

**Intro:**

In our last message, we emphasized the phrase in Rm 4.5, ‘him who justifies the ungodly’. This remarkable state of affairs is a true miracle, that God would take men who have no native regard for him, make a promise to them through the proclamation of the work of his Son as their Saviour from sin and, based on their faith alone, declaring them to be righteous.

This is the theme we are proving in Romans 4. We are primarily doing it through what one commentator calls “an exposition of Genesis 15.6.” We find Paul quoting or alluding to this statement about Abraham in every paragraph of Romans 4.

In today’s passage, Paul is going to add another witness to bolster the Scriptural authority for his main proposition: *the just shall live by faith alone*. That witness is David.

Paul is going to say that David’s case speaks of the blessedness of a man on whom God has reckoned righteousness.

From this idea comes the title for this message:

*The Blessed Man*

We are going to find in this passage that there is a negative aspect to justification by faith which, combined with the positive, becomes the great blessedness of the blessed man.

But more than that, it will prove Paul’s point: justification by faith is apart from works – you can’t do anything to achieve justification by faith, you can’t do anything to achieve the blessedness of the blessed man: you just simply have to trust God for it.

Read Rm 4.1-8, text 6-8

**Proposition:** The greatest blessing a man can have is the blessing discovered by both Abraham and David, the blessedness of imputed righteousness without works.

**I. David’s blessed state (6)**

A. The theme of our passage

1. Noun ‘the blessedness of...’ (6)
2. Adjective ‘blessed are...’ (7)
3. Noun ‘blessed is...’ (8)

B. The personal possession of this blessedness (Ps 32)

1. The quoted section stating the blessedness that belongs to such a man (1-2)
2. The personalized section (3-7)
  - a. "I" kept silent about my sins: no blessedness (3-4)
  - b. "I" confessed my sin: blessedness (5)
  - c. You are "my" hiding place (6-7)
3. The exhortative [teaching] section (8-11)
  - a. God will instruct "you" (8)
  - b. Don't be stubborn (9)
  - c. Remember the blessings in the Lord (10)
  - d. Be glad in the Lord all who are upright in heart (11)

David speaks of a general condition, and then shows how he found it.

David's finding it becomes instructive to us: by confession comes imputation.

C. Offered as a witness: 'even as'

1. David's experience is the same as Abraham's
2. David speaks of the blessedness of imputed righteousness
  - a. Remember that "imputed" is a key word in this chapter

The word occurs in Rm 4.3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 22, 23, 24

- b. The word is a key link between Moses (Gen 15.6) and David (Ps 32.2) [Rabbinical method of exegesis, according to Moo.]
3. David speaks of imputation 'without works'

"David is not a new illustration of this doctrine, but a new witness to it."<sup>1</sup>

- a. According to Moses, righteousness is credited [imputed] to Abraham by faith (3)

<sup>1</sup> James Denney, "St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans" in *The Expositor's Greek Testament*, W. Robertson Nicoll, ed., p. 616.

- b. According to Paul, faith is not a work (5)
- c. According to David, imputation without works makes a man blessed (6)

We see, then, first of all, that David sees the blessedness of imputed righteousness.

In this, Paul says, David agrees with Moses who speaks of Abraham's imputed righteousness.

## II. David's different circumstances (7)

A. Abraham is described in terms of that which he does not have; David in terms of what he has done

### 1. Gen 15.1-3

- a. I have no heir
- b. I have no land

Abraham is a man with an empty future.

### 2. Ps 32.1-2

- a. I have lawless deeds
- b. I have sins [falling short; missing the mark]

David is a man with a doomed future.

B. Abraham is a man who has turned toward God out of paganism; David is a man who has indulged the flesh after following God

### 1. Abraham came from Ur

- a. A place where men worshipped the moon (among others)
- b. A father who followed false gods (Josh 24.2)
- c. A man who heard God's call and obeyed (Gen 12.1ff.)

Abram's justification likely occurred before Gen 15.6; the fact of it is declared in Gen 15.6.

### 2. David came from Bethlehem

- a. Descended of Boaz and Ruth
- b. From a family and in a land of YHWH worshippers

- c. A man who committed adultery and murder [pre-meditated and long unconfessed]

David is a justified man – God has chosen to use him to write inspired Scripture; God set him on the throne of Israel; God has given him the Davidic Covenant (2 Sa 7).

David's circumstances are different, but in them God gives him a full understanding of what justification means – and it makes him a blessed man.

### III. David's understanding fills out the fulness of justification (8)

- A. Three descriptions of the blessed man's blessed state

1. Iniquities forgiven (sent away, left alone)

“Forgiveness is more than mere remitting of penalty. Even a hardhearted judge might remit a man's fine if it were paid by someone else, but forgiveness involves the heart of the forgiver. God's forgiveness is the going forth of God's infinite tenderness toward the object of His mercy. It is God folding the sinner, as the returning prodigal was folded, to His bosom.”<sup>2</sup>

2. Sins covered

In the ten plagues, the plague of frogs saw frogs 'cover' the land (Ex 8.6). In the Exodus, the pillar of cloud 'covered' the tabernacle (Nm 9.16).

In the same way, sins are 'covered' – 'blotted out so they cannot be seen.'

3. Sin not imputed

a. Justification = righteousness of Jesus Christ credited to my account

b. Justification = sins of me not credited to my account

We will come back to this idea...

<sup>2</sup> William R. Newell, *Romans: verse by verse*, p. 136.

**B. The contrast of David's witness with Abraham's**

## 1. Abraham's witness:

- a. God imputes righteousness without works to the ungodly (Rm 4.3-5)
- b. Emphasis is on faith and 'un-work'

## 2. David's witness:

- a. Emphasis: God chooses not to impute sin. (Rm 4.7-8)
- b. David is guilty of grievous sin (adultery, murder)
- c. God did not impute that to him (God doesn't charge it to his account)

It is not stated in our text, but where is David's sin actually imputed? To Christ.

Where is your sin imputed? To Christ.

- Christ's account is charged with the guilt and penalty of your sin!
- Your account is charged with the beauty and righteousness of Christ!

**C. The thing 'not imputed' [sin] is the flip-side of the thing actually imputed [righteousness]**

1. This is not just true of David – he is a witness to this truth
2. This is true of everyone who doesn't work, but believes

**Conclusion:**

What could make you happier?

Suppose you are some impoverished person in Haiti, trying to get by on \$300 per year. Life is very uncertain. You have very little in this world for the happiness of this world. But you find Christ! You find your sin not imputed to you! You find Christ's righteousness instead imputed to you! What is the effect on your soul? What does it mean for you if your lot never improves and you die in absolute poverty and filth? It means you stand shoulder to shoulder with your brethren in heaven, rejoicing forever that your sins are not imputed to you but the righteousness of Christ is.

Suppose you are a young man with dreams of success in our culture. Or a young woman with dreams of a family and the happy life of a Christian home, even. Is that where your blessedness and happiness ultimately lies, even if you achieve them? Where does the Bible say true happiness lies?

- Read the Beatitudes (Mt 5.1-12)
- Read Psalm 1

Do we really believe this?

Suppose God were to strip this nation bare. I mean bare. Suppose we were suddenly reduced to third world status. Would you still worship God and serve God?

Would you be blessed?