

Romans 4 “Unearned Righteousness”

Romans 4:2-8

October 18, 2026

Romans 4:2-8

2 If Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about—but not before God. 3 For what does the Scripture say? Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him for righteousness. 4 Now to the one who works, pay is not credited as a gift, but as something owed. 5 But to the one who does not work, but believes on him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited for righteousness.

6 Likewise, David also speaks of the blessing of the person to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:

7 Blessed are those whose lawless acts are forgiven and whose sins are covered.

8 Blessed is the person the Lord will never charge with sin.

Romans 3:23-24

23 For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; 24 they are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

Justification's two parts.

Romans 4:3-5

3 For what does the Scripture say? Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him for righteousness. 4 Now to the one who works, pay is not credited as a gift, but as something owed. 5 But to the one who does not work, but believes on him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited for righteousness.

Paul contrasts belief with work.

Romans 4:4

4 Now to the one who works, pay is not credited as a gift, but as something owed.

Can I improve or lose my status by my works and obedience?

Romans 4:4

4 Now to the one who works, pay is not credited as a gift, but as something owed.

Justification supply another's righteousness

Romans 3:22

22 The righteousness of God is through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe, since there is no distinction.

2 Corinthians 5:21

21 He made the one who did not know sin to be sin[e] for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Your justification is not fragile.

Romans 4:5

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

Luke 7:47

47 Therefore I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven; that's why she loved much. But the one who is forgiven little, loves little."

Philippians 2:12-13

12 Therefore, my dear friends, just as you have always obeyed, so now, not only in my presence but even more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. 13 For it is God who is working in you both to will and to work according to his good purpose.

Progressing in what you possess.

Philippians 1:6

6 being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

Life Group Discussion Questions

- 1.) What did God say to you through His Scriptures during our Sunday gathering?
- 2.) Share about receiving a memorable gift? Who gave it to you? What was your response?
- 3.) Why is Paul clarifying that righteousness is a gift?
- 4.) Read Romans 4:4-5. How can we turn a gift into a wage?
- 5.) What is the concern if we begin to think about our relationship with God as transactional?
- 6.) What begins to happen if your righteous standing with God becomes something you must to maintain by your obedience? What happens to our eternal security?
- 7.) How does Philippians 2:12-13 highlight God's deeper work?
- 8.) Share one way to apply the doctrine of justification to your daily life?