

## 11. Learning Why Abraham and David Were Justified

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain what justification means. We saw that the Father declared us righteous at the moment that we placed our faith in Christ. At that moment, the righteousness of Christ was placed on us. As a result, as the Father looks at each Christian, the Father sees the righteousness of Christ instead of our sins. In fact, our sins have been blotted out and the Father has promised that He will remember them no more. In our topic today, we will see how to help our children understand why Abraham and David were justified and made righteous in the sight of the Father.

Romans 4:1-4 says, “What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has *something* to boast about, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? ‘Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.’ Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt.” In these verses, we learn some very important lessons about the reason that Abraham was justified.

Abraham gives us an example of a man who was justified totally by faith and not by works. He was the father of the nation of Israel. However, he is also the father of faith for both Jews and Gentiles because of the fact that his life provided a model of faith for all people through the Word of God. The faith of Abraham is described in detail in Hebrews 11:8-19. In Hebrews 11:8, we read, “By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.” Here, we see that Abraham responded to the call of God by faith, even though he did not know where he was going.

Hebrews 11:9-10 gives us a second example of the faith of Abraham. Those verses say, “By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as *in* a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God.” Even though Abraham lived in the land that God had promised to Abraham and his descendants, Abraham did not have his focus on that land. Instead, these verses tell us that Abraham was waiting for that eternal city, “which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God”. Here, we see that the faith of Abraham was based on an eternal focus, instead of a worldly focus. We also want to help our children develop an eternal focus instead of a worldly focus.

In addition to the faith of Abraham, we also see the faith of his wife. Hebrews 11:11-12 says, “By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised. Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born *as many* as the stars of the sky in multitude--innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore.” God blessed the faith of Abraham and Sarah by giving them a son long past the time of childbearing because they believed the promise of God. God caused that son to become the father of an innumerable number of descendants.

Another example of the faith of Abraham is given in Hebrews 11:13-16 where we read, “These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced *them* and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For those who

say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. And truly if they had called to mind that *country* from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly *country*. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.” The faith of Abraham caused him to realize that he was just a stranger and pilgrim while he was on this earth because of the fact that his real home was an eternal home.

One final example of the faith of Abraham in Hebrews is given in Hebrews 11:17-19 where we read, “By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten *son*, of whom it was said, ‘In Isaac your seed shall be called,’ concluding that God *was* able to raise *him* up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.” Abraham showed his faith when he was willing to offer Isaac to the Lord as a sacrifice because he had confidence that God was able to raise Isaac from the dead. All of these examples of faith made it clear that Abraham did what he did because of faith in the promises of God.

That faith is important to understand because Romans 4:2 says, “For if Abraham was justified by works, he has *something* to boast about, but not before God.” Abraham did not boast. Instead, he believed God. Genesis 15:6 says, “And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.” The word that is translated “accounted” means *to put something to the account of another*. It is used in nine verses in Romans 4. Because Abraham believed the promises of God, God chose to put righteousness to the account of Abraham.

This meant that Abraham had righteousness put to his account apart from any works. If Abraham would have worked to receive that righteousness, that righteousness would have been the wages for his works. However, Abraham did not do any works. Instead, Abraham just believed the promises of God and God chose to put that faith to the account of Abraham as righteousness.

In the same way, all of us have righteousness put to our account by the Lord. Romans 4:5 says, “But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness.” We all realize that we were ungodly. We left God out of our lives and thinking until the day came when the Father drew us to Christ. Before that time, we had done no works that were pleasing to God because of the fact that we were separated from God. When the Father drew us to Christ and we placed our faith in the fact that Christ had paid the penalty for our sins, the Father justified us. He put that faith to our account as righteousness and placed the righteousness of Christ on us.

God also did the same thing for David in the Old Testament. Romans 4:6-8 says, “Just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works: ‘Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin.’” David knew the awfulness of the sin in his own life. In 2 Samuel 11, we read how David committed adultery with Bathsheba and then had her husband killed on the battlefield to try and cover his own sin. In Psalm 51, we see that when David repented of his sins, he confessed his sin to the Lord and asked the Lord to wash him thoroughly

from his sin. Then, in Psalm 32, David wrote about the blessing of being forgiven by the Lord.

Psalm 32:1-2 says, “Blessed *is he whose* transgression *is* forgiven, *whose sin is* covered. Blessed *is* the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit *there is* no deceit.” These are the verses that are quoted here in Romans 4. David knew the awfulness of his sin but he experienced the blessing that comes when those sins are forgiven. David knew that he had committed sin and that his sin should have been put to his account. Instead, because he had come to God in repentance, the Lord put righteousness to his account instead. David knew that he did not deserve that righteousness on his account because he knew that his works were very sinful.

David knew that his deeds or actions were lawless actions and violated the commandments of God. However, in Psalm 51 David prayed and asked the Lord to forgive him for his lawless deeds. As a result, when David later wrote Psalm 32, he was very thankful for the fact that the Lord had forgiven his lawless deeds. David fully understood that his sins were covered by God. Here, we see that he understood the fact that God covered sin until Christ would come to take away sin. David knew and understood the blessing of forgiveness.

At the same time, David also knew and understood the blessing of not having his sins put to his account. He also understood the blessing of a human spirit that was in a right relationship to the Holy Spirit. From the moment that David had sinned, he knew that he was guilty. One part of our human spirit is our conscience. In Psalm 32:3-4, David tells how he felt within himself when he knew that he had unconfessed sin. Those verses say, “When I kept silent, my bones grew old through my groaning all the day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; my vitality was turned into the drought of summer. Selah.” Here, we see that David experienced several months of total misery in his spirit, because of the sin that was in his life. However, when David confessed his sin, his human spirit was once again able to enjoy true fellowship with the Holy Spirit because there was no deceit in his life that made that fellowship impossible.

God used what had to be one of the worst experiences in the life of David to point out the fact that David knew that he had been justified and declared righteous in the sight of God in spite of his sinful works. God wants us to understand that He puts righteousness to our account without any works on our part. He wants us to help our children understand this same thing. As we help our children understand God recognized the faith of both Abraham and David and put that faith to their accounts as righteousness, it will help our children understand that there are no works that anyone can do to even try to earn their salvation. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children realize that we are justified by faith and that God has put righteousness to our accounts because of His love.