

What Is Saving Faith?

Steven Dunne · Romans 3:27–4:5

Romans 3:27–4:5 CSB

Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By one of works? No, on the contrary, by a law of faith. For we conclude that a person is justified by faith apart from the works of the law. Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too, since there is one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith. Do we then nullify the law through faith? Absolutely not! On the contrary, we uphold the law.

What then will we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found? If Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about—but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him for righteousness. Now to the one who works, pay is not credited as a gift, but as something owed. But to the one who does not work, but believes on him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited for righteousness.

What is saving faith?

Boasting

Boasting is excluded.

Jeremiah 9:23–24 CSB

“ ‘This is what the LORD says:

The wise person should not boast in his wisdom;

the strong should not boast in his strength;

the wealthy should not boast in his wealth.

But the one who boasts should boast in this:

that he understands and knows me—

that I am the LORD, showing faithful love,

justice, and righteousness on the earth,

for I delight in these things.

This is the LORD’s declaration.

Believing

We are made right with God and given a new identity by faith, not by what we’ve done or what we’ve accomplished.

Hebrews 11:1 CSB

Now faith is the reality of what is hoped for, the proof of what is not seen.

Genesis 15:6 CSB

Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.

Galatians 3:6–9 CSB

just like Abraham who believed God, and it was credited to him for righteousness?

You know, then, that those who have faith, these are Abraham's sons. Now the Scripture saw in advance that God would justify the Gentiles by faith and proclaimed the gospel ahead of time to Abraham, saying, All the nations will be blessed through you. Consequently, those who have faith are blessed with Abraham, who had faith.

Boasting Again

Boasting in Christ alone.

Galatians 6:14 CSB

But as for me, I will never boast about anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. The world has been crucified to me through the cross, and I to the world.

2 Corinthians 12:9–10 CSB

But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is perfected in weakness."

Therefore, I will most gladly boast all the more about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may reside in me. So I take pleasure in weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and in difficulties, for the sake of Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Life Group Discussion Questions:

1. What did God say to you through His Scripture during our Sunday gathering?
2. Read Jeremiah 9:23–24. Wisdom, strength, and wealth are the three boasts named there. Which of the "we might say" boasts from the sermon (good parent, hard worker, moral, better than the worst people, etc...) do you most naturally reach for to feel valuable or secure? How has that boast backfired?
3. **Believing:** Read Genesis 15:6. God walked between the pieces alone. Which promise of God is hardest for you to believe right now, and how does it help to know that keeping it depends on him and not on you?

4. **Boasting:** Read Galatians 6:14 and 2 Corinthians 12:9–10. Paul says the world has been crucified to him, and that he now boasts in his weaknesses. If your boast really were the cross this week, what is one situation (at work, at home, or in a relationship) where you could say “You are right, I do need help” without being crushed by it?
5. Where in your life right now are you anxious about the outcome, and what would it look like to walk into it saying “Jesus wins”?
6. The sermon ended with four statements for those justified by faith: God is pleased with you, God approves of you, God applauds you, God loves you. Which one is hardest for you to receive, and what would change this week if you believed it?