

Intro:

Last week we compared our faith with the faith of Abraham. One phrase in our text last week leads us into this week's message. It is found in Rm 4.24:

"But for us also..."

- The blessings given to Abraham are *for us also*.
- The promises given to Abraham are *for us also*.
- The righteousness given to Abraham is *for us also*.

Who is included in the 'us'?

'... to the ones believing ...'

Those included in the blessings of saving faith are those who believe in God and in his Christ, Jesus Christ our Lord.

What gives Jesus Christ this power to save men from sins by their faith in him?

That brings us to our text today, Rm 4.25.

Read Rm 4.25

"This verse is a comprehensive statement of the Gospel."¹

This is one of those passages that succinctly states the gospel. It is probably one of the shortest summaries of the gospel we have in the Bible, just 12 words in the original Greek.

The significance of our passage, however, lies not just in the fact that it is a summary statement of the gospel, but in the particular way in which it summarizes the gospel.

When we talk about saving faith, what do we usually mean is the object of our faith? In other words, what do we believe *in* for salvation?

Jesus Christ, or the work of Christ – that is usually what we say is the object of saving faith.

Of course, this is exactly right, but our passage speaks of the same thing, but says it in a different way. Let's read our passage and you tell me what the difference is:

Read 4.23-25 [text v. 25]

Did you catch the difference? What, or who, are we said to believe in?

¹ Charles Hodge, *Romans*, p. 125.

Our passage says we believe in God. It describes the work done to obtain our salvation as God's work.

It is this angle on the work of salvation that I want to focus on today.

Our message today is entitled:

God's Gospel

I want to impress on your minds the full meaning of what God did in Christ to save us from our sins.

Proposition: Saving faith abandons one's self to the God who worked to save you through Christ.

I. The fact of God's working

A. We are more familiar with the notion of Christ working in salvation

1. Gal 2.20

^{KJV} **Gal 2.20** I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

2. Titus 2.14

^{KJV} **Titus 2.14** Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

3. Eph 5.2

^{KJV} **Eph 5.2** And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.

4. Mt 20.28

^{KJV} **Mt 20.28** Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

5. and others...

B. Our passage declares that God worked in the 'cross event'

1. Two passive verbs

a. Subject: 'who', *i.e.*, Jesus Christ

- b. First action: 'was delivered' – passive
 - c. Second action: 'was raised' – passive
 - d. Passive verbs mean the subject receives the action
 - 1) Active: Subject acts 'I hit', 'You throw', 'He delivers over'
 - 2) Passive: 'I was hit', 'you were thrown', 'He was delivered over', 'He was raised up'
 - e. In other words, someone else is doing the acting: God did these things to Christ
2. Similar statements in other passages
- a. Rm 8.32

^{KJV} **Rm 8.32** He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

- b. 1 Th 1.10

^{KJV} **1 Th 1.10** And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, *even* Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.

I don't want to belabor this, but I want you to take note of this aspect of the work of salvation: there is a sense in which we have to say that God is the one working.

II. The twin activities of God's working

A. The work of delivering over because of sin

- 1. The word here refers to an act of 'delivering over' or 'betrayal into the hands of another'
 - a. Jesus spoke of this prior to his arrest and crucifixion

^{KJV} **Mt 17.22** And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men:

^{KJV} **Mt 26.2** Ye know that after two days is *the feast* of the passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified.

- b. When we think of delivering Christ over, who do we think of?
Judas
- c. But the Scripture uses this language of God himself: Jesus was delivered over by God (Rm 4.25)

Why did God do that?

2. The cause is our sin ('offences')

- a. This deliverance is 'on account of' or 'because of' our sins
- b. The word for sins here has a unique 'word picture' of what sin is
 - 1) When we quote Rm 3.23, we are using a word that has the image of 'falling short' or 'not measuring up'
 - a) God's standard is perfection
 - b) Man fails to make the standard

What do you think of when you think of this word picture? Do you think of military height requirements? [Do they still have such things?]

- The standard is 5 ft 5 inches at minimum, let's say
- A guy applies who is 5 ft 4 in... he fails to measure up, he doesn't meet the standard – he's rejected

Is that the way this word picture appears to your mind when you think of sin? 'I just don't quite measure up, I'm an inch or two short.'

- I think most people think of their sin that way: "Well, I'm not *perfect* ..." But "I'm not that bad either..." Right?

- 2) Our word in this passage gives a different word picture
 - a) Root means 'to fall'
 - b) Adds a preposition that gives the meaning 'to fall along side'

- c) So the picture of sin here is a terrible weakness that doesn't allow you to stand
 - i) Falling down
 - ii) Collapsing alongside the way
 - iii) Collapsing out of the way
- d) But I want you to see the strength of the word and the meaning of sin
 - i) It is like you are walking along a narrow road on a cliff side
 - ii) You sin – your weakness is to take that wrong step
 - iii) You fall over the cliff

By the way, that's how you miss the mark – you are at the bottom of the cliff
It's not that the standard is 5 ft 5 in and you are 5 ft 4 in – the standard is perfection and you are minus infinity!

- You've missed the mark all right.
- You are at the bottom of the cliff.

3. God's work in the 'cross event' is giving over Christ because of our sins
- a. God gives him over because we already given God over
 - b. God betrays his son for the sake of traitorous men
 - c. God hands Christ over to the hands of wicked men who slew him

When you realize that this is what your sin has done, you also realize why Christians have a hard time allowing the continuing presence of sin in their lives.

- You tell a lie – God betrayed his Son for that
- You covet something, you lust for something – God betrayed his Son for that

- You love the things of this world – God betrayed his Son for that

Do you get the picture?

As a Christian, do you like to see what you can get away with? Do you claim, 'that's not really a sin'? 'It's not so bad'? — How bad is sin?

Sin is so bad, God betrayed his Son for it.

B. The work of raising up because of righteousness

1. Remember the great 'but now' passage in Rm 3.21

- a. We all stand condemned before God as sinners (Rm 1-3)
- b. 'But now' *without-law* righteousness from God is revealed

How is it revealed?

- c. It is revealed in a resurrected and living Saviour

2. How it is that God's raising him up was on account of righteousness:

- a. God raising up His Son shows that God is satisfied with his death as a payment for sins – as a fair exchange for the righteousness he will give to men
 - 1) Where are we in our sin? At the bottom of the cliff
 - 2) God threw his Son over the cliff instead of us – and says he will give us his Son's righteousness
 - 3) If Jesus had not risen, how would we know God approved of that death as the sacrifice for sins?

God is satisfied with Christ's death, so he raised him up on account of righteousness – the righteousness he would give us.

- b. God raising up His Son secures the benefits of Christ's eternal life for our righteousness

- 1) Our sins threw Christ over the cliff
- 2) But now, raised up by God, he stands at the right hand of God and *intercedes* for us when we sin

Your sin is known by God.

Your Christ pleads for you and your sin.

We have a hymn by Charles Wesley that goes this way in the third verse:

Five bleeding wounds he bears,
Received on Calvary.
They pour effectual prayers;
They strongly plead for me.
'Forgive him, O, forgive,' they cry.
'Forgive him, O, forgive,' they cry,
'Nor let that ransomed sinner die.'

You have a living Saviour who pleads his blood for your sins because God raised up his Son on account of your need for righteousness.

III. Saving faith in God's working

- A. Our passage says that the example of God's declaration to Abraham was not for Abraham's sake alone
 - 1. Not for his sake only
 - 2. But for our sake also
- B. For our sake also – for 'us who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead'
 - 1. Our passage looks at the 'cross event' as the work of God
 - 2. It is faith in the God who worked these things out that will save you

Conclusion:

Do you believe in God?

Do you believe in His work by delivering over and then raising up his son?

Do you turn from sin in horror and walk with Christ in love and obedience as a result?