

St. Paul and His Letters Part 2

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IMMORALITY AND ELECTION THEOLOGY IN CORINTH

For Paul the Corinthians belong to the *ekklesia*, the sanctified community. They have been *called* to this community – behind this is *election theology*. All members of the Church are the sanctified ones because God through Christ has chosen and elected them to be part of this sanctified community. Because of this the people must avoid *immorality* – the problem in many of Paul’s communities is that they hold onto immoral practices. In Corinth there is the special problem that some people think they are *beyond* the ordinary rules of morality. These people therefore can go to the temples with idol worship, or have ritual sex with prostitutes, because they *know* that they’re beyond this. The Corinthians don’t seem to *understand* that they’re doing something morally wrong – they think they can do anything they want; this is a greater problem than the immoral behavior itself. Paul clarifies something that they misunderstood in the first letter – they can’t disassociate themselves from *everybody* that is immoral in the world, but they *should* exclude immoral people from their community.

Evidently the Corinthians are bringing lawsuits against each other. For Paul the real problem is this – what bothers him is that members of the sanctified community are going to people *outside* of the sanctified community to receive judgment. Paul has a high expectation of the community – they have failed in this instance because they *should* be able to judge their own cases, because eventually they will be judging the world, and even the angels, in the end times. The *ekklesia* is a sanctified zone, and there should be no immorality in their midst.

There is a slogan being said about in Corinth: “Everything is lawful for me.” Therefore, there are no more moral rules. Paul corrects these statements – “but not everything is beneficial” and “I will not let myself be dominated by anything.” Another statement going around is, “food for the stomach and the stomach for food” – this is a statement downplaying the importance the *body*; and Paul responds that the body is not for immorality but for the Lord. The body if it joins a prostitute becomes one with a prostitute, and therefore can’t become a member of Christ’s body. The body of the believer doesn’t simply belong to the believer, but to Christ, because the community is the *body of Christ* – the body both individually and as a community are *temples of the Holy Spirit*. Paul has a high regard for the body. Paul has what we could call a “*body ethic*.”

The basic problem in Corinth is simply this: *enthusiasm* – the original meaning is “to be filled with God.” Corinth was a charismatic community, and there is no problem with being filled with the Spirit. However, the Corinthians don’t understand the *distinction* between what has *already* happened and what has *not yet* happened –

(*Spirit versus Salvation*). Another problem is the meaning of “*wisdom*” – Paul teaches them this in light of the *cross*.

MARRIAGE AND VIRGINITY

In chapter 6 as we’ve seen there is the serious problem with morality (a person living in incest, some people going to prostitutes). When we come to chapter 7, it is clear that Paul is responding to a letter. This entire chapter deals with marriage, celibacy, and sexuality. Some married couples are abstaining from sexual relations. Paul responds that it is a good thing for a man not to touch a woman but because of cases of immorality, every man should have his own wife, and every woman her own husband. Men and women have mutual authority over each other. They shouldn’t deprive each other of sex except for mutual consent, only for a time, and for *prayer* – then they should return to one another. Paul is a realist with regard to sexuality.

Paul says that his celibate life is a gift from the Spirit and everyone has a different “particular gift.” He advises the unmarried and widows to remain as they are “as I do.” Paul also understands that not everyone can do this and if they don’t have “self-control” it is better to marry than to be on fire with passions.

Paul continues that a wife should not separate from her husband, and a man should not divorce his wife and if he does he cannot remarry. He goes further to talk about people married to unbelievers – a person should stay with their non-believing spouse because the children and spouse are sanctified by the believer. Then we have the so-called “Pauline privilege” – a believer may allow the unbelieving spouse to separate – this later becomes one of the reasons for annulling a marriage.

Paul encourages the Corinthians to remain as they were “when they were called.” These verses are very important because they show why Paul is responding in the way he is responding. From Paul’s perspective, the parousia is not far away; therefore for believers they should remain in the situation they were in when they became believers. The most important thing is the call. Having said that, there are exceptions – it is okay for an unmarried person to marry and for a married person to separate under certain conditions. Paul uses “call” four times. The underlying theme is Paul’s *election* theology – the *ideal* is to remain in the state by which you were called.

Then Paul turns to marriage in the light of the parousia – not only is election theology present here, but Paul’s lively belief in the coming parousia. Paul associated “affliction” with marriage not because marriage itself is an affliction, but because the parousia is at hand. He goes further to talk about the *anxieties* that come upon those who are married; if they can, the unmarried should remain in this state. If you are not married to a spouse there is only one person you have to please (the Lord), but if you are married you have to please both the Lord and your spouse, and sometimes this is hard. Ideally an unmarried person is single-minded about the “things of the Lord,” but a married person on the other hand is anxious about the

“things of the world.” Paul has an idealistic view of celibacy – ideally speaking, if you don’t have a spouse you can be single-minded in the Lord. For him celibacy is a charisma and it should only be exercised by those to whom the gift has been given. On the other hand, Paul has a healthy, realistic view of marriage.

Later in the chapter, Paul comes back to unmarried virgins – it is unclear what he is talking about (either a father betrothing a virgin to a young man, or possibly a practice in Corinth that a betrothed couple decides to refrain from sex: “If anyone thinks he is behaving improperly toward his virgin then let him get married. This seems to be what we would call “spiritual marriage” – Paul realizes that this doesn’t always work, and marriage is good but not getting married is better. Further he speaks about widows – they are allowed to remarry when their husband dies, but in Paul’s opinion she is blessed if she remains as she is.

WOMEN, BE SUBMISSIVE TO YOUR HUSBANDS - EPHESIANS

Backlay tells us that for the Jew, the woman was a very lowly person. The Jewish man in his morning prayer thanked God for not making him a woman. Women were considered things and not persons. In theory, the Jew had a high ideal of marriage, but in practice this wasn’t the case. The Rabbis taught, “Every Jew must surrender his life rather than commit idolatry, murder or adultery.” The law of divorce is summarized in Deuteronomy 24:1. (Please Read) The stricter Rabbis headed by the famous Shammai held that the phrase meant adultery alone but the liberal Rabbis headed by Hillel interpreted this as wide as possible. Two problems, the wife had no right of divorce and the process of divorce was easy. At the time of Jesus, this was a big problem because many Jewish girls were refusing to marry because their position as wife was uncertain.

In the Greek world, this was even worse. Prostitution was legal. There was no legal procedure of divorce. Fidelity was non-existent. When Paul was writing, the situation was even worse. Paul’s view was not a common view held by men. He was calling men and women to a new purity and a new fellowship in the married life. Paul lists four loves the husband must have for his wife:

- Sacrificial love
- Purifying love
- Caring love
- Unbreakable love¹

PAUL’S THEOLOGY OF JUSTIFICATION IN GALATIANS

¹ This section from Ephesians is paraphrased from Backlay’s commentary.

Paul had founded the church at Galatia. Apparently he didn't require the Galatians to be circumcised, but after he left, "agitators" or "Judaizers," probably Jewish Christian missionaries, compelled Galatians to be circumcised in order to be incorporated into the People of Israel. Paul realized that God had done something new in Jesus, and faith was a total act of self-giving and obedience and so the people of Galatia did not need to be circumcised.

Peter was enjoying fellowship with the gentile believers in Antioch. Suddenly some of the Jewish Christians from Jerusalem came to Antioch and they are scandalized by what they see. They could not believe that Jewish Christians would intermingle with gentile Christians. Peter immediately withdrew from table fellowship with the gentiles. Paul saw this action of Peter as hypocrisy. What we have here is Paul's teaching on justification by faith. The gentiles by their very birth are sinners because they do not have the gift of God's law. The gentiles are in a disadvantage from the very first moment because they don't have the law. The Jews however are in the advantage because they know what God require of humanity. This is his teaching on Justification by faith.

A person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in/of Christ. Paul uses the phrase "works of the law" three times. The basic opposition is doing the works of the law or believing in Christ or in the faith of Jesus. The question is how is one justified? His answer, we are not justified by works of the law but by faith in Christ or by faithfulness in Christ. We are justified on the basis of something God has done in Christ. This notion of the faithfulness of Christ does not oppose believing in Christ. I believe in Christ on the basis of Christ's faithful acts on the cross. We are justified not because we are Jews or because of our Jewishness. Here he refers to those identity markers, those things that identify a person as a Jew: circumcision, dietary laws, etc.

Further more, he is probably responding to an objection from what some people have said, that he has made Christ a servant or minister of sin. Paul objects to this strongly. He responded, "If I am building those things that I tear down, then I am a transgressor." Those things that he tore down is the law that separates the Jews from gentiles. What made the Jews special people was the law. Paul sees this as separating the Jewish and the gentiles. He sees Christ as the end of the law. If Christ is the end of the law, then they should be no barrier. If on the basis that these people from James have come and Paul reestablishes those barriers as Peter had done, then he is a transgressor. The Christ event had put an end to that barrier and he Paul cannot rebuild that barrier.

Paul had come to a new point in his life that he has died to the law that he might live for Christ. Before he was a Christian, the very center of his religious life was the law. But now with the Christ event, the role that the law played for Paul has been displaced by Christ. Now he relates to God through Christ than by the law. Paul adds, "for through the law, I die to the law." Perhaps what he is saying here is that, it was his very zealotness to the law that paradoxically led him to his dying to the law. He realized that the law he was zealous about is the law that pronounced Jesus as a law breaker and one under God's curse. Once the law is not at the center of his life, something else takes over and that is Christ. The very driving force of his life is not himself any longer but Christ.

He begins Galatians 3 with a very practical argument, an argument based on experience, the experience of the Galatians. This is the experience of the Spirit, an experience they will not deny. Paul has a very simple question for them, When did you experience the Spirit? When you started to believe in the good news of the crucified Christ? Or when you started doing the works of the law? Their own experience should tell them that they experienced the spirit apart from circumcision and the law. An experiential proof of those justified are those who have received the spirit. Paul portrayed the crucified Christ when he preached to the Galatians. Paul makes the argument that the Galatians are Abraham's descendants. How are they Abraham's descendants? This is because they are incorporated into the singular Abraham descendant, the Christ. It is those who have faith who are Abraham's descendants.

He says it was known right from time that God was going to justify the gentiles on the basis of faith. That is why God made the promise, through you Abraham, all the nations shall be blessed. He says, in Abraham, the gentiles will find their righteousness through Christ. The blessing of Abraham is the Spirit. This spirit leads to justification. If you want to be the son of Abraham, you must have the faith of Abraham. It is people who have the trusting faith that Abraham has, who are the real descendants of Abraham and not those who are circumcised. People who have that kind of faith, enjoy the blessing of Abraham, which is shown to be the Spirit and if you have the spirit, you are justified.

Paul also talks about the curse of the law. He is not saying the law is bad but that there is a curse on anyone who does not observe the law. The law is not cursed but it carries a curse. Christ freed us from the threatening curse of the law by taking the curses upon himself and by observing it so that we will be free.

Paul's main point is that Abraham's singular descendant is the messiah, the Christ. The law does not annul the covenant previously ratified by Christ, so as to cancel the covenant. The law is an interruption in salvation history. The more important thing is not the law but the promise.

Why then the Law? The law was added for transgressions. He doesn't say "sin" because for him sin is in the singular, a power. What we call sins, he regards as "transgressions." The law is added because suddenly there are all of these transgressions. The law is added to let the people know of what God's will is. The law is temporal until Christ comes. Now that Christ has come, there is no need for it. The law is inferior to the promise. The promise was made directly from God to Abraham without any mediation but the law was given through the mediation of Angels and something must have been lost in the process of this mediation.

He now raises another question, does it mean that the law is opposed to the promise of God? Of course not. If you are in Christ through baptism, you are Abraham's descendent and if you are in Abraham, you receive the blessing.

Paul makes an allegorical use of Scripture, going back to the story of Abraham. Abraham had two wives, Sara and Hagar. Sara the free woman had a son Isaac, and Hagar the slave woman had a son Ishmael. These women represent two covenants; the covenant of Sara is never identified; the covenant of Hagar is Sinai. Sara represents the heavenly Jerusalem; Hagar represents the present Jerusalem. The children of Sara are free children; the children of Hagar are children of slavery. Paul is saying that those who belong to the Law-free Gospel that he is preaching are descendants of Isaac. Those who follow the “Torah Gospel” of the Judaizers are children of Hagar and therefore slaves. So, there are two types of Christians; Paul is not contrasting Christians and Jews. He says that he now appeals to the Law for those who purport to be under the Law. The son of the slave woman was born “naturally” while the son of the freeborn woman was born “through a promise.” Paul says that this is an allegory. Paul compares slavery to the present Jerusalem because that is probably where many of the agitators are coming from. The Gentile church represents the heavenly Jerusalem because they have produced innumerable offspring, like Sara, even though it seemed at first that they were barren themselves. Lastly, remember in the OT text that Sara commands Abraham to drive out Hagar; Paul interprets this text that the child Isaac is being persecuted by “the child of the flesh. What Paul is really saying to the Galatians is to drive out the Judaizers and their offspring.

Then we come to the culmination of Paul’s argument – here he talks specifically about circumcision. *Freedom* is freedom from the slavery of being under the Law; it is not a libertine freedom. Remember that Paul is talking almost exclusively to Gentiles here; he will use different language in Romans. Circumcision brings with it responsibilities – all the prescriptions of the Law. This separates a person from Christ and is a fall from grace because the person is trying to justify or rectify himself based on doing the Law, instead of God’s grace. The dichotomy for Paul is between justification by the Law and justification by grace.

The mark of circumcision doesn’t mean anything, but what matters is only “faith working through love.” Next Paul uses the metaphor of a runner who cuts another person off in a race. The agitators are the yeast that has spoiled a whole batch of dough.

Paul still has one other problem – a very serious problem. If I am under the Law, can I do absolutely anything I want? Paul’s faith is a faith that leads to obedience to God. Paul shows that the justified live the moral life of the “love commandment” of the Law *through* guidance by the Spirit. Paul has a very *optimistic* view of the moral life – if you are guided by the Spirit you will do what is right connaturally because the Spirit will guide you to fulfill the love commandment.

Paul contrasts two ways of the life: under the power of the “flesh” (metaphorically) and under the power of the Spirit. “Live by the Spirit and you will certainly not gratify the desire of the flesh” – the flesh is not simply sexual urge, but it includes this. You can’t be in both “armies;” you align yourself either with one or with another. “If you are guided by the Spirit you are not under the law” – you don’t need to follow the individual prescriptions of the Law. Next Paul lists 17 “works of the flesh;” the first three have to

do with sexual immorality;" the last 14 are various things mostly having to do with dissent within the community. He contrasts this with "the *fruit* of the Spirit" – there is one fruit (in contrast with the *works* of the flesh) – he uses "fruit" instead of "work" because he makes the point that these are "produced" by the Spirit. Now there are 9 items neatly rhetorically organized into three groups of three (in contrast to the lack of organization of the 17 works of the flesh). "Love, joy, peace;" "patience, kindness, generosity;" "faithfulness, gentleness, self-control." There are no laws prohibiting or allowing these things; are these things simply magically produced? What does the justified person have to do? To balance this, there is a certain discipline in working in the moral life – "Those who belong to Christ have crucified their flesh with their passions and desires." Last he offers an exhortation, "If we live in the Spirit, let us also follow the Spirit." Once we are in the Spirit we must continue to follow the lead of the Spirit.

BACKGROUND TO ROMANS

Paul is writing this letter because he intends to visit the church at Rome. It is a church he has never visited before but which he had often wanted to visit. He was not the founder of this church and it has been founded by unknown Christians. This church is an important church because Rome is the capital of the world at this time. He wanted to strengthen them with his faith and he wanted to be strengthened by their faith.

His priestly ministry is the preaching of the gospel and the sacrifices that he offers is his ministry to the gentiles. Paul's plan was to preach the gospel at Spain which at that time was the end of the known world. He is going to go to Rome on his way to Spain. At Rome he would strengthen them and would also look for some support from them, to see if some people would go with him to Spain. He couldn't come to the Romans earlier because he was preaching the gospel in other places. Paul is writing the Romans from Corinth in the middle of the 50's. Paul's goal is that he has preached in the East and now he is going to the West to preach at Spain. This will mean, he has preached in the whole known world.

Paul is writing this letter as a letter of self introduction, an ambassadorial letter. He is doing this because the Roman church is a very important church but also it appears that there are rumors circulating about Paul's gospel and people are distorting that gospel. One of the rumors circulating is that Paul has this gospel of God's grace in which he says that our evil has led to God producing more and more grace, why not you take this to a logical conclusion that we sin and sin so that God would produce more grace.

Other questions concern the Law – is the Law evil? Has God been unfaithful to the Jewish people? In Romans 9-11 he God has not rejected His people. the Jewish people remain His chosen people and always will. The gifts and the call of God are irrevocable" Israel's call and election are still in place. Paul has this vision that eventually Israel will be saved, but he doesn't explicitly say *how* they will be saved.

The community of the Romans is not a single community, but probably a diverse one of several communities in the big city of Rome, made up of varying degrees of Jewish Christians and Romans. Romans is the closest letter to a complete exposition of Paul's own theology. Paul is apologetic with regard to the Jews. He speaks directly to the Gentile converts here, saying that some of the Jewish "branches" have broken off, but he also warns the Gentile converts not to "lord it over" the Jews who not believe as though they are somehow superior.

At the beginning of the letter, notice the extensive greeting. Normally Paul's greetings are simple. Here Paul formulates it very carefully, introducing himself and his gospel. First, Paul identifies himself as a *slave of Christ Jesus*. He is *called* to be an *apostle* and *set apart* for the *gospel of God* (i.e. God's own good news – the whole theme of the letter). The gospel is described in this way: it was *promised through the prophets in sacred scripture* – it is the continuation of God's faithful story; it is the *gospel about his Son*, who was (1) a *descendant of David* and thus worthy of Messiahship, and (2) *the Son of God*; *through him* we have the *grace of apostleship* and the *obedience of faith* – i.e. faith itself is an act of obedience to God; when you believe you submit to God. Faith is an act of obedience because when you believe you become a servant or slave of Jesus Christ. Paul is a slave of Jesus Christ because he is obedient. Note that slavery was an important and essential institution in the Roman empire. He was called to be an apostle (he didn't choose this); and consecrated (set apart and made holy) for God's gospel. There is a movement from promise to fulfillment in the OT prophets. In terms of human origin Jesus is the Davidic Messiah. At the Resurrection Jesus' Sonship is shown in a special way (not that he wasn't always the Son of God). Jesus' purpose is to summon the Gentiles to faith so that when they entrust themselves to God they will be obedient to righteousness. The greeting is this long because this letter is an ambassadorial letter written to a community that is not familiar with him and probably has a lot of questions concerning the gospel he preaches.

JUSTIFICATION IN ROMANS

Back to the opening statement that Paul makes – he is not ashamed of the gospel because it is the *power* (dynamis) of God that leads to or has in view salvation – this salvation is open to everyone; it is universal in scope, and the basis of appropriating this salvation is *faith*, which has already been defined as an act of obedience. This salvation is meant first of all for the Jews, *and then* it is for the Greeks (the Gentiles); thus Paul recognizes the priority given to the Jews. What is *revealed* is the *righteousness of God*, it starts and ends with faith. The one who is righteous by faith will live. Either one is righteous by his own faith, or one is righteous by God's faith.

The righteousness of God could be a righteousness that comes from God, which he gives to people, or it could be God's own righteousness which is revealed and disclosed when the Gospel is proclaimed. God's righteousness is God's covenant loyalty, his faithfulness, his reliability, his dependability, his perfect integrity.

The gospel is a power because it brings salvation; also, something is revealed – God’s own righteousness. What you discover in the proclamation of the gospel is how God goes about rectifying the ungodly. He does this by offering his own Son for the sins of the world. The only response to this is *total faith*, obedience and trust. Now the *wrath of God* is the second thing being revealed by the gospel. It’s easy to say that this is God’s emotion and anger, i.e. God simply going on a rant. What Paul means is God’s *reaction* to sin. When the gospel is proclaimed God’s reaction to sin is revealed. The wrath of God brings the unbeliever to discover God’s righteousness. In fact the wrath of God is righteousness of God, *apart from Christ* – in other words God’s wrath and God’s righteousness are the *same thing*.

How does the wrath of God work itself out? Normally when one thinks of this term one thinks of punishment. However that’s not how it works. God exercises his wrath simply by allowing sinners to do what they want – God simply hands sinners over to their own sinfulness. Ultimately the real punishment of sin is sin itself – having exactly what we want. People have no excuse because they have willfully suppressed the truth, they have refused to acknowledge God. “*Therefore, God handed them over,*” i.e. he let them do what they want.

The fundamental sin in this entire section is *idolatry*, the “original sin” – the refusal to offer to God glory and to give it to *creatures* instead. Paul views humanity as having made a fundamental mistake early on of following the creature instead of the Creator, and the punishment is to live without the Creator. You don’t know the wrath of God until the gospel is preached. The Gentiles could have known something about God from the created world but they didn’t; The Jews knew God, but they did not “accord him glory.” Instead, they preferred the glory of the creature. God handed them over to impurity. Paul speaks about homosexuality, something taken for granted by Gentiles but condemned by Jews. The end result is that Paul has presented a picture of the Gentile world that is in a swamp of its own making – it is filled with sin. Everything goes back to the “original sin” of idolatry. Paul simply assumes that homosexual acts are unnatural. However he doesn’t deal with what we would call today “homosexual orientation;” he assumed it was a choice commonly made in the ancient world, often between men and boys. Overall homosexuality is not a major issue in the NT because Paul and others assume it is wrong, but doesn’t deal with the problem we have to deal with.

God is an *impartial judge* and will not exclude Jews based on nationality. All will be judged on the basis of what they have done – this doesn’t contradict justification by faith alone, because what we do reflects our faith. On the last day, everyone will be judged according to his works; notice that Paul doesn’t say that everyone will be *saved* on the basis of works. Paul argues against any idea that since the Jews hold a privileged place, they will be judged on a different standard.

Paul acknowledges that the Jews sometimes observe the moral prescriptions of the Mosaic Law, and some things can be known “*connaturally*.” He points to the moral consciousness of what is right and wrong; the Gentiles don’t have the whole Law, but some of it is written in their hearts. Again, Paul is showing the impartiality of God – he

will judge the Jewish people on the basis of a law that was given to them, and the Gentiles on what parts of the law they have.

Now Paul turns to circumcision, a mark which distinguishes Jews from Gentiles. If the Jewish people observe the Law then this will be considered “inward circumcision,” but if they don’t observe the Law, their circumcision becomes “un-circumcision.” Paul is arguing against Jews who boast of a privileged place because they have the Law and the mark of circumcision – these mean nothing in themselves; what matters is what you do.

No human being will be justified in his sight by observing the law, because through the law comes *consciousness* of sin. The whole purpose of the law is to make aware what sin is. Paul says that the law is holy. It is not the purpose of the law to justify me, because under the law a person is dominated by sin. If all are under the power of sin, all are justified freely by God’s grace. The fullest description is that we are justified *by* God’s grace (favor) *through* faith. God’s righteousness is manifested in Christ, on the cross – when I look on the cross there I see God’s fidelity. Paul says that God sent forth Christ as an *expiation*. Christ is the mercy seat and his own blood atones for our sins. This is appropriated through faith. God is just and fully deals with sin, not by punishing the sinner, but by allowing his own Son to become the expiation for sinners, thereby sparing the sinner, sinful humanity, God’s wrath.

No human being is in a position to boast, because it is ruled out on the principle of faith, and not the principle of works. It is not doing the works of the law that justify us, but it is on the basis of faith, of entrusting ourselves to God. God belongs not to the Jews alone, but to the Gentiles also. God will justify both on the basis of faith.

God has *always* justified people on the basis of faith and not works. Paul shows this through the story of Abraham; Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness. Abraham did not boast on the basis of his works. Paul *presupposes* that Abraham was justified. If he was justified on the basis of his works, then we would have an example of justification through works. However this was not so. God “recorded” or “credited” Abraham’s trust as an act of righteousness. Now somebody does work, and the employer credits this as a wage that is due to the worker. But Abraham’s belief was *not* a work but an act of righteousness, and that is how God records it. Abraham is *blessed* because it was credited to him through faith, and God does not credit or record the righteous person’s sins, but covers them up. *When* did God declare Abraham as righteous? In Genesis 15 God had *already* declared Abraham righteous, and in Genesis 17 God “sealed” this covenant with circumcision. Abraham was the father of not only the circumcised but also the uncircumcised who believe, and the circumcised walk in the same path of faith as Abraham walked while still uncircumcised.

Paul makes the point that the *promise* made to Abraham, that God will make Abraham a father to many nations, was made through the righteousness that comes from faith and not the Law. The promise is based on faith so that it can be seen as a *gift* or grace from God. If the promise was dependent upon the Law then it would only be accessible to Jewish people; but on the contrary it is accessible to all. Paul compares this faith to faith

in the *resurrection*. Abraham was far beyond the age where he could raise a child and the womb of Sarah was dead. The womb of Sarah is analogous to the tomb where Jesus was buried. Just as God was able to bring life out of the tomb, he was able to bring life out of the womb of Sarah. Therefore, Abraham had a type of *resurrection* faith. Abraham did not doubt God's promise, even though there was no natural reason for Abraham to continue to believe. Rather he believed in the God who raises the dead, and therefore "it was credited to him as righteousness." What is necessary is not merely faith in God, but faith in God who is capable of keeping his promises and moreover of raising the dead.

Justification by faith leads to a new situation of "*peace* with God," and it also means we have access to *grace*. We now *can* boast in hope of the glory of God. If Christ *died* for us while we were *sinners*, how much more since *now* we are justified will we be *saved* from God's wrath. Before we were *enemies*, and now we are *reconciled*. Now that we are reconciled, all the more can we be sure that we can be *saved*. So the present situation of the Christian is two-fold, on the one hand justified, and the other hand reconciled. The former is a legal term; the latter refers to the peace we currently have. In the future we will be saved.