

FAITH & RIGHTEOUSNESS



INTRODUCTION

Throughout the scriptures we are constantly reminded that our faith is in a big God who saves people despite their continued indifference and sin. We are also reminded that our righteousness before God has nothing to do with ourselves and everything to do with Him.

DISCUSSION

Like Martin Luther, in what ways have you noticed people trying to pay God back?

EXPLANATION

What things shake your faith the most?

Are there any circumstances in life that would cause you to question God?

What things, in regard to what God does, do not need a rational explanation for you to be OK with it?

APPLICATION

Read Philippians 2:12-18.

How did Paul's faith become reflected in how he lived?

Describe what this verse brings to your mind, "it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure."

How could greater faith actually help to not grumble or complain?

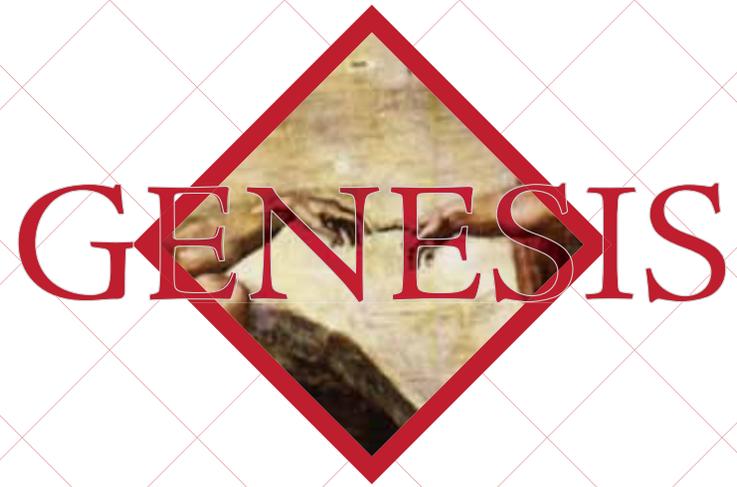
MISSION

How does your faith impact your life in how you live?

How do you think a heart filled with gratitude for our faith would inspire those around us?

Week 26

Family & Group Discussion



FAITH & RIGHTEOUSNESS

Genesis 15:6

Ephesians 2:8-9

Habakkuk 2:4

John 14:6

John 17:17

Mark 5:6-8

Luke 4:33-34

James 2:19

Matthew 5:48

James 2:10

Romans 1:6

Romans 1:16-17

Galatians 2:16

Galatians 3:1

Hebrews 10:35-39

Romans 4:1-3

Galatians 3:5-9

Week 26

Notes & Scripture



FAITH & RIGHTEOUSNESS

Genesis 15:6 “And he believed the Lord, and he counted it to him as righteousness.”

Faith is a gift. When we have overwhelming doubts, we must remember salvation is not about our faith, it is about our God. Throughout the scriptures we are constantly reminded that our faith is in a big God who saves people despite their continued indifference and sin. We are also reminded that our righteousness before God has nothing to do with ourselves and everything to do with Him.

The reformers defined saving faith in three parts (not necessarily this order).

- *notitia* - knowledge about the content of the gospel of Jesus as taught in the Scriptures. Faith needed an object and the object is defined by your knowledge of it.
- *assensus* - the intellectual acceptance of the truth about Jesus. We receive it because it is true.
- *fiducia* - personal reliance and trust in Jesus and His gospel. Trusting in Jesus as revealed.

All three go together and infect and affect how we live.

Genesis 15:6 is a key verse that is quoted at least four times in the New Testament (Rom. 4:3, 22; Gal. 3:6; James 2:23). Faith in God is something that everyone in the Bible was expected to exercise.

Faith entails trust in, or confident reliance on, God based on the truthfulness of His words. Faith leads to a life that obeys God's commands. A person's faith, or lack of it, is most apparent in crises (much like the ones Abraham faces throughout his life).

Abraham believed God would give him a son despite many years of childlessness. This is why his faith was counted as righteousness; he trusted God.

“Righteousness” is the fundamental Old Testament virtue characterized by a godly life lived in conformity with the law. It is the righteous who enjoy God's favor. Moses, in Genesis 15:6, underlines the significance of faith, in that before Abraham has proved himself righteous by his deeds, he is counted (regarded) as righteous because of his faith.

The precise location and use of the concept of “faith” in chapter 15 is not accidental, from this point forward it is used with great purpose in the Torah. There are moments, at key places in the narrative, when Moses returns to the notion of “faith” and points to it as the decisive factor in God's dealings with Abraham's descendants.

Martin Luther, when finally understating Genesis 15:6, Habakkuk 2:4, and Romans 1:17 says, “*There I began to understand [that] the righteousness of God is that by which the righteous lives by a gift of God, namely by faith. And this is the meaning: the righteousness of God is revealed by the gospel, namely, the passive righteousness with which [the] merciful God justifies us by faith, as it is written “He who through faith is righteous shall live.” Here I felt that I was altogether born again and had entered paradise itself through open gates. Here a totally other face of the entire Scripture showed itself to me...*”

Romans 4:1-3 What then shall we say was gained by Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness.”

We don't get God to love us. He already does. Jesus was not starting a new religion, but showing us the trueness of what God always intended.

Galatians 3:5-9... Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith— just as Abraham “believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”? Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “In you shall all the nations be blessed.” So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

We are still blessed today by a faith that brings righteousness, a faith given to us by our great God.

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