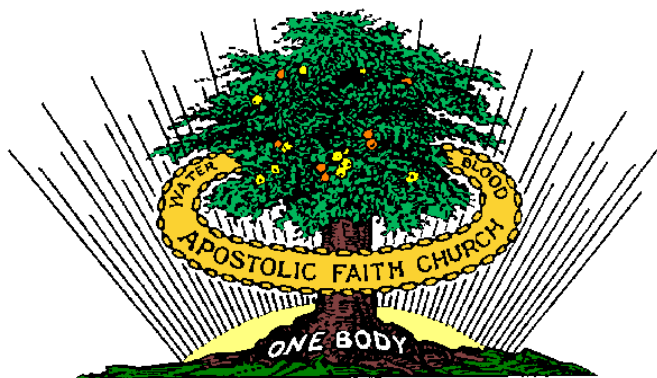


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Righteousness Through Faith (Article by the late Pastor W. O. Hutchinson.)

I want to talk to you a little about **ABRAHAM**, the man who became the friend of God. It is very simple, the way in which he became the friend of God; let us consider here what took place. First of all, God called him out from his kindred and country; he had to leave his father's house, and go to a land that the Lord was to show him.

In the twelfth chapter of Genesis, we read, "I will make of you a great nation, and **I will Bless you** and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing; and I will bless them that bless you, and curse him that curses you; and in you shall all the families of the earth be blessed." This was the promise of God to Abraham, and the Scripture says that Abraham believed God, and God counted it to him for righteousness. In the fifteenth chapter of Genesis we find, "The Word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am your shield, and your exceeding great reward." (This was before his name was changed to Abraham.)

Now God was going to do a great thing in Abram, and he certainly felt in his heart that God was on the move for him. In this chapter he talks with God about a son which is to be born. In the fourth verse we find the Lord saying concerning Eliezer's son who had been born in Abram's house, "This shall not be your heir, but he that comes forth from your own bowels shall be your heir. And he brought him forth outdoors and said, Look now toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to number them" (they were innumerable) "so shall your seed be." (It is necessary for us to notice this, as we will see that we who believe in Jesus Christ are Abraham's seed). And in answer to this, we have in the sixth verse, that Abram "believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness." Brethren, it is a big thing for anyone to believe the promises of God.

Now in Genesis 17:19 we find, "God said, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son indeed; and you shall call his name Isaac: and I will establish My covenant with him for **an everlasting covenant** and with his seed after him." Now here God is touching upon the increase of Abraham's seed, and in Genesis 21:12, at the end of the verse, you will see He said to Abraham, "In Isaac shall your seed be called." God had a plan on hand here; He was looking forward away down the ages to Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and the Seed of Abraham. Isaac was the son of promise; and Jesus Christ is the Son of promise. The great thing is that Abraham BELIEVED God, and that is how he became righteous and blessed: this is how we become righteous and blessed; Abraham was blessed himself because he believed God; other people have been blessed because he believed God; nations have been blessed because he believed God.

Faith and Works. If you will turn to the fourth chapter of Romans, you will see that the teaching there is concerning faith and works; to those who are seeking salvation the question of works is often a stumbling block, for they think that they must attain to righteousness by works, but I would point out that that is not the way Abraham obtained it; no, but his FAITH

was counted for righteousness. Abraham is spoken of in this chapter in a very wonderful way; it tells us clearly that he had to stand in faith in order that the nations of the earth should be blessed. And in the ninth verse we see that “faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness.” In the thirteenth verse we see that the promise was not obtained through the law, (the Ten Commandments), but that this promise and blessing came without the law, and therefore it was of faith.

In the sixteenth verse we read, “Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, as it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations, before Him Whom he believed, even God, Who quickens the dead and calls those things which be not as though they were. Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations according to that which was spoken, so shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about a hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara’s womb: he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that what He had promised He was also able to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.”

So we see our father Abraham, when he received the promise of God, did not stagger at it, though it seemed in the natural an impossible thing. It may seem in the natural to you, that God cannot forgive your sin; the deeds you have committed are so dreadful, that you cry out, “Oh, I’m a sinner! Oh, I’m such a sinner!” I tell you your sin has been laid on Jesus; stagger not at the promise. ‘It is the promise of God full salvation to give,’ says the old hymn. Believe God, and *your faith* shall be counted for *righteousness*. Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness; you believe God, and it will be counted to you for righteousness.

*Free from the law, oh, happy condition, Jesus has bled, and there is remission,
Cursed by the law and bruised by the fall, Grace has redeemed us once for all.*

Abraham had this promise given to him, and the promise of God to him was everything. Now, no doubt, in his experience he had dropped across many a man who had made promises and failed to keep them, but he knew God would not fail; He gave His Word, and Abraham accepted the promise of God, and therefore became a righteous man and a friend of God.

This fourth chapter of Romans shows that we are not saved by works, although faith without works is dead, as the Apostle James says; and all our righteousness is as filthy rags, saith the Scripture, but living faith is made manifest by works; it is, then, not our own righteousness, but the righteousness of Christ working out from us.

The chapter goes on to say, “What shall we then say that Abraham, our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God.” That is, if a man works for a thing, he earns it; he is entitled to it because he works for it. I mean, if a man does a day’s work, he has a right to be paid; and if Abraham had been counted righteous through works alone, then it would not have been of promise, it would not have been of grace. But what does the Scripture say here? “Abraham *believed* God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.” The fourth verse says, “Now to him that works not, but believes on Him that justifies the ungodly, his **Faith is counted for Righteousness**.”

(To be continued.)

