



**The Oaks
Baptist Church**
Grand Prairie, Texas



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GOD'S PROMISES OF RIGHTEOUSNESS ROM 4:2-25

What is faith? Most of us are familiar with the biblical definition found in Hebrews 11:1: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." When we matter-of-factly use such words when witnessing to our non-Christian acquaintances, we run the risk of "losing" them. At the other end of the scale are biblical words that are *so* common in English that we run the risk of misunderstanding when Christian usage differs from secular usage. "Credit" and "credited" is just such a word group. One dictionary lists "credit" as having eight primary meanings as a noun, and five as a verb. Counting secondary meanings and cognates, there are at least twenty-seven understandings! People have good and bad credit. People have credit cards. Movies list credits at the end. A person is a credit to his or her profession. A person is credited with an invention—etc.! But as we shall see, **"credited" is a word we dare not misunderstand when it comes to grasping the core of the Christian faith.** The Jews knew that both Abraham and Sarah were past the age of having children when God promised Abraham He would make of him "a great nation" (Genesis 12:2). They believed they were the heirs of that promise, that Israel was that "great nation." **Paul would not argue that point, but he would not limit the promise to those who were Abraham's children by genealogy. He expanded it to those who were Abraham's children because they exhibited a faith like that of Abraham.** Faith sees beyond the present and trusts that unseen realities are true. One Bible teacher defined faith as "the acceptance of testimony." For example, in a court of law, testimony is heard. The prosecuting attorney presents testimony attempting to show that the accused is guilty of a crime. The defense attorney likewise presents testimony attempting to prove that the accused is not guilty. In the final analysis, the jury will have to decide which testimony they find more credible. Paul said later in Romans 10:17, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Not all who hear the Word of God, however become believers.

Abraham is a great example of faith. While we know very little about the reasons he initially became a believer, he is set forth as a man of great faith. Thus far in Romans, Paul has laid down **two very important principles.** First, **we are all sinners**, whether Jews or Gentiles (3:23). Second, **we can be justified only by faith in Christ**, apart from the works of the law (2:28). It was quite common among Jews of Paul's day to believe that one could be put right with God (justified) by obeying the commandments of the Mosaic law. Of course, no one ever perfectly obeyed these commandments. Nevertheless, from the ritualistic standpoint, a person might declare that he was "blameless" (Phil 3:6), as did Paul prior to his conversion. If a person is able to convince himself that he is "blameless" with regard to God's commandments, it is easy to see how he might feel he has earned his salvation by works. Even though we are to obey God's commandments as Christians, we should never conclude that we have earned salvation in this manner. Salvation is a gift to be received (John 1:12; Acts 2:41; Rom 6:23), not a work to be performed. Since Abraham was the father of the Hebrew people, he was often set forth as a great example to follow. But how was Abraham justified before God? It was not by works but by faith! If Abraham had been made right with God by works, he would have had reason to "glory" (Rom. 4:2), or boast. Indeed, if we could be saved by performing meritorious works, once we had performed enough of them, we too could boast in the salvation we had achieved (Eph. 2:9). **Salvation, however, is not something to be achieved but to be received.** Once we have received Christ, **we are obligated to live the Christian life** (Col. 2:6).

(adapted from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator and the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)

Displaying the Righteousness of God A Study in Romans

Date	Lesson	Text
07/06	Introduction	
07/13	All Have Sinned	1:16-20; 3:9-20
07/20	God's Judgment	2:1-16
07/27	God's Promises	4:2-25
08/03	Justified By Faith	5:1-21
08/10	Victory in Christ	6:1-14
08/17	Life in the Spirit	8:1-16
08/24	Salvation in Christ	10:5-17
08/31	Marks of a Christian	12:1-21
09/07	Responsible Citizens	13:1-14
09/14	Do Not Judge	14:1-15:6

Food for Thought

No More Shame

Simply
Honor God's
Authority and
Miss
Emotional disaster

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on you own understanding, in all your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your path. **Prov 3:5-6**

(supplied by a Class Member)

NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

BEING AN HEIR THROUGH RIGHTEOUSNESS

Heirs through justification (2, 25)

- Free justification through redemption (Romans 3:24)
- Justification through faith apart from the law (Romans 3:28)
- Justification that brings peace (Romans 5:1)
- Justification through Jesus' blood (Romans 5:9)
- Predestined justification (Romans 8:30)
- Justification through the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:11)
- Justification through grace (Titus 3:7)
- Justification through faith with resulting works (James 2:24)

Heirs through faith (3, 13)

- Faith that involves confession (Romans 10:10)
- Faith that has as its object Jesus (Galatians 2:16)
- Faith that must be lived (Galatians 3:11)
- Faith through the law leading us to Jesus (Galatians 3:24)

Heirship depends on sonship (17-18)

- Sonship that requires adoption through the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:14-17)
- Sonship that requires baptism into Jesus (Gal 3:26-29)
- Sonship that requires redemption (Gal 4:4-7)

THE PROMISES OF BEING RIGHTEOUS

What were the promises

- Heir to the world (13)
 - Promise of national blessings (Gen 12:2-3)
 - Promise of being the blessing to many nations (Rom 9:4-5)
 - Promise of Gentile salvation (Rom 15:8-9)
- Father of many nations (17)
 - Promise of many off-springs (Gen 15:5)
 - Promise of father of many nations (Gen 17:5)
- Faith credited as righteousness (24)
 - Promise of cleansing (2 Cor 6:17-7:1)
 - Promise of a new covenant (Heb 8:6-8, 10-12)
 - Promise of participating in the Divine Nature (2 Peter 1:4)

What is the value of the promises (14)

- Value because Jesus is the method of the promise (Gal 3:16)
- Value because God is able to do more than all we can imagine (Eph 3:20)
- Value because nothing is too hard for God (Jer 32:17)
- Value because with God all things are possible (Matt 19:26)
- Value because God will always complete the work in me (Phil 1:6)

What are the guarantees of the promises (16)

- Guaranteed because God established it (2 Cor 1:21-22)
- Guaranteed because we have been sealed (Eph 1:12-14)
- Guaranteed because God has vowed it (Heb 7:22)
- Guaranteed because God prepared it (2 Cor 5:5)