**Sermon Title: Old Testament Illustrations of Justification by Faith Alone**

**Sermon Text: Romans 4:1-8**

**Sermon Purpose: To call the hearer to a clear understanding of justification by faith and not works.**

**Sermon Proposition: There are 3 Old Testament illustrations Paul provides to support this truth.**

**I. The illustration of Abraham related to justification by faith alone. V.1-2**

**II. The illustration of Scripture related to justification by faith alone. V.3-5**

**III. The illustration of David related to justification by faith alone. V.6-8**

**Introduction:** When Paul establishes that God is responsible for declaring a person righteous, or treating them as righteous is by faith alone and not be works people can do. The Jews first response would be “what about Abraham, why, because Abraham was the father of the Jews and the Old Testament leading illustration of all the saved.

Justification does not mean in Chapter 3-4 to make a man righteous, this is sanctification and is covered in Chapters 6-8. (Romans 8:28-30) “Every false religion of the world – whether a heretical branch of Christianity, a highly developed pagan religion, or primitive, is founded on some form of salvation by works. Without exception they teach that, by one means or another man can become right with deity by attaining righteousness in His own power.” (The MacArthur New Testament Commentary, Romans 1-8, pp.231-232)

Paul’s 3 reasons for using Abraham as the illustration summarized.

1. Abraham lived about 2,000 years before Paul wrote this letter, illustrating that the principle of salvation (justification by faith rather than by works was not new in Judaism. He lived more than 600 years before the Old Covenant was established or before the law.

2. Abraham was a human being.

3. Although rabbinical teaching and popular Jewish belief were contrary to Scripture as far as the basis of Abraham’s righteousness was concerned, they agreed that Abraham was the Old Testament supreme illustration of a godly righteous man who is acceptable to God. The illustration of genuine faith and godliness was Abraham.

Many Scriptures were twisted by rabbis to make it appear that Abraham earned God’s righteousness by what he did, rather than understand that faithfulness was a fruit of faith, justification cannot be earned, but faithfulness is the fruit or outworking of true faith.

**Genesis 26:4** "And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; **5** "because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws."

**Isaiah 41:8** "But you, Israel, *are* My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, The descendants of Abraham My friend.

**Genesis 15:6** And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.

**I. The illustration of Abraham related to justification by faith alone. V.1-2**

A. The **human** example Abraham presents. V.1

B. The **hopeless** example Abraham presents. V.2

**II. The illustration of Scripture related to justification by faith alone. V.3-5**

A. The Scriptures testify of faith preceding imputed righteousness. V.3

(**Gen 15:6; 12:ff; Rom 4:11**)

**Galatians 3:6** just as Abraham "believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." **7** Therefore know that *only* those who are of faith are sons of Abraham….**9** So then those who *are* of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.

**John 8:56** "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw *it* and was glad."

**Hebrews 11:8** 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. **9** 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; **10** for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God.

**Genesis 11:31** And Terah took his son Abram and his grandson Lot, the son of Haran, and his daughter-in-law Sarai, his son Abram's wife, and they went out with them from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to the land of Canaan; and they came to Haran and dwelt there.

**Genesis 15:7** Then He said to him, "I *am* the LORD, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to inherit it."

Abraham was called by God as a pagan, just like Paul, just like all before salvation.

Was reckoned is from “logizomai” which carries an economic and legal meaning of crediting something to another’s account.

“Faith is never the basis or the reason for justification, but only the channel through which God works His redeeming grace. Faith is simply a converted heart responding to receive God’s free gift and unmerited gift of salvation.” (Ibid p.238)

**Isaiah 53:4** Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. **5** 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.

B. The Scriptures testify of the **necessity** of grace over works. V.4

C. The Scriptures testify of the necessity of **faith** alone. V.5

**III. The illustration of David related to justification by faith alone. V.6-8**

Paul here cites David the King of Israel, and his understanding of salvation by faith alone.

(Ps 32:1-2; 51:1-14)

A. The individual of genuine faith is **blessed**. V.7a

B. The individual of genuine faith is **forgiven**. V.7b

C. The individual of genuine faith sins are **covered**. V.7c

D. The individual of genuine faith **sins** are not taken into account. V.8