

Bible e-Study on the book of Romans (4)

The promise of belief!

“20 Yet he (Abraham) did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God... The words “it was credited to him” were written not for him alone, 24 but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. 25 He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification. [Romans](#) 4:20-25 (selected portions)

NUGGET – These verses from the 4th chapter of Romans are worth much to us Christians today. We have much in our society and the world that assails us for what we believe. Many, like Richard Dawkins, would like us to simply go away, because he claims we are too dim-witted because we believe in God and we believe in His promises.

Yet these verses help us to focus our belief outside of ourselves. We don't claim that what we believe is true because *we* say so. No, we claim that God is true and so what He says is what we believe. Our belief does not make God true; God's truth is what changes us into believers.

Abraham is the father of all who believe God, because he believed God's word of promise to him. Abraham is 'credited' with righteousness because he believed God's promise to be valid. Yes Abraham made mistakes and he fouled up often. Read through Genesis chapters 11-25 sometime and you'll see that very clearly.

Yet still righteousness is credited to Abraham. That is a powerful message for us. Yes, we do want to live well, and we want to please God, but none of that counts toward our righteousness, because then it would be up to us. God credits righteousness, God grants righteousness, God is the One who delivers righteousness only through belief in His promises. It isn't up to us to make sure that we 'get it all correct'. It isn't even by how we live out our response to God that matters. We need to get it in our heads (and then let it drop 18 inches into our hearts!) that we are righteous only by the gift of faith, and that we are not 'almost' righteous or that we're 'nearly' good enough people apart from that gift. None of what we *do* acquires righteousness for us according these verses from Romans.

There is no other way for us to accrue righteousness. We do not earn it, make it, or 'feel' it hard enough to make it true. As the verses today say *but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.* It is that promise carried out by Jesus and it is in His name that we believe.

Only in the righteousness of Jesus Christ are we made whole. Only by believing in His name is His righteousness imputed to us. ([John 3:16-18](#)) And only by the gift of faith from God are we enabled, like Abraham, to believe.

APPLICATION -

1. To apply this lesson is both the easiest and the most elusive thing to do. It is easy in that God is the one who comes to us and gives us faith, which enables us to rest in His Promises. But it is also elusive in that we tend to then try and make of it something *WE do* rather than realize it is something we are! So go look in the mirror sometime and acknowledge that who you are by the gift of faith in the righteousness of Christ is whom you see in that reflection.

PRAY – O God of our father Abraham, grant to us that same faithful trust in Your word of promise that he displayed. May we be strengthened by Your living Word, Jesus Christ to trust that we are whom You have redeemed us to be, believers in You. In Jesus name, Amen.