

# Romans 5 (Part 1)

by Ron Bailey

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*The gospel is the power of God to salvation, and it's the effective solution to man's condition, but it requires understanding the universality of sin, justification by faith, and the propitiation of God's anger on the cross.*

**Duration:** 49:20

**Topics:** "Gods Grace", "Original Sin"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of understanding the full gospel, which includes the universality of sin, redemption through the blood of Christ, and regeneration by the Holy Spirit. The basis of our acceptance with God is not our own righteousness, but entirely upon grace. The preacher refers to Romans chapter 5, where the phrase 'much more' is mentioned multiple times, highlighting the abundance of God's grace. The sermon also discusses how Paul, in Romans chapters 1-3, presents a case against the entire human race, stating that all have sinned and fallen short of God's glory. The preacher emphasizes the need to recognize the seriousness of our condition and the basis of God's ability to save us through the death of his son.

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## Transcript

It's wonderful to be back with you. Thank you for that vague welcome. I always feel very welcome here, almost welcome.

And it really is good to be with you. My favourite Billy Bray story links much with what Mary was saying. There's a story told about a time when Billy Bray was relying on God alone for the supply of all his needs.

And at this particular time, he was hungry, and his whole family were hungry. And they had nothing to put on the table. And the local butcher, who was a militant atheist, came to know that Billy Bray had no food.

So he went to the trouble of climbing onto the roof of Billy Bray's house and lowering down the chimney a leg of lamb on a rope. A rope appeared down inside Billy Bray's home. The butcher shouted down the chimney, Here are Billy Bray, the devil's brought thee some meat.

And Billy Bray untied it. And he shouted back at the chimney, The devil may have brought it, but the Lord sent it. It's so with many of our experiences in life.

It is so with many of our experiences in life. Don't be afraid to untie it, the Lord sent it. Margaret sent her love, she can't be with you today, she's not very well.

But sadly she would have loved to have been here as well. We went yesterday to Brighton, which is the reason she isn't very well, the long carnal gin knocked her about a bit. But we were just walking through some of the lanes.

I have a daughter who lives at Brighton. And we were walking through some of the lanes and we came across a building which obviously at one time was a chapel and has now been made into a wine bar. And yet outside the door you go in, they've left this big plaque which commemorates the raising of this chapel and the purposes for which it was used.

And it's forgotten the name of the man who was instrumental in it, but there by the door of this wine bar, there's this little statement which says that this man, I think he was a London businessman, who did a lot of preaching and used his money to establish this little chapel. And then it says he always preached, in every sermon he preached, he preached the universality of sin through the fall, redemption by the blood of Christ, and regeneration by the Holy Ghost. It's an amazing thing for kind of all the people going to this wine bar to see every day.

It's right there, but not a little plaque. It's a big thing. And the universality of sin by the fall.

Redemption by the blood of Christ. Regeneration by the Holy Spirit. And I thought what an amazing summary of the gospel that is.

In fact you need all those aspects of the gospel for it to be the full gospel. If you don't understand the seriousness of what has happened to the human race, you'll never really submit to what God has to do in each one of us to deal with that circumstance. And if you don't understand on what basis God is able to deal with us, that it is through the death of his son, you'll never understand why God is able to do what he does.

And of course if we don't know personally ourselves the energies of the Holy Spirit, we'll never really know what it means to be born again, to be regenerate. And really, without any of those elements, you don't have a full gospel. You actually need all those elements for it to be a full gospel.

And I was thinking about this, thinking about it this morning, and reading in Paul's, Paul the Gospel according to Paul, which is really the book of Romans. And if you'll turn with me there, I'd like to take a section of this. I'd like to take all of it, but I can't quite do that.

We'll take the half of it in many ways, which... Well, where does that begin? Let me tell you what Romans is all about. Then you'll have the notes with you, so that you can go away and remind yourself of what I've said, because I don't want to say anything that isn't here. One of the things that Paul has to say right at the beginning of the book of Romans is that he says, I'm not ashamed of the gospel.

And the reason he's not ashamed of it, he goes on, he says, because it's the power of God to salvation, to everyone that believes, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. It's the power of God to salvation. It wasn't because it was a good intellectual idea that Paul was unashamed.

It wasn't because it was factually true, or because it was logically consistent. It was because the gospel was the power of God to salvation. In other words, it wasn't just an idea, it was an effective solution to man's condition.

And the man who wrote the book of Romans, of course, was the greatest evidence of that that has ever been in the whole history of the world. This man who himself was the chief enemy of the early church, who God took hold of and absolutely transformed. So that instead of being a man who left no stone unturned to destroy the Christians, he becomes a man who is willing to be spent, and to be spent, and be spent, and pour out the last drops of his blood as a sacrifice on top of theirs.

It's an extraordinary transformation that you have in the life of this man. And when Paul writes to Timothy, he actually says that's the reason, or at least that's one of the reasons, why God chose him. That in him there should be an example of the long-suffering of God.

It's as though God is saying, you want proof that I can do it with you? Look at this man here. However you view your condition, whatever you think you are like, but look at this man, because this man was worse, and look what I've done with this man. So Paul isn't ashamed of the gospel, because it's the power of God to salvation.

And then in the first two or three chapters, he explains why it is that man needs the gospel. He says the gospel is a revelation of God, what God has done, and God's righteousness. But it also says that God's anger has been revealed.

Now God's anger is something that people don't like to think about. We prefer to think about God's love and his faithfulness and his gentleness. We prefer to think of the good shepherd.

But one of the things that we need to take on board if we're really going to preach the whole gospel, is to understand that there's a Bible truth which is captured in the verse of the Old Testament which says God is angry with the wicked every day. The reason we don't like to think of God as being angry is because in our mind we find it very difficult to distinguish between anger and temper. They are not the same thing.

God does not lose his temper. But God is angry with the wicked every day. There is a state of animosity, of anger in the heart of God with every sinner.

Now you've heard it said, oh God loves the sinner and he hates the sin. There's a truth in that, but you mustn't obscure this truth, that God is angry with the wicked every day. There is a personal condition between God and every living human being.

Which, as long as that person holds on to his sin, can only be expressed as animosity, as anger. Now how did all this come about? Well, Paul speaks of it in the first two or three chapters, and he really is acting like someone in a court of law. And he is the advocate for the prosecution, or whatever you want to call it.

He is the man who is bringing accusation against the whole human race and against every individual in it. Against every sector of society. And as you come toward the end of the third chapter, he makes this statement and he says there's no difference.

He's talked about Jews, he's talked about Gentiles, and then he says there is no difference. All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Now in that last half of that sentence is a part that is almost impossible for us to grasp and get a hold of.

It's not just that man has sinned, it's that man has fallen short of the glory of God. The destiny that God planned and purposed for the human race was forfeit as a result of man's sin. It's not just that man has slipped below a zero line into sin.

What has happened is that God had an amazing plan for him. Had an amazing destiny for him. It's written in the very first chapter of the Bible.

We will make man in our likeness and our image. That was God's intention for the human race. And it isn't just that sin has defiled us or disappointed God.

It's that sin has, in its initial stages, has frustrated what God intended to be. It is, all sin is actually a clash of roots. There's a little definition for you.

Sin is always a clash of roots. God willed that the human race should be like this. Sin has made it like what we see around us.

All spoiled and distorted. Doesn't mean that God has ceased to love. Anger and love are not opposites.

In fact, in many ways, anger is an ultimate expression of love. I'm not going to develop that for you, you can think it through yourself. But Paul makes a statement where he says there is no difference.

Maybe you are tempted at times to make a distinction and to think that this sin is worse than this sin. This is the worst sin that a human being could commit or that is the worst sin that a human being could commit. There is no difference.

All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. And then having brought that universal condemnation in for the whole human race, Paul then says this, I'm reading from Romans 3, verse 23 now. I'll go back half a verse.

There is no difference. The last little few words of verse 22. There is no difference.

For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. And then he says this. Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus whom God set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood to declare His righteousness for the putting away of sins that are past or the looking over of them through the forbearance of God.

That's a very long and complicated sentence. And I just want to take out a couple of things. Maybe you are familiar with the little phrase in Ephesians where Paul says, by grace are you saved through faith.

And that little couplet is really very important for us to understand. You are not saved because of your faith. Shall I say it again? You are not saved because of your faith.

You are saved by grace through faith. Your faith on its own could not save you. It's only because of God's offer.

Because of God's enabling power that faith becomes the channel through which salvation comes to you. Faith and salvation are not the same thing. You must not put too much concentration on the channel.

You must put concentration on the source which is the grace of God. Now God has ordained that it's only by faith that this grace will reach us. That's really to make it wonderfully simple so that every single one of us is on the same level playing field.

It's got nothing to do with our intellectual ability or our understanding of the scripture or our background or what kind of family we came from or what kind of family we didn't get. It's all by grace through faith. There

is no difference.

That little theme comes up again and again through Romans. But he speaks here about God having done something and he says, God has set forth his Son as a propitiation. And I'm not going to define every single one of these words for you this morning.

But I just want to say simply that this big old-fashioned word propitiation means a price which is paid to put away anger. That's what it means. It's a price that was paid to put away anger.

And you may well be using a version of the Bible that won't have the word propitiation at all. It'll have the word expiation in it. And I don't think I've got the time to explain what that's all about.

But certain theologians don't like to think about God as being angry, so they don't think that what happened on the cross had any effect upon God. They think it had an effect upon sin, which they say was expiated, but they don't think it had any effect upon God who needs to be propitiated. Alright, well we won't go into all that.

But the point is that God did it. God sent his son. He sent him forth to be the price paid to remove the anger.

I'm sure I've said this to you before, just very briefly. There's a wonderful, and so often the Bible's like this, there's a wonderful story which explains what propitiation is about in the book of Genesis. It's the story of Jacob and his brother Esau.

And the time when Jacob is coming back into the land of his father's and his brother Esau, who was so angry with him that Esau wanted to kill him, although the years have passed, Jacob doesn't think that Esau's anger will have passed, so he decides to propitiate Esau. And he sends a gift to put away his anger so that he will regard me with favour, so that he will look upon me face to face, so that there can be reconciliation and fellowship again. And that is propitiation.

It's the price paid to put away anger that makes reconciliation possible. And the Bible here says here, and it's one of the foundational truths of the New Testament, that what was happening on the cross was that God himself was providing the price to make it possible for God not to visit his anger upon the human race. That's why it says here that God was able to look over the sins, to overlook previous sins.

I don't know whether I've told you this story before, I probably have, but many years ago I can remember me and my family, and you know we had a big family, going to, I think it was Madame Tussauds or something like that, and you had this system with a turnstile, where you had to pay your money and you went through, and the next person paid the money and they went through. And we arrived with our family, and I often say that life with seven children is really just like life in a queue and you're at the end of it. That's the way it is, it's just that it teaches you patience.

And still, there was a family, most of them in front of us, and you know, they let the turnstile turn and the first one went in without paying a penny. And the second one, they let the turnstile turn and the second one went in without paying a penny. And they did this for four of them.

And do you know why they did this? Because they could see me coming with the money in my hand. They knew the price was going to be paid. And the reason that God in Old Testament times was to overlook the sins of individuals, because he could see the man coming with the money in his hand.

That's why he did it. That's why he did it. God didn't turn a blind eye to them.

What God was doing was absolutely righteous, it was absolutely the way it ought to be done. And of course those who followed the price had been paid so they could come. But the basis for those in front and those behind was exactly the same.

God himself paid the price. We sometimes say, and we're preaching and we're talking, that Jesus paid the price. And that's not wrong, but if you really wanted to be pedantic, you'd have to say that the Father paid the price.

And the price was the same. That's the price that was paid. And then Paul goes on to say this in chapter 4. He says, What shall we say then? And I think it's five or six times in the letter to the Romans Paul asks that question.

What shall we say? It's great. It's good psychology. I don't think that's why he's doing it like this, but it's great because he is fixing you in his gauge and he's saying, now what do you say about this? Come on, I want some response.

What do you say? But isn't that Paul doesn't have the answers to all the questions he asks in Romans. He has answers to all of them. But he wants to engage the thinking of the people who are reading it.

So he says, what are you going to say? What are you going to say to this? And this is the first thing. He says, What shall we say that Abraham, our father, according to the flesh, has failed? In other words, he's going to say, well, what was Abraham's experience? Remember, he's just talked about God having overlooked the sins of those that were before Christ because of the propitiation that was to be paid. And now he says, well, let's illustrate this.

And here's this wonderful illustration. And the one he goes to, first off, is Abraham. And he says, what was Abraham's experience? And then he begins to say this.

He says, What shall we say, then, that Abraham, our father, is pertaining to the flesh, has failed? For if Abraham were justified by works, he has something to glory in, but not before God. Maybe we need just another very easy definition before we go any farther. And that's for this word justification.

I guess it's about forty years ago now since I first heard this definition. And I have never heard it better. Apparently in Papua New Guinea, where they use this pidgin English, they wanted to put this idea of justification into something which made sense for them.

And they produced this wonderful phrase, God can say me all right. You'd have to spend a long time thinking about that to know what a perfect definition that is of justification. Because justification is the declaration of the judge.

That the accusation that's been brought against someone cannot be substantiated. So that the person is declared righteous by the judge. It's nothing at all to do with how he feels.

The judge is not interested in how you feel. He's not interested in whether you feel guilty or accused. He wants to know whether you've done it.

And the court has nothing at all to do with forgiveness. Do you understand this? This is all legal terminology. So here you've got this picture and the accusation is that the whole human race, including the

likes of you and me, are in front of the judge and inevitably the verdict, the sentence, the declaration that the judge passes is going to be guilty.

But something happens so that that isn't what he says. What he says is you're all right. God, him saying, you're all right.

It's justification. It's the declaration from the judge that justice is satisfied. That everything is all right.

You can go from this court without a blemish upon your character. That's what you can do. Sounds quite something, doesn't it? What does the Scripture say? Verse 3 Abraham believed God and it was written to him for righteousness.

I want you to notice what it doesn't say. It doesn't say Abraham became righteous. It says Abraham was reckoned.

Faith was reckoned to him as righteousness. It's as though in the accounts at this stage, the account now stands that by the name of Abraham it says this man is righteous and there's God's signature by the side of it. God declares him to be righteous not because he achieved righteousness not because he attained to some standard but because he put all his faith in God and God reckoned him to be righteous.

If you were trying to work out what faith really means and this would be the best way of doing it, I suppose and you started to read at the beginning of the Bible and you worked your way through it to find out what does the Bible mean by faith or believing? Those words are really the same. You'd read through most of Genesis. You'd get to Genesis chapter 15 and verse 6 before you came across the word belief or faith and then you'd find this phrase Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him for righteousness.

Consequently, Abraham becomes the archetypal believer. He is the father of all that believe. All who believe in this way are really behaving like Abraham so they're Abraham's children.

That's what the Bible means when it talks about as being Abraham's children. When it talks about Abraham being the father of it all who believe. What it's saying is that Abraham had a certain kind of attitude towards God and his attitude towards God was one of total reliance.

He did not depend on 99% of God's provision or 1% of his own effort. It was all his eggs in one basket. It was utter, absolute reliance upon God.

I'll tell you something about this passage of Romans that I've thought this for a long, long time and I heard someone say it fairly recently. That we have to preach a gospel in such a way that it's capable of being misunderstood. If we preach a gospel that isn't capable of being misunderstood we're probably missing some key things.

And one of the next the next time that Paul says what shall we say is in chapter 6. Look at chapter 6 in verse 1. And he says what shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin so that grace may abound? Now, we have to preach a gospel which is so full and so free in its offer of salvation through the grace of God that logically it's possible for someone to ask that question. If the gospel that we preach isn't capable of being misunderstood then there's something missing from the gospel that we preach. We really have to go right out on a limb on this one.

So you get to the place where you say but if that's it what Paul goes on to say he doesn't say there's anything wrong with that logic. He says if you're asking that question you haven't understood what we've been talking about. You can't ask that question if you haven't understood what we've been talking about.

It's not because it's illogical it's because in the 6th chapter in the 5th chapter in particular he begins to speak of something which is much more. I want to come onto much more tonight. This is your preparation for tonight.

In Romans chapter 5 you'll find, I think in the AV five times this little phrase much more. In Romans chapter 5 because the full gospel is much more than what we're going to find in Romans chapter 4. In Romans chapter 4 we're going to find the basis of our acceptance with God. And the basis of our acceptance with God is not on us achieving any level of righteousness.

It's not because we get to a certain standard that God then recognizes as part of his family or accepts us or forgives us. It's not that at all. It's based entirely upon grace.

I was pausing then because I thought shall I say this or shall I not say it? I thought, yeah, I'll say it. Someone gave to me fairly recently a cheque and a piece of paper I'm going to have to apologize for this afterwards and on the piece of paper it said a gift for the preaching and I was very, very grateful for the gift but I thought I'll need to talk to this man about his theology. You can't have a gift for anything.

You can't have a gift that is given to you because of something that you've done. Because if it's given to you on the basis of something that you've done your reward is no longer reckoned of grace but of debt. That's what Paul says here.

Preachers are terrible. They really are so pedantic. If you think lawyers are pedantic you just need to mix with some preachers.

But a gift is absolutely it's the generosity of God it's God's grace it's based on nothing that you give to Him. It's based on no contribution it's based on no effort no energy that you put into it. It is entirely 100% the free gift of God and your acceptance of God is 100% based upon what happened upon the cross.

And it doesn't matter if you were better yesterday than you were today or you were worse today than you were it doesn't matter. Your acceptance of God was never based on your achievement and it never will be based upon your achievement. There's a lovely line in one of the hymns that says that even in heaven our claim will still be the same.

It will still be the same. Not anything that I have done not any contribution that I have made 100% creditable to what Jesus Christ did upon the cross. So that's why he says here it goes on in verse 4 Now to him that works is the reward not reckoned of grace but of debt.

In other words if you've made a contribution towards it God is in your debt. God has to do something. But this grace through faith salvation is not anything that you and I contribute to.

And then to make it very plain what he's talking about he talks about David and he says David describes or David declares what this justification is all about. And there are three parts of it here and he says, verse 7 Blessed are they whose iniquities or lawlessnesses are and we've got this word forgiven. Again is she going to be really very pedantic? Why not? Why should I change now? If you think about it it's only people who can be forgiven.

It's not sin that can be forgiven. How can I forgive a sin? How can I forgive a record on a piece of paper? You need another word for that. The word you need for that is remitted which is what the word you've got here.

Our lawlessnesses are remitted they're sent away. In the mind of Paul when he's saying this he's got Old Testament pictures. He's got the picture of the scapegoat upon which sin was placed in picture form in the symbol of it and then it was sent away from the presence of God.

And David here in his psalm he says Blessed are they whose sins are sent away. Anybody who says I'll forgive you but I can't forget what you've done has no idea of what the word forgiveness means in this context. And it actually means to send it away from your presence to send it away from your conscious remembrance of it to... who was it? Who was it? I think it was the Dutch lady.

Yeah. I think she used to say something like God has buried your sins in the depths of the sea and he puts up a notice which says no fishing. It's sent away.

It's absolutely sent away. And then he says here and whose sins are covered. That's another Old Testament idea.

That's the idea of atonement. Sins which are hidden so that it would be possible for someone still to be in the presence of God although the stain of their sin was upon them they could be hidden because of atonement because of some provision that had been made. And I suppose if you wanted to follow this one right the way back you'd get right the way back to the story of Adam's sin and the fact that they tried to cover their own nakedness from the consequence of their own sin with fig leaves which you know how long they would have lasted.

And it was God who actually covered Adam and Eve with animal skin. So the first blood according to the biblical record that was shed was shed by God in order to provide Adam and Eve with atonement. These aren't accidents.

These are all part of the amazing consistency of this book. Blessed are they whose lawlessnesses are carried away whose sins are covered. Blessed, he says in verse 8 is the man to whom the Lord will not reckon sin will not impute sin.

In Romans, sorry 1 Corinthians chapter 13 it describes love. And one of the things it says it comes through very clearly in the AV One of the things it says is this is that love does not keep a record. That's what it says.

Love does not keep a record of sin. And that's what Paul is saying that David is saying here. Blessed is the man to whom God does not reckon sin.

When the man sins God does not put it down to the account. We're out on a limb now, aren't we? This sounds as though if you push this far enough you're going to end up with antinomianism. You're going to end up with lawlessness.

You're going to end up with a state in which people say well let's carry on sinning until the great way abound. We have to push it so far that it's possible to ask the question. That's what we have to do.

This is justification by faith. It's when our sin is carried away from God's presence. It's when it is hidden.

It's when there's no record of it made. You'll notice that all these are negative. These are all minuses.

These are all it's sin being carried away it's sin being hidden it's sin not being recorded. They're all kind of they're all negative things that are happening. They're all things that are happening in that sense.

You need to come into Romans chapter 5 before you come into the plus of the gospel. Before you come into the much more. Then he says something here and this is really what I wanted to draw our attention to.

He comes in and then he begins to explain about Abraham's experience of God. And he asks this question just another question here. Verse 10 he says How then will it be reckoned? Because he asked the question before that about does this blessedness that David talks about of having our sins taken away of having our sins covered of there being no record of our sin is that blessedness then just for Abraham? Just for Abraham's family? Just for, listen to me Is it just for the people who are in the covenant? Circumcision was a sign of the covenant.

Is this blessing then just for the people who are in the covenant? Verse 10 How was it then reckoned? When he was in circumcision or in uncircumcision? Do you know the story well enough? What he's saying is when this event took place that we read of in Genesis chapter 15 and it says that Abraham believed God and God reckoned it to him for righteousness did God have a relationship with Abraham at that time? Was Abraham in the covenant? Was the covenant signed on Abraham at that time?

Was he circumcised? Or was he this really just shows the courage of Paul on one occasion Paul says that Isaiah is very bold well Paul is very bold as well because Paul is asking this question in the power of the Spirit he's saying did this take place when Abraham was in the covenant or outside it? When he was circumcised or uncircumcised? When he was God's man or before he was God's man? And the fact is you read the story the fact is it was before he was circumcised in other words let me put in words into Paul's mouth to make the point to you when he was in a Gentile condition when there was no covenant that bound him to God when he wasn't part of that covenant at all he put his faith in God and the consequence was if we use David's words of explanation the consequence was that Abraham's sin was carried away that Abraham's sin was covered that Abraham's sin had no record of it made before Abraham was God's man before he was in the covenant so does a person have to be in the new covenant before their sins can be put away? before they can be covered? before there can be no record of it? does he?

Paul is saying here I think very strongly that these things happened as a result one hundred percent of the grace of God and a man putting his confidence in God before the covenant he wants to use the language of the men that outside the building in Brighton redemption by the blood of Christ and the next thing we want to discuss in Romans chapter 5 is regeneration by the Holy Spirit your sin if I understand what Paul is saying here your sin and it's being dealt with in terms of your acceptance of God is not dependent upon your regeneration it's not dependent upon you being in the covenant it's dependent upon you trusting in God I sometimes think that we in emphasizing some wonderfully important truths about the new covenant and regeneration sometimes we've made ourselves a bit of a rod to

beat our own back with in that we've we've produced a situation where we if we're not very careful we end up preaching justification by sanctification now that is not a Bible teaching the Bible does not teach justification by sanctification it does not say God has declared righteous the man or the woman who has become righteous it doesn't say that in fact there's this here's one to take your breath away look at this in verse chapter 4 and verse 5 but to him who believes not who works not but who believes in him who justifies the ungodly his faith is reckoned for righteousness a God who justifies the ungodly not a God who

wakes and says when you're good enough I'm going to put my mark of approval upon you but a God who says if you will trust me I will declare you to be righteous God can

say you're alright even though you are ungodly not waiting for you to change just as I am I think these are really so important for us it's so important because if you think about Galatians and if you think about Hebrews you'll know that it seems as though there was there's always a kind of a a temptation for Christians to slip onto a works basis it seems as though at every level of Christianity this temptation can come back that I'm not good enough well who said you've got to be good enough a God wants you to be good but you're never going to be good enough your salvation is not depending upon you being good enough it's dependent upon him being good enough it's, it's your whole notice the distinction I'm making your acceptance with God is not dependent upon any achievement that you may

or may not make and tomorrow's acceptance upon God is not dependent upon you having attained or continued in the level of grace you got to yesterday it's still dependent upon what Jesus Christ has done for you if this really can sink down into our understanding you'll find brothers and sisters this will bring you such an amazing freedom you will be free to love him, free to reach out to him without constantly measuring yourself without constantly measuring whether you're better or you're worse or we do have to examine ourselves but we don't examine ourselves as to whether we're good enough we examine ourselves to see whether we're in faith am I believing God that's all that matters so he talks here about Abraham being the father of all believers he's the father of all those who are

accepted by God not on the basis of their achievements or energies but on the basis of what God has done that means you can come, that means you can come just as you are and if in your thinking any single necessary qualification comes between you and God accepting you other than what Jesus has done upon the cross you may do this with law here's some algebra to you grace plus x equals law okay, there's some algebra for you grace plus x equals law whatever x is whether it's circumcision or baptism or this experience or that experience or my attainment or my faithfulness whatever x is once you add it to grace you've got law I wouldn't have liked to have been on the end of one of Paul's arguments I don't think he was they say, don't they, about people who take a sledgehammer to crack a peanut

and he does this but it's the faithfulness of God and it's the work of the Holy Spirit in him laying this so solid foundation that we should understand that God hasn't saved us by slight of hand that he hasn't saved us because he's found some legal loophole that he's wriggled his way through what God has done is absolutely it's cast iron, it's as solid as a rock that's what John can go on later on to say if we confess our sins listen to it not he is loving and gracious he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins that's why John goes on to say if we sin, we have an advocate the father, Jesus Christ the righteous one and he is the price already paid to remove God's anger it's like I think I said this before when I was here it's like that little button on your car that you can press that

keeps on setting things back to zero you know, you've done 10 miles, you press it and it's back to zero you do another 20 miles, you press it and it's back to zero and you go 5000 miles and you press it and it's still back to zero and when you come, when you confess your sin when you acknowledge that you are the sinner and that he is to save you when you say the same thing that God has said God is faithful and just to forgive you all your sins and to cleanse you from all your righteousness all it's very very wonderful he goes on to say, where shall we go on he talks about faith then briefly and he talks about Abraham and he says this, verse 18 I'm missing big pieces out, but you can put it in yourself who against hope, believed in hope that he might become the father of many nations

according to that which was spoken social thy seed be and being not weak in faith he considered not his own body now dead when he was about a hundred years old neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb there's a fair marriage for you of death and deadness it was from utter hopelessness that Isaac arrived utter hopelessness he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief but was strong in faith giving glory to God and that really is what underlies so much of this you see, someone who is living by faith is actually giving glory to God they're not giving glory to their own contribution they're giving glory to God it stands for forsaking all I trust him forsaking all I trust him and then he used to say this it takes many Christians a lifetime to discover what all means forsaking all my

energies my compliance with doctrinal accuracy my conformity to the people that I'm part of my own sense of well-being my own sense of acceptance forsaking all I trust no, it's not it not the gospel as an idea as a notion, as a belief system as a code of ethics I trust him that's faith it gives glory to God verse 21 and being fully persuaded that what he had promised he was able also to perform it was therefore reckoned to him for righteousness and if that's all it was it would be a wonderful story about Abraham and you could put it in your library with all the other wonderful biographies you've got but it says in verse 23 it was not written for his sake alone these events that took place in the life of Abraham were not just for Abraham's benefit and they're not just so that we should

understand Abraham's history it was not written for him alone that it was imputed to him but for us also to whom it shall be imputed if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead who was delivered for our offenses and raised for our justification in other words that basis upon which Abraham came which was total dependence upon God that is exactly the same basis that you came on you know if we were simpler if we really behave like children instead of spending so much time saying to the children grow up if we said to each other grow down a bit and keep it simple Paul says this, he says as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord so walk in him how did you begin your relationship with God? by effort? by energy? by understanding? by conformity to God's standards? is that how

you began? no you began because you put your trust in what he had done for you as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord so walk ye in him in other words you progress by doing exactly what you did in the very first which is by putting all your dependence upon him your acceptance of God is not determined by your contribution and it cannot be sealed off from you because of your failure doesn't matter what you have done doesn't matter why you did it if you are willing to come on this basis and put your trust in him you will know the blessedness of someone whose sin is carried away whose sin is covered whose sin is not kept to record and I'm going to stop now but I want to tell you that isn't the gospel that's just the foundation for it you'll have to come to notice if you want to hear what

the gospel is all about because it's not just that that Paul was rejoicing in what he rejoiced in was that I'm not ashamed of the gospel because it's the power of God to salvation it's not just all these negatives not all just these impediments and obstacles removed from you it's a plus, it's a glorious plus and we'll come to that tonight Amen

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