

“Sola Fide”
Romans 4:1-25
12/18/22
Message 9

Introduction

- Title Of The Message: “Sola Fide”

- **Illustration: A Pastor Who Moved from the Truth of God’s Word**

- **Told this story to his congregation**

- His attempt to explain his outlook on Christianity and Heaven
- The Story...
 - Was about a frog who fell into a pail of milk
 - Stuck couldn’t climb out & he couldn’t get any leverage to leap out
 - So, he did the only thing that he could do he just kept paddling around & around hoping that he could be rescued
 - As he paddled around something amazing took place
 - His paddling churned a pad of butter from which he was able to launch himself out
 - The moral of this story & the point of the pastor’s message
 - Was just keep paddling, keep on working, keep doing your best, & you will make it to heaven...

- **This is a VERY Sad way of thinking**

- That we can just keep paddling and we will make to heaven

- BUT Sadly - Many in our world believe this
 - They will say
 - I AM a good person
 - I am have done good things
 - I have been good to people
 - I have been kind to people
 - Or to quote Dolly Parton
 - *"If there is a heaven, I hope to hell I go there"*
 - If I'm just good enough, I just might make...
 - **Well Paul has just laid out the first 3 chapters of Romans –**
 - Informing us that NONE are GOOD

• **Review**

- **Chapter 1**
 - They Suppress the Truth in Unrighteousness vs. 19-21
 - They Claim to be WISE v. 22
 - They Change the Glory v. 23
 - So - God GAVE them up vs. 24-32
 - To Sexual Immorality
 - To Homosexuality
 - To a Debased Mind

- **Chapter 2**

- **1st The Moralist**

- “Good Ol Boys” / “Conservatives” (with Christ)

- **2nd The Religious Jews – Or “Religious christians”**

- Say and Do the “Right” thing But their hearts are far from God

- **Chapter 3:1-20**

- The Jewish ADVANTAGE vs. 1-8

- Spells it OUT in PLAN language

- **ALL have SINNED ALL Are GUILTY vs. 9-20**

- **Chapter 3:21-31**

- BUT NOW...

- The Righteousness of God vs. the Sinfulness of MANKIND

- There is a RIGHTEOUSNESS apart From The LAW

- Remember –

- The LAW reveals our need for a Savior

- All have SINNED

- BUT God Made a way to be right with Him Apart from the LAW

- Gave us and Examples “Types” OT Sacrifices

- The TRUE Sacrifice JESUS

- ALL who put their faith in Jesus will be Saved
- At the Moment of salvation
 - Justified = Just As If I Never Sinned

▪ *MacDonald' "When God justifies the believing sinner, He not only acquits him from guilt but clothes him in His own righteousness and thus makes him absolutely fit for heaven. "Justification goes beyond acquittal to approval; beyond pardon to promotion." Acquittal means only that a person is set free from a charge. Justification means that positive righteousness is imputed."*

- Been Redeemed
 - Purchased from the Slave market = Set Free
- Propitiation vs. Expiation
 - Expiation = Debt Satisfied
 - Propitiation = Emotions Satisfied = Awakens God's Love
- **The Title again is – Sola Fide**
 - Salvation is by GRACE & FAITH ALONE –
 - Justification BY FAITH alone
 - Brief History on the title
 - The Roman Catholic Church
 - Have added to the FREE gift of salvation
 - They have add works...

- Salvation in Christ – fine BUT now you need to do
- Indulgences, Hail Mary's, works, etc...
- Protestant Reformation
 - Broke Away from this heresy of Salvation by Works
 - They Came up with the “Five Solas” which are five Latin phrases
 - Sola meaning ONLY
 - The Phrases
 - 1st Sola Scriptura: “Scripture Alone”
 - 2nd Sola Fide: “Faith Alone”
 - 3rd Sola Gratia: “Grace Alone”
 - 4th Solo Christo: “Christ Alone”
 - 5th Soli Deo Gloria: “To the Glory of God Alone”
- These Five Solas
 - Gave a Strong Correction
 - That Salvation can be by Works

Ephesians 2:8–9 (NKJV)

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,
9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.

- **Now this morning - Paul is GOING to Illustrate the MIRACLE of Justification**

- **He will Use Abraham and David as Examples**
 - Two great Patriarchs of Israel
- **We will see 3 Wonderful Truth of Sola Fide**
 - Justified By Faith Alone vs. 1-8
 - Justified By Grace – Not The Law vs. 9-18
 - Justified By The Promise & Power of God vs. 19-25

Justified By Faith Alone vs. 1-8

First: Abraham was not justified by works vs. 1-3

- **1st What then shall we say v. 1**

Romans 4:1 (NKJV)

1 What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh?

- In Using Abraham to illustrate
 - God's Word tells us that Abraham was a friend of God. (James 2:23 / 2 Chr. 20:7 / Isa. 41:8)
 - The most esteemed man among the Jewish people
 - An even greater than the "George Washington" of the American people.
 - The Jews were quite proud to be called the sons of Abraham (Luke 3:8)
 - He is the Prototype for Faith
 - So, they would pay attention to this!
- **3rd For if Abraham was justified by works v. 3**

Romans 4:2 (NKJV)

2 *For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.*

- NOW - The Jewish teachers of Paul's day believed that Abraham
 - Was justified BY HIS WORKS, by keeping the law.
 - *Ancient passages from the rabbis say: "We find that Abraham our father had performed the whole Law before it was given" and "Abraham was perfect in all his deeds with the Lord."*
 - The rabbis argued that Abraham kept the law perfectly before it was given, keeping it by intuition or anticipation.
- AKA = If Abraham was justified BY WHAT he did –
 - Then he could BOAST
 - Nevertheless - Such boasting is nothing before God
 - This boasting is nothing because before God, because sees ALL

○ **4th For what does the Scripture say? v. 3**

- **1st Paul makes it clear**

Romans 4:3 (NKJV)

3 *For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."*

- Abraham's Righteousness DID NOT come from Performing Good Works
 - BUT from Belief in God.
 - It was a righteousness obtained through faith.

- **2nd Context - Takes us Back to THE OT - Turn to Genesis 15**

- Context to Genesis 15
- Abraham (still known at this time as Abram)
- Has just rescued his nephew Lot
- Who was taken hostage when the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah had been captured by the kings of the east.
- After turning down the riches of the “world” from the King of Sodom
- Abraham was wondering where the promise of God was

Genesis 15:1–21 (NKJV)

1 After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, “Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward.”

2 But Abram said, “Lord GOD, what will You give me, seeing I go childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?”

3 Then Abram said, “Look, You have given me no offspring; indeed one born in my house is my heir!”

4 And behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, “This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir.”

5 Then He brought him outside and said, “Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them.” And He said to him, “So shall your descendants be.”

6 And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.

- NOT BY Works

- BY FAITH – Abraham Believed

- The Covenant was ONE SIDED

- **3rd Account v. 3b**

Romans 4:3 (NKJV)

3 For what does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.”

- Greek: Logizomai
- Means: To reckon, count, compute, calculate, count over
 - This is an old Greek accounting word which simply means to “set down accounts”.
 - It’s to record your checks in the check register.
- Note of interest - Accounted
 - It is found 40 times in Scripture
 - Almost half of them (19) are in Romans
 - 11 times it’s found in Romans 4
 - (verses 3,4,5,6,8,9,10,11,22,23,24).
 - Romans is Paul’s “accounting” book.
- **4th For Righteousness**
 - Remember that righteousness is also more than the absence of evil and guilt.
 - It is a positive good,
 - Meaning that God does not only declare us innocent, But righteous.

Second: A distinction made between grace and works vs. 4-5

- ***1st Now to him who works v. 4***

Romans 4:4 (NKJV)

4 Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt.

- Working = To earn your salvation
 - If salvation were on the basis of Works
 - God would owe salvation as a debt
 - But salvation is always a sovereignly given gift of God's grace
- Counted as GRACE
 - Wuest on Grace – Charis
 - The ancient Greek word translated grace:
 - *“Signified in classical authors a favor done out of the spontaneous generosity of the heart without any expectation or return. Of course, this favor was always done to one’s friend, never to an enemy... But when charis comes into the New Testament, it takes an infinite leap forward, for the favor God did at Calvary was for those who hated Him.”*
 - **2nd But to him who does not work but believes on Him v. 5**

Romans 4:5 (NKJV)

5 But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness,

- Shocking as it may seems - The justified man is the one who
 - 1st Does not work
 - 2nd He renounces any possibility of earning his salvation.
 - 3rd He disavows any personal merit or goodness.

- 4th He acknowledges that all his best labors could never fulfill God's righteous demands.
- Instead, he believes on Him who justifies the ungodly!
 - He puts his faith and trust in the Lord.
 - He takes God at His word.
 - HIS FAITH IS IN GOD
- *Smith; "Does that mean then that I have a free ride, a free ticket, it doesn't matter what I do as long as I believe in Jesus Christ? Yes, as long as you believe in Jesus Christ, your belief will be manifested by your works. But the works don't make you righteous. They don't save you. But they are the fruit of that faith and belief in Jesus Christ."*

• **Third: David and the blessedness of justification through faith vs. 6-8**

○ **1st Just as David also Describes vs. 6-8**

Romans 4:6–8 (NKJV)

6 *just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works:*

7 *"Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, And whose sins are covered;*

8 *Blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin."*

- Context - Paul is quoting (Psalm 32)
- The "back story" to the passage
 - David – Bathsheba – Uriah – Nathan
 - Briefly Explain
 - Nathan to David – You are that man

- David Said to Nathan

2 Samuel 12:13 (NKJV)

13 So David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD." And Nathan said to David, "The LORD also has put away your sin; you shall not die.

- David Writes Psalm 32 & 51
- He knows there is NOTHING that can be done – his sins are capital offense

Psalm 32:1–2 (NKJV)

1 Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered.

2 Blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit there is no deceit.

Psalm 51:16–17 (NKJV)

16 For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it; You do not delight in burnt offering.

17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart—
These, O God, You will not despise.

Justified By Grace – Not The Law vs. 9-17

- **First: Abraham was counted righteous before he was circumcised vs. 9-12**

- **1st Does this blessedness then come upon the circumcised only?**

Romans 4:9 (NKJV)

9 Does this blessedness then come upon the circumcised only, or upon the uncircumcised also? For we say that faith was accounted to Abraham for righteousness.

- In the mind of the Jews
 - They had a corner on God's justification
 - That only those who were circumcised could be justified.

- **The apostle turns again to the experience of Abraham**

- To show that this is not so.

- **2nd How then was it accounted?**

Romans 4:10 (NKJV)

***10 How then was it accounted? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised?
Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised.***

- **OH NO Huston - We have a problem**

- Abraham was JUSTIFIED before Circumcised
- Abraham was counted as righteous in Genesis 15:6.
- He did not receive the covenant of circumcision until Genesis 17
- Which was at least 14 years later.

- **Therefore his righteousness**

- Wasn't based on circumcision (keeping the LAW – BUT on FAITH

- **3rd The faith which he had while still uncircumcised v. 11**

Romans 4:11 (NKJV)

11 And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while still uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also,

- In fact, Abraham, the father of all those who believe,
 - Was declared righteous while he was still uncircumcised!
- NOTE

- Therefore, how could anyone then say (as some did in Paul's day) that Gentiles must be circumcised before God would declare them righteous?

○ **4th That he might be the father of all those who believe v. 12**

Romans 4:12 (NKJV)

12 and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of the faith which our father Abraham had while still uncircumcised.

- The Jews of Paul's day thought circumcision meant they were the true descendants of Abraham.
- But AKA = To the Gentiles as WELL
- Hughes; "Therefore, sola fide was a Gentile principle long before it was Jewish reality"

• **Second: Based on the principle of faith, not law or works vs. 13-15**

○ **1st For the promise that he would be the heir of the world vs. 13-14**

Romans 4:13–14 (NKJV)

13 For the promise that he would 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 those who are of the law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise made of no effect,

- They are based on God's declaration of Abraham's righteousness through faith.
- The law cannot bring us into the blessings of God's promises.
- This is not because the law is bad, but because we are unable to keep it.

○ **2nd Because the law brings about wrath v. 15**

Romans 4:15 (NKJV)

15 because the law brings about wrath; for where there is no law there is no transgression.

- The law brings about God's wrath, not His blessing.

- **Third: Following Abraham's Example vs. 16-18**

- **1st It is of faith that it might be according to grace v. 16a**

Romans 4:16 (NKJV)

16 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

- Paul is talking about Jews (of the law) and Gentiles (of the faith).
- The Law was only given to the nation of Israel, the Jews.
- If salvation comes only through the Law
- Then how could the rest of us be saved?
- How could Abraham be the father of "many nations" if only the Jews could be saved?
- Salvation comes by grace through faith so that every one of us, whether we're Jews or Gentiles, can be absolutely sure of our salvation.

- **Second: The life-giving power of the God Abraham believed in vs. 17-18**

Romans 4:17–18 (NKJV)

17 (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;

18 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."

- **1st So that he became the father of many nations:**

- The fulfillment of the promise in Genesis 17:4-5
- Is found not only in Abraham's descendants through Isaac, but especially in his role as being the father of us all who believe – and those believers come from every nation under heaven.
- **2nd Who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as if they did:**
 - These works of God demonstrate His ability to count things that are not (such as our righteousness) as if they were (as in counting us righteous).
 - *Smith; "I'm greatly comforted when God speaks about me as righteous, justified, glorified, holy, pure, and saintly. God can talk about such things before they exist, because He knows they will exist."*
- **3rd Contrary to hope, in hope believed:**
 - This life-giving power was accomplished in Abraham as he believed.
 - The power was evident naturally and spiritually.

Justified By The Promise and Power of God vs. 19-25

• **First: The Character of Abraham's Faith vs. 19-22**

Romans 4:19–22 (NKJV)

19 *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.*

20 *He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God,*

21 *and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.*

22 *And therefore "it was accounted to him for righteousness."*

- **1st Not being weak in faith:**

- Past the AGE to have a baby
- Still believed the PROMISES of God
- **2nd He did not consider his own body, already dead:**
 - Abraham, in faith, did not look to circumstances (his own body and the deadness of Sarah's womb)
 - But he looked at the promise of God.
- **3rd He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief:**
 - His faith did not waver; and it gave glory to God.
 - Though it was a huge challenge, Abraham remained steadfast in faith.
- **4th Being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform:**
 - Abraham's faith came because he had been fully convinced of God's ability to perform what He has promised.
 - Lessons
 - 1st Paul removes all the SIN Abraham committed – Hagar
 - 2nd Is your God too small?

• **Second: Abraham's justification and our own vs. 23-25**

Romans 4:23–25 (NKJV)

23 Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him,
24 but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up
 Jesus our Lord from the dead,
25 who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of
 our justification.

- **1st It was not written for his sake alone**

- He is an example that we are invited to follow – it is also for us.
- **2nd Who believe in Him who raised up Jesus:**
 - Abraham Look forward to the PROMISE
 - We Look Backwards to the Promise

Closing

- Living the Victorious Christian life
 - Happens when
 - We REST and TRUST in what God says –
 - In God's Eyes – at the Moment of our Conversion –
 - Salvation happens
 - Justifications happens
 - Propitiation
 - Redemption happens
 - You have been made BRAND NEW
 - SO STOP trying to
 - Earn it
 - Merit it
 - Quit trying to score spiritual brownie points with God
 - That's the greatest way to become totally frustrated as a believer

- Simply Walk WORTHY OF THE SALVATION God has given you