



## SERMON BASED STUDY GUIDE

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Faith and Righteousness: The Heart of the Gospel

### OPENING & PRAYER:

The book of Romans lays out the most important truths about our relationship with God, and in these first four chapters, we see the foundation of the gospel: that all of humanity, no matter our background, is in need of salvation. Whether Jew or Gentile, religious or irreligious, every person stands guilty before a holy God. The law, as good as it is, cannot make us right with God. It only reveals our need for a Savior. But God, in His mercy, has provided a way for us to be made right—not by our own works, but by faith in Jesus Christ.

“Father, we are excited to dive into the book of Romans. Please guide our studies and discussions to help us better understand Your Truths. Help us to not lean on our own understanding, but lean on your truths this week. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.”

## SCRIPTURE:

*For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith." **Romans 1:16-17***

*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, **Romans 1:18***

*What advantage then has the Jew, or what is the profit of circumcision? Much in every way! Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God. For what if some did not believe? Will their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect? Certainly not! Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar. **Romans 3:1-4a***

*What then? Are we better than they? Not at all. For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin. **Romans 3:9***

*for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, **Romans 3:23-25***

*For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, **Ephesians 2:8***

*What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. **Romans 4:1-2***

*For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. **Romans 4:3-4***

*But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness, just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works: **Romans 4:5-6***

*"Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, And whose sins are covered; Blessed is the man to whom the Lord shall not impute sin." **Romans 4:7-8***

*Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all **Romans 4:16***

*(as it is written, “I have made you a father of many nations”) in the presence of Him whom he believed—God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did; who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, “So shall your descendants be.”* **Romans 4:17-18**

*And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah’s womb. He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God,* **Romans 4:19-20**

*and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. And therefore “it was accounted to him for righteousness.” Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, but also for us.* **Romans 4:21-24**

## GO DEEPER:

Paul makes it clear that righteousness is not something we can earn or achieve. Our own righteousness is like filthy rags; it’s not enough. Instead, God gives us His righteousness as a gift, something theologians call “imputed righteousness.” Just like a parent deposits money into a child’s account, God deposits His righteousness into our lives when we believe in Jesus. We don’t earn it, we simply receive it by faith. This is the heart of the gospel: we are justified—declared righteous—by faith, not by works.

Paul uses Abraham and David as examples to show that this has always been God’s way. Abraham was declared righteous before he was circumcised, simply because he believed God. David spoke of the blessedness of the one whose sins are forgiven, not because of their own merit, but because of God’s grace. The law and the prophets all point to this truth: that God’s meeting place with humanity has always been at the mercy seat, where the blood is applied. In the Old Testament, it was the blood of animals; now, it’s the blood of Jesus that covers us and makes us righteous.

Faith is our part, grace is God’s part. Faith is not just believing that God exists, but believing that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him, and that He is able to do what He has promised—even when our circumstances say otherwise. Abraham’s story reminds us that even when we doubt, as long as our core belief is in God’s faithfulness, we are counted as righteous. Our righteousness is not based on our performance, but on God’s promise and our trust in Him.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS:

**All humanity stands equally in need of God's grace, regardless of background, morality, or religious heritage.** The law exposes our sin but cannot save us; it simply shows us our need for a Savior. No one is righteous on their own, and all are without excuse before God. [\[05:33\]](#)

**Righteousness is not something we achieve, but something we receive.** God's righteousness is imputed to us—deposited into our account—when we put our faith in Jesus. Our works, efforts, or religious rituals cannot earn this; it is a gift of grace that we simply accept by believing. [\[13:13\]](#)

**Justification is God's declaration over us that we are righteous, not because of what we have done, but because of what Jesus has done.** To walk in condemnation or doubt God's love is to disagree with what He has spoken over us. We are called to agree with God's verdict and live in the freedom of His declaration. [\[19:57\]](#)

**The mercy seat, where the blood was applied, has always been God's meeting place with humanity.** In Christ, the blood of Jesus covers us, fulfilling what the Old Testament sacrifices pointed to. Our access to God, our forgiveness, and our righteousness are all found at the cross, not in our own efforts. [\[24:22\]](#)

**Faith, like Abraham's, means believing God's promise even when circumstances seem impossible.** Doubt may come to our minds, but true faith holds fast in the heart, trusting that God is able to do what He has said. Righteousness is credited to us not because we never struggle, but because we trust in God's faithfulness above all. [\[41:33\]](#)

## LEARNING AND GROWING:

1. According to Romans 1:16-17, what is the power of God for salvation, and who is it for?

2. What does the sermon say is the purpose of the law? Does it save us or show us something else? **[05:33]**

3. The “mercy seat” is described as God’s meeting place with humanity. What does it mean that Jesus is now our mercy seat? How does this change our access to God? **[24:22]**

4. The sermon says that to walk in condemnation or doubt God’s love is to disagree with what He has spoken over us. Are there areas where you struggle to accept God’s verdict about you? What practical steps can you take to agree with God’s declaration and live in that freedom?

5. The sermon says, “Faith is our part, grace is God’s part.” What is one area of your life where you need to step out in faith and trust God to do what only He can do? **[33:12]**

## CLOSING PRAYER:

“Father, thank you for your guidance and love for us. We know that we are far from perfect, but you do not call us to be perfect. You have forgiven our imperfections. You overcome where we fall short. We thank you and love you for it. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”