



# Faith Receives Righteousness as Gift

**“For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness” (Romans 4:3)**

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“What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? 2 For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. 3 For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. 4 Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. 5 But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. 6 Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, 7 Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. 8 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. 9 Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. 10 How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. 11 And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also: 12 And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised. 13 For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. 14 For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect: 15 Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression. 16 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” (Romans 4:1-16).

## Introduction

Romans 4:1–16 brings us to the very heart of the Christian message: **salvation by faith**. Not faith as a vague idea, not faith as a religious badge, but **faith that is living, trusting, balanced, and active**. Paul turns to Abraham—the father of the faithful—to show us what genuine faith looks like, how it is received, and what it demands from us today.

This passage speaks not only to believers longing to grow deeper, but also to those who stand at the edge of faith, uncertain, questioning, or searching. And Paul’s message is wonderfully simple: **“Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace”** (Romans 4:16).

Let us explore three great truths from this passage.

1. **Faith begins with hearing God’s call**—like Abraham.
2. **Faith receives righteousness as a gift**—not a wage.
3. **Faith walks in obedience, perseverance, and hope**—trusting God’s promise.

### 1. True Faith Begins With Hearing God’s Call (Romans 4:1–3)

Paul asks, “*What shall we say then that Abraham our father... hath found?*” And he answers by pointing us to Genesis 15:6: “*Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.*” The salient points from this scripture are that (a) **faith begins** when God speaks and (b) **faith responds** in trust, not negotiation

**(a) Faith begins when God speaks**—Abraham was not seeking God; God sought him. He lived in a pagan land, surrounded by idols, traditions, and a culture that knew not the Lord (Joshua



24:2). Yet God spoke—and Abraham believed. Likewise, “*So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*” (Romans 10:17). **True faith does not begin with our goodness, effort, or religious observance. It begins with God revealing Himself and our heart responding.**

**(b) Faith responds in trust, not negotiation**— God promised Abraham descendants when he had none. He promised a land he had never seen. He promised a future he could not imagine.

**And Abraham trusted.** In the secular world we often admire those who take bold steps like:

- Explorers who push beyond the known,
- Scientists like Marie Curie who persisted through uncertainty,
- Entrepreneurs who invest without guarantees.

These examples show that **faith is not passive; it inspires movement**. But biblical faith goes further—it leans on **God’s character**, not our courage. **Are you waiting for full certainty before trusting God?** Abraham never received that luxury. He simply believed God—and it was counted to him for righteousness. You can begin the same way.

## **2. Faith Receives Righteousness as a Gift, Not a Wage (Romans 4:4–8)**

Paul draws a sharp contrast that:

- A wage is earned.
- Grace is given.

“*Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt*” (Romans 4:4).

**This implies that no amount of religious performance can earn acceptance with God.**

Whether Jew or Gentile, moral or immoral, young or old—no human being earns righteousness. Isaiah declares, “*All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags*” (Isaiah 64:6). David himself, a king who knew both triumph and failure, spoke of the blessedness of the forgiven man: “*Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered*” (Romans 4:7, quoting Psalm 32:1).

**You may ask why this matters for today?** Well, the reason is because many modern people—even non-religious ones—live as though the universe is keeping score such as:

- “If I am kind, life will be kind to me.”
- “If I do good, I will be favoured.”
- “If I slip up, everything bad will happen.”

This produces a performance mindset, which in turn produces anxiety, guilt, and fear. But the Gospel proclaims something different: **God does not save us because we are good—He saves us because He is gracious.** God certainly expects the Christian to perform well and walk circumspectly after salvation, but past performance record is not the basis nor pre-requisite for salvation.

**Another important aspect to note here is that faith receives; it does not demand. This messages to:**

- The believer is: stop striving to earn what God has already given.
- The unbeliever is: stop thinking you must clean yourself before coming to God. Christ has already done the work. Your part is to believe.

## **3. True Faith Walks in Obedience, Perseverance, and Hope (Romans 4:9–16)**

Paul argues that Abraham was counted righteous **before** circumcision (v. 10), meaning that he became the father of all who believe—Jew and Gentile alike. This shows us that **faith is not a one-time emotional experience. It is a relationship of trust that produces action.** Observe carefully the following salient points:



**(a) Faith obeys**—Hebrews 11:8: “*By faith Abraham... obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.*”

Faith that never steps out is not faith; it is merely opinion.

**(b) Faith perseveres through contradictions**—Paul writes: “*Who against hope believed in hope*” (Romans 4:18). Abraham believed God even when his body was “as good as dead” (Romans 4:19). **Faith is not blind optimism; it is choosing to trust God’s promise over visible impossibility.**

In our world we admire resilience—athletes training through pain, soldiers enduring hardship, individuals rebuilding after crisis. These are reflections of a deeper truth: **faith endures because it sees God, not circumstances.**

**(c) Faith produces hope**—Verse 16 sums it up: “*Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure...*” Faith makes God’s promises certain, not because we are strong, but because He cannot lie (Titus 1:2).

This message reminds and encourages:

- 1) **Believers** to walk by faith daily—pray, serve, love, forgive, give, witness. Let your life be a testimony.
- 2) **non-believers** that faith in God does not remove challenges, but it transforms them. You will never again face life alone or without purpose.

### **Conclusion: A Call to Genuine, Balanced, Active Faith**

In summary, Romans 4:1–16 teaches us that:

1. **Faith begins with hearing God’s call**—like Abraham.
2. **Faith receives righteousness as a gift**—not a wage.
3. **Faith walks in obedience, perseverance, and hope**—trusting God’s promise.

The call today is simple yet profound for:

#### **(a) the Believer**

- 1) Return to a fresh, active, daily faith.
- 2) Do not live on past experiences.
- 3) Trust God anew.

#### **(b) Unbeliever or seeker**

- 1) Take the first step.
- 2) Like Abraham, you don’t need all the answers.
- 3) You simply need to believe God—and He will meet you with grace.

“*For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.*” (Romans 4:3)

**May God grant us all such a faith—genuine, balanced, active, humble, and unshakeable.**