiting; this decision is identified as the root of the ongoing conflict in the Middle East and serves as a warning against pursuing God's purposes through man's methods
- The young ruler calling Jesus good: Referenced briefly to illustrate that Jesus alone is truly good and that no human being meets God's standard of goodness apart from Christ
- The illustration of road signs and navigation: Used to explain the purpose of circumcision as a sign pointing toward a destination, namely the cutting away of trust in one's own flesh and the embrace of faith in God alone

Discussion Questions:

Day 1:

The sermon emphasizes that salvation is available to all people regardless of background or heritage — how does this truth challenge any subtle assumptions you may hold about who is or is not worthy of hearing the gospel?

Abraham believed God's promise yet still took matters into his own hands with Hagar — in what areas of your own life are you tempted to trust God in principle while still trying to engineer the outcome yourself?

Day 2:

The pastor draws a distinction between doing the right thing the right way versus doing the right thing the wrong way — can you think of a time when good intentions led you to pursue a godly goal through ungodly means, and what did you learn from it?

Romans 4 describes righteousness being credited to Abraham's account purely on the basis of faith — how does the reality of imputed righteousness change the way you view your standing before God on your worst days?

Day 3:

The sermon points out that circumcision was given as a sign after Abraham was already declared righteous, not before — what signs or rituals do people in your circles sometimes confuse with the means of salvation itself?

The pastor describes the certainty of salvation as one of its greatest gifts, saying it is based on Jesus and not on us — how does the assurance of your salvation practically affect the boldness with which you share your faith?

Day 4:

Paul uses Abraham as the father of faith for both Jews and Gentiles, demonstrating that God has always intended to save all nations — how should this universal scope of the gospel shape the way your church engages with its surrounding community?

The sermon notes that the law's purpose is to bury us in the weight of our sin and point us to a Savior — how do you balance presenting the seriousness of sin to others without it becoming a barrier rather than a bridge to the gospel?

Day 5:

The pastor observes that there are no spiritual grandchildren in the faith, meaning each person must come to God individually — how does this truth inform the way you pray for and invest in the spiritual lives of your family members?

The sermon closes by noting that it was our offenses that delivered Jesus to the cross — how does personally owning your role in the necessity of Christ's death deepen your gratitude and reshape how you live in response to his sacrifice?

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

This Week, Consider the Following:

1. **Examine what you are trusting in.** Take an honest look at your own heart. Are there any practices, habits, or personal qualities you are quietly relying on to feel secure before God — beyond faith in Jesus alone? Bring those before the Lord in prayer and ask him to reorient your trust.
2. **Reflect on the certainty of your salvation.** Because salvation is by faith in Christ and not by your performance, you can be fully assured of it. Spend time this week meditating on what it means that God has credited the full righteousness of Jesus to your account. Let that truth shape how you think, speak, and live.
3. **Identify someone in your life you may have written off.** The sermon reminded us that God desires to save all people — no exceptions. Is there someone you have quietly assumed is beyond reach or uninterested in the gospel? Commit to praying for that person this week and look for an opportunity to share the good news with them.
4. **Check your methods, not just your motives.** Think about an area of your life where you are pursuing something good — a ministry goal, a relationship, a personal conviction. Ask yourself honestly whether you are pursuing it God's way or whether you are cutting corners and justifying it because the goal seems right.
5. **Memorize or meditate on Romans 4:20-21.** Abraham "did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform." Let this be an encouragement to you wherever you are waiting on God to act.