

Sunday, June 9, 2002

Faith in His Favor

Romans 4:5-8

In the first part of chapter 4 Paul gives Abraham and David as examples of those whose "*faith (in Him who justifies the ungodly) is counted as righteousness.*" Has something ever become so familiar to you that you lost sight of its value and took it for granted? The power of the gospel is often not understood or appreciated by the very people who say they believe it because it sounds too familiar. David's example of faith will shock us all.

I. God's favor is upon the ungodly . . .

In other words, the people to whom Christ came are those who know themselves to be sinners. He justifies "*the ungodly.*" The gospel is for great sinners, not great saints. When the Pharisees asked Jesus why he ate with publicans and sinners, Jesus replied, "*They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick*" (Matthew 9:12).

(A). This is David's own testimony . . .

When we think of David we too often think of someone who "*loved the law*" and was "*a man after God's own heart,*" but in reality David lied, stole, envied, committed adultery, and broke all of the laws that he professed to love. Yet,

(B). God's favor rested upon David . . .

"Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and sins are covered" (v.7).

The term blessed is often translated "*God's favor rests upon . . .*"

II. Our faith is to be in God who "justifies the ungodly."

In other words, we are to have *faith in His favor*. This is the faith that He counts as righteousness. But what does it mean to have "*faith in His favor?*" How do I get it?

(A). I must believe that God imputes righteousness without works . . .

This is the heart of the gospel. It is the anchor of our faith. It is the good news.

Impute is an accounting term that literally means, "*to credit to the account of.*"

(1). God credits to our account Christ's righteousness (v.6) **(Philippians 3:9)**.

(2). God does not credit to our account our sin (v.8) **(II Corinthians 5:21)**.

(a). "*Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven*" (lit. "*carried off*") (v.7).

(b). "*Blessed are they whose sins are covered*" (lit. "*hidden*") (v.7).

(B). It is the object of my faith, not the amount or quality, that is important.

"With faith as a grain of mustard seed . . . nothing shall be impossible" (Matt. 17:20).

Jesus said to His disciples during the storm, "*Where is your faith?*" (Luke 8:25).

III. My faithfulness to God happens when I am shocked by His grace.

Romans 12:1 teaches that we are "*holy and well-pleasing to God*" but so many Christians try to become "*holy and acceptable*" rather than believing they are so. "*The Christian's obedience is his response to what God has done for Him in Christ. The source of this obedience springs neither from the humanistic desire for the enhancement of the self by the attainment of moral superiority, nor the legalist's illusory hope of putting God under an obligation, but the saving deed of God itself. It is not the act of sacrifice we are called to, but an understanding that we ARE the sacrifice, no longer under our own power, but entirely under His.*" **C. B. Cranfield.**