

Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)

Romans 4: 5-8

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the bible again. We will continue reading Romans chapter 4. Today we will read verses 5-8.

Paul used Abraham as an example of justification by faith. Paul specifically pointed out that God accounted Abraham as righteous when he believed God's promise that his descendants would be as numerous as the stars in the sky. From the time Abraham entered the good land at age seventy-five to that moment, nearly ten years had passed. Abraham's faith was gradually strengthened through five appearances of God, and he was finally able to truly believe God's promise. It was then that God accounted him as righteous. Abraham had no works to boast of. On the contrary, it was when Abraham could not keep up that God repeatedly appeared and spoke to him, enabling Abraham to believe God's promise. This leads to Paul's conclusion.

Verse 5: "But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness."

It is not by one's own works, but by simply believing God, that one's faith is accounted as righteousness. In this verse, Paul particularly emphasizes that God justifies the ungodly. As we saw in Romans 3:23, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Sinners were originally destined for destruction, but God set forth Jesus Christ as the mercy seat. As long as one enters into this sphere of grace by faith, one can be justified by God. Abraham is the father of our shared faith. If he, without relying on works but by faith alone, could be justified by God, how much more can we?

When Paul spoke of God justifying sinners, he also brought up another highly respected figure among the Jews—King David—as an example. In the Bible, God called David, “a man after His own heart.” He was the greatest king in Israel's history. Yet David also had dark times, especially when he committed two grave sins: adultery and murder. Paul specifically quoted David's psalm of repentance after his sin to show that even sinners can be justified by faith.

Verse 6: “Just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works:”

To be accounted righteous apart from works means that even though a person has sinned and deserves destruction according to the Law, he can still be justified by God apart from works—that is, outside of the Law. David called such a man blessed. In fact, David was speaking of himself. First, he committed adultery with Uriah's wife, then conspired to have faithful Uriah killed by the sword of the enemy, and finally took Uriah's wife as his own.

This thing displeased the Lord, so He sent the prophet Nathan to David. This incident is recorded in 2 Samuel 12:1–15. When Nathan met David, he first told a story: there were two men in a city, one rich and the other poor. The rich man had many flocks and herds, but the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb which he had brought up. This lamb grew up together with him and his children; he treated it like his own daughter. One day, the rich man had a guest, but he was unwilling to take from his own flock or herd to prepare a meal for the guest. Instead, he took the poor man's lamb, slaughtered it, and prepared it for his guest.

Upon hearing this, David's anger was greatly aroused, and he said that the man who had done this deserved to die because he showed no compassion. Then the prophet Nathan paused and pointed at David, saying, “You are the man!” Nathan then proclaimed God's judgment, saying to David: “The sword shall never depart from your house... For you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, before the sun.”

Now let us look at David's response, recorded in 2 Samuel 12:13, "So David said to Nathan, 'I have sinned against the LORD.' And Nathan said to David, 'The LORD also has put away your sin; you shall not die.'" David had committed great sins that, according to the Law of Moses, were punishable by death. But after David confessed his sin, Nathan conveyed God's will, saying, "The LORD also has put away your sin; you shall not die."

Deeply moved, David wrote a psalm of repentance—Psalm 32. In it, he wrote, "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. I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,' and You forgave the iniquity of my sin." Truly, blessed is the man whose sins are forgiven and who is justified by God. This is exactly the message of Psalm 32.

People in the Old Testament may not have understood how a righteous God could justify sinners, but in the New Testament, Paul tells us that in God's eternal plan, Jesus Christ had already been set forth as the mercy seat. The redeeming power of Christ's sacrifice on the cross is eternal. New Testament Gentile believers can be justified by faith, and so too can Old Testament Jews—by faith. Paul is very certain about this.

The Gospel of Matthew opens with the genealogy of Jesus Christ. The very first verse mentions that Jesus is the Son of Abraham and the Son of David. Therefore, Paul specifically brings up Abraham and David to demonstrate justification by faith. Who could be more fitting examples of being justified by faith than these two? Of course, in David's case, his sins were forgiven, and he was justified by God. Such forgiveness and justification are eternal. This is the most important matter for every person. However, in time, the prophet Nathan had also prophesied that the sword would never depart from David's house—and indeed, Nathan's prophecy was fulfilled, as recorded throughout 2 Samuel.

Dear brothers and sisters, we all live in time. Often, we place too much emphasis on gains and losses within time, frequently praying for God's protection and care

concerning these matters. But we must broaden our vision. The affairs of time come and go—what you gain can be lost, and what you lose can be regained. These are not the most important things. What truly matters is whether, in eternity, you have received God’s forgiveness, and whether, in eternity, you have been justified by God. When we sin and do wrong, we offend both God and others. For the part where we offend others, our righteous God will cause us to repay in time. But for the part where we offend God, the blood of Jesus Christ can cover and forgive our sins. Then we will be justified by God. David had such vision, and he said: Blessed is the man whose sins are forgiven and who is justified by God.

Verses 7–8: “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.”

This is a direct quote from Psalm 32:1–2, “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.” David sinned, yet God forgave his transgressions and covered his sins. Therefore, David declared that such a person is blessed. In fact, not only David—we are all the same. Perhaps we haven’t committed adultery and murder as David did, but when we examine our daily lives, we must admit that we have done many things we should not have done and spoken many words we should not have spoken. Under the scrutiny of truth, our lives cannot stand.

As Psalm 130:3–4 says, “If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared.” If God truly counted our sins, who could stand? This event will surely take place in the future. When Christ returns, every saint must stand before the judgment seat of Christ and receive recompense for their deeds after salvation, whether good or bad. Therefore, we must learn to examine our lives daily. When we close our eyes at night, our conscience must be clean. The sins we are aware of must be confessed so that we can receive God’s forgiveness and be justified. Then, when we wake up the next morning, we can begin a new day in God’s grace.

David understood this, so he said, “Blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin.” Every day we accumulate many sins, both great and small. How can we be counted as not guilty? By confessing our sins. God is faithful and just and will forgive all our sins.

Dear brothers and sisters, under the Law, we are all condemned and destined for destruction. But under the principle of grace, everyone can believe in Jesus, and through the blood of Jesus, our sins are covered, we are forgiven, and we are justified by God. In verses 6–8, Paul uses the phrase “Blessed is the man” three times. Truly, we are a blessed people. May we never take this great blessing lightly.

Let us pray together: Dear Lord Jesus, through the book of Romans, Paul tells us that our father of faith, Abraham, was not justified by works but by faith. David, the greatest king in Israel’s history, after sinning, confessed to God and was forgiven, repeatedly declaring that such a person is blessed. The experiences of Abraham and David are also our experiences. We acknowledge that in our daily lives, we often offend You and do many things that are wrong toward others. Lord, shine Your light on us that we may see our true condition. I am willing to come before Your throne of grace, confessing my sins and seeking Your forgiveness. And as I fellowship with You before the mercy seat, may it help my life to grow, so that I may remove bad habits and overcome sins that frequently entangle me. May I become increasingly holy, and may my life be a good testimony. Help those around me come to know You and receive You as their Savior for life. Lord, bless my daily life. We pray in the Holy Name of Jesus Christ.