

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

Romans 4: 23-25

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank God, it's time to read the Bible again. Let's continue to read Romans Chapter 4. We will read verses 23-25 today.

Yesterday, we read how Paul described Abraham's faith journey, from being justified by faith at the beginning to later fully believing, which was accounted to him for righteousness. Paul's description differs significantly from our perception of a great man of faith. We often imagine Abraham, the father of faith, as a magnanimous, bold, and resolute figure who never wavers. Yet, his experiences reveal a man full of helplessness, often unable to believe, yet clinging tightly to God's promises, weak and failing, but still looking to God's mercy.

From the initial justification by faith, through over a decade of experiences, Abraham continually learned to look to God's promises, eventually reaching full belief. Paul presents Abraham's faith journey to encourage us to imitate him, learning to progress from initial justification by faith to full belief.

Verse 23: "Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him,"

Abraham walked the journey of faith, eventually fully believing, and God accounted it to him for righteousness, which became evidence that he could produce Isaac. Paul states here that this was not written for Abraham alone, because God promised Abraham, he would be the father of many nations. Today, among all peoples and tribes worldwide, there are Christians saved by grace, all of whom are Abraham's descendants through faith. Thus, Paul wrote Romans, using Abraham as an example, to show how he progressed from initial justification by faith to full belief, accounted as righteousness. Paul's purpose in writing Romans was for all of

Abraham's faith descendants—that is, all saints saved by grace—so we often say Romans is the gospel book for the believers.

Verse 24: “but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead,”

Abraham progressed from being justified by faith at the start to fully believing, accounted as righteousness. Though Abraham walked a lifelong journey of faith, he did not see his descendants become as numerous as the stars in the sky or the sand on the seashore, yet because of his full belief, God accounted it to him for righteousness.

God's promise to Abraham was fulfilled only in the New Testament, when God's Son, Jesus Christ, came as a man, completed redemption, resurrected, and ascended. Though Abraham's eyes did not see it, he fully believed, knowing God's promise would not fail. Thus, Jesus said in John 8:56, “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.” Abraham looked forward in faith, saw it in faith, and was filled with joy. Abraham, at that time, looked 2,000 years ahead, saw it, was accounted righteous, and rejoiced fully.

We, the New Testament saints, are truly blessed, as Jesus Christ's redemptive work is complete, and God has raised Him from the dead. We are surrounded by many of Abraham's faith descendants who preach the gospel and bear witness to us, making our belief much easier than Abraham's. With so much evidence before us, if we believe that Christ Jesus has risen from the dead, God will account us as righteous.

Verse 25: “who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.”

This verse explains the previous one: if we believe Jesus Christ rose from the dead, like Abraham, we will be accounted righteous by God. Jesus was delivered up,

crucified, shedding His precious blood, paying the price of His life, taking the punishment for our offenses, clearing our debt of sin, and satisfying God's righteous requirements. As Isaiah 53:5-6 says, "But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all."

Jesus was delivered up because of our offenses, taking the punishment we deserved, so God could forgive our sins. Our record of sin has been completely cleared before God, addressing the negative aspect of resolving the issue between us and God.

His resurrection was for our justification. Jesus Christ's resurrection is positive, enabling us to be justified before God. Seeing Jesus rise from the dead involves at least four aspects:

First, His resurrection proves He is the Son of God, as Romans 1:4 states, "and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." It shows He overcame death and the power of Hades, triumphing and proving He is God's Son.

Second, it serves as credible evidence for all, as Acts 17:31 says, "because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead." Jesus' death negatively resolved the problem of human sin. His resurrection positively shows that God accepted His completed redemption, proving that all can come to God through Jesus Christ's redemption, making His resurrection credible evidence for all.

Third, it is for our justification, as Romans 4:25 states, His resurrection was for our justification. Jesus Christ's resurrection, accepted by God, established a realm of grace, allowing all who believe to enter this realm through His blood and gain the status of being justified by God.

Dear brothers and sisters, we were originally sinners, unable to come before God. Now we have a justified status, enabling us to come boldly to God's throne of grace at any time, as Hebrews 4:16 says, "Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." We must not underestimate this justified status; only God's children have this privilege to come boldly before the Father.

Fourth, it enables us to receive resurrection life. Ephesians 2:5-6 says, "even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Through Jesus Christ's resurrection, we not only gain a justified status but also receive resurrection life. This life guides our daily living. Having been made alive with Christ, we not only live but also sit with Him in the heavenly places.

Though we live in the world today, we can sit with Christ in the heavenly places, living on earth as if in heaven. Often, we leave the realm of grace, living on earth by our own strength, facing temptations and stumbling. Yet, the resurrection life within us reminds us to return to the realm of grace, come to God's throne of grace, and receive the supply of divine life in resurrection. Thus, we not only have a justified status but can gradually live a life that aligns with God's righteousness.

Dear brothers and sisters, may we always remember that once we believe in Jesus Christ and become God's children, we receive a special identity and status as members of God's household, declared righteous by Him. When we are strong, God declares us righteous; when we are weak, He still declares us righteous. When we triumph, God declares us righteous; when we fail, He still declares us righteous, because we are God's children, and no one can snatch us from His hand.

With this justified status, God gives us the authority to come boldly to the throne of grace at any time. We can fellowship with God, draw on His manifold supply in resurrection, help our life grow, and gradually live a sanctified life. Externally, we have God's justification; internally, we have a life from God to live righteously. God's provision for us is truly comprehensive, inside and out.

All this is through Jesus Christ's death and resurrection. He was delivered up for our offenses and raised for our justification. By believing in Jesus Christ, we are united with Him in the likeness of His death and resurrection, so our every action bears the likeness of newness. Let us follow Abraham's footsteps, standing in the position of being justified by God, experiencing the Triune God's provision for us in life—joy, sorrow, strength, weakness, victory, and failure. Through these experiences, our faith is tested, proving more precious than gold, until one day we can fully believe, like Abraham, producing Christ within us, letting Christ be formed in us.

Let us pray together: Lord, thank You! You've shown us the truth of justification by faith and Abraham's lifelong example, helping us not only know the truth but imitate his faith journey. We are saved by grace, not because of what we've done or because we're better than others, but entirely due to the Father's mercy and Jesus Christ's grace. Through simple belief, our sins are forgiven, we are justified by God, and we are helped to fully believe God's promises in daily life, living each day in peace and joy on earth, giving glory to God. This prayer, petition, and thanksgiving are in the holy name of our Lord Jesus Christ.