

Studies in Romans 1 - 8 (5)

Reading: Study 5 – Romans 4 v 18 – 5 v 5, 12, 18 - 21

In this second section of Romans (3 v 21 – 5 v 21) Paul deals with God's provision for man's need, salvation. He declares the righteousness of God, 'God's method of making bad men good', in the closing verses of chapter 3. In chapter 4 Paul brings to the reader's attention an illustration of the righteousness of God from the experience of Abraham. In the earlier part of the chapter he shows that Abraham was not justified by works, circumcision or law, but by faith.

4 v 18 – 25 The righteousness of God Illustrated – The Example of Abraham: v22 *"but was strong in faith And therefore it was counted unto him for righteousness"*

5 v 1 - 11 The Results of Justification: v1 *"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God"*

5 v 12 – 21 Jesus Christ and Adam Contrasted: v19 *"For as be one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."*

4 v 18 – 25 The righteousness of God Illustrated – The Example of Abraham

In v18 – 22 Paul highlights Abraham's faith and its result and in v23 – 25 the lesson for us.

v18 – 22 - The example of Abraham was one of great faith and it was his faith that led to v22 *"it was imputed to him for righteousness."* Faith is defined in Heb 11 v1 as *"the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."* This was the characteristic of Abraham v18 *"Who against hope believed in hope"*. Humanly speaking there was no hope of the promise of God being fulfilled. Abraham had *"considered"* i.e. noted accurately the hopelessness of the situation, but despite this he believed God v21 *"being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform."* Impossible as it seemed, he believed God - Matt 19 v 26 *"With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible."* It was his faith that was *"imputed to him for righteousness."*

v23 – 25 – The record of Abraham's faith in Genesis is not just a story from history v24 *"But for us also"* (compare Rom 15 v 4). There is a lesson for us in what is recorded, for the God who imputed righteousness to faithful Abraham can and will do the same for us v24 *"if we believe on him"*. The chapter ends with the statement of two great facts about the Lord Jesus 1. *"delivered for our offences"* and 2. *"raised again for our justification."* The death of the Lord Jesus satisfied God and therefore God raised him from among the dead.

5 v 1 - 11 The Results of Justification

In these verses Paul brings to our attention the benefits, the blessings of justification v1 *"Therefore being justified by faith, we have"* The death of the Lord Jesus propitiated, satisfied the demands of God, and we are declared righteous. From this v1 *"through our Lord Jesus Christ"* so much more has flowed to us. In v1 *"we have peace with God"* and in v2 *"we have access by faith"*. What a change; see v10 *"we were enemies"* and compare Eph 2 v 3.

In v2 we have the word *"rejoice"*, or 'let us rejoice', which has the meaning to boast or to glory. The justification that we have is an incentive to rejoice. The word is repeated in v3 *"we glory"* and v11 *"we also joy"*. We have an exhortation to rejoice concerning the past v11 for we have been reconciled, concerning the present v3 *"in tribulations"* and concerning the future v2 *"in hope of the glory of God."*

In v3 “*we rejoice in tribulation knowing that tribulation worketh patience*”. Patience, or endurance, has the idea of bearing up under pressure and this leads to experience. Experience means the effect of proving or approval and this leads to hope, the “*hope of the glory of God*”, the hope of Abraham (4 v 18). In v5 Paul introduces the love of God for the first time in his letter. The love of God is poured out in our hearts through “*the Holy Spirit which is given unto us*”; another result that follows justification.

When we read v6 – 8 we can not doubt that God loves us. The proof that God loves us is found in these verses v8 “*while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*” The love was all of God; his love was shown “*while we were yet sinners*” and it was at God’s appointed time. The outcome of the love of God, and the death of Christ; the result of justification is stated in v9 “*we shall be saved from wrath through him.*” (see also Rom 8 v 1).

At v10 Paul introduces another result of justification “*we were enemies, we were reconciled to God*”. Our justification cost the “*death of his Son*”, our present preservation and future glory is secured by the fact that He lives.

5 v 12 – 21 Jesus Christ and Adam Contrasted

In this section Paul is still considering the benefits of the death of the Lord Jesus, but now on a universal level rather than personal. The contrast is death through Adam, but life through Jesus Christ. The thrust of the argument is that as sin and death are universal because of Adam’s disobedience, so the offer of God’s righteousness is universal because of the obedience, the death, of the Lord Jesus. A summary is given in v19.

In v12 Adam is seen as the head of the human race. The historical record of Adam’s sin is found in Gen 3 and the result of his sin was death. Adam, as head of the race, sinned and as a result the principle, the nature of sin passed to all men, “*so death passed upon all men for that all have sinned.*”

v13 – 17 is a parenthesis as Paul expands on the subject of the universal nature of sin. The problem raised is that between Adam and Moses there was no law, no revealed command from God and “*sin is not imputed where there is no law.*” Yet despite this, although there was no disobedience of a command given by God, “*death reigned from Adam to Moses*”. As head of the human race, when Adam sinned and fell, the human race fell and the evidence is that all have sinned and all die – I Cor 15 v 22 “*For as in Adam all die*”.

In v15 – 17 the contrast seen in the Lord Jesus is shown. The Lord Jesus is the head of a new kind of humanity – see 1 Cor 15 v 45 – 49. Under Adam v15 “*through the offence of one many be dead*”, but under the Lord Jesus, as a result of His one act of obedience justification is declared “*of many offences*”.

In v18 – 21 the argument commenced at v12 is taken up again. The wonderful contrast to sin and death that came into the world as a result of Adam’s disobedience is “*justification of life*” through the Lord Jesus. There are two linked contrasts highlighted in these verses 1. v18 – with Adam it was an offence that brought judgement upon all, but with the Lord Jesus it is one act of righteousness that brought the gift “*unto justification of life*”. 2. v19 – it was Adam’s disobedience that made many sinners, but it was the obedience of the Lord Jesus that “*many be made righteous.*”

In v20 the subject of the law is again introduced. One of the purposes of the law was to reveal the character of sin (see chap 7). However, if sin abounded “*grace did much more abound.*” The chapter finishes with another contrast, “*sin reigned unto death ... grace unto eternal life*”.