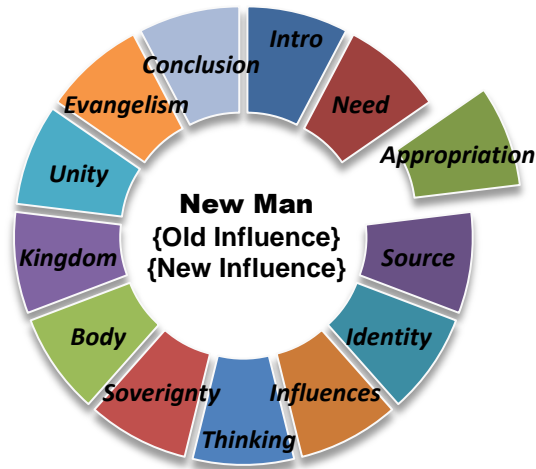


I. The New Man – Appropriation Cont. (Ch. 4-5:11)

Paul has clearly laid out that justification is by faith alone. The Law reveals that man, in his natural condition, is unjust. In contrast God has revealed Himself to be able to justify man while satisfying His just character. He did not do this for only one race but for all races (Jew and Gentile). This is all possible by paying a ransom through the death of Jesus Christ.

Paul is now going to explain that justification by faith has always been God’s plan. This was true prior to Law or Works and prior to Circumcision or Judaism. This was true at the time that God promised to bless all nations through Abraham. Therefore all men are able to appropriate the new justified life by faith just like “Father Abraham”.



A. Father Abraham received the blessings of justification by Faith. (4:1-8)

Paul talks about Abraham and uses a term the ESV translates as “our forefather according to the flesh”. This could be translated a couple of different ways. It could be that he is referring to Abraham who is our father by race. He could also be talking about Abraham but asking what did he gain according to the flesh. This would be asking what our father Abraham gained in his fleshly efforts. This last view does fit well with the context of this section.



Paul quotes from Gen 15 showing that God told us that Abraham was accounted righteous when he believed God. Genesis makes a turn in Chapter 12 to begin a long focus on the life of Abraham and really begins with God sending Abraham to another land. Overall, God promises Abraham a special homeland, a large family tree, and a specific blessing to all mankind. Abraham believed God and went. We are not told that he was accounted as righteous for his belief in chapter 12. In Chapter 15, Abraham asks God what God is going to do since Abraham’s closest heir was not his own child. God told him that he would have his own child who would be the heir and whom God would build a large nation. This is what Abraham believes and God then says he is righteous.

Abraham was looking at human reasoning and could not come up with a way to see God's promise as true. However, no human work would be the way. Instead, God promises life from death. Abraham was not capable.

In Genesis 15, after accounting Abraham as righteous, God performs an unconditional covenant in behalf of Abraham. He puts Abraham to sleep and then performs a ritual designed to show his unconditional promise to bless Abraham. Abraham can do nothing to earn it and can do nothing to change it. It is totally based on the faithfulness of God.

In a similar way, Paul presents us with a principle. If a man works and is given something in return, this is not considered a gift. Instead we would call it a wage. It actually brings glory to the one working rather than the generosity of the giver.

So Paul gives us the key issue with justification:

- The one who is not working
- The one who is believing God to justify them even though they are ungodly.
- Their faith is counted (or imputed) as righteousness

The word "counted" is the same word translated as "imputed" or "reckoned". It is an accounting term and has the idea of counting up the exact amount of money you have on hand. The final number is not a "I hope I will have some amount". Instead it is the facts. You have this. God now is saying that the man who does not have righteousness and does no righteousness but instead depends on God, that man will be reckoned as righteous. God will count up Christ's righteousness and place it on the believer's account.

2 Cor 5:21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Christ's account received our sin. Our account received Christ's righteousness!

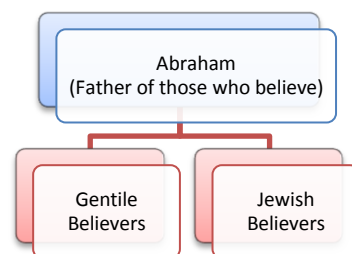
Doesn't sound deserved but it certainly emphasizes the generosity of the giver! It reveals God's righteousness.

Paul then quotes David in Psalms and shows how this is a blessing. The man is especially blessed who does not have to stand and give an account for his sins before God.

B. Father Abraham received the blessings of justification before circumcision. (4:9-12)

Paul now points to the time when Paul was accounted righteous. It was 14 years before being circumcised. Abraham was in essence still a Gentile. There was no law, nothing that especially separated him from other men on earth except for the fact that He believed God.

Apparently a man can experience this blessing of justification without having to be a Jew!



As a matter of fact, not all Jews are truly considered children of Father Abraham. They might be circumcised but if they have not followed Him in exercising faith then they are not his children.

Rom 2:28-29 ²⁸For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. ²⁹But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God.
Rom 9:6 ⁶But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel,

God consistently considered only those who followed Abraham as they who were continuing God's programs. They are often referred to as "the Believing Remnant".

C. Father Abraham received the blessings of justification outside of law. (4:13-25)

It was many years after Abraham was justified before the law was given. It is clear that Abraham would have lived in a manner that broke the Law on a continual basis if it had been given.

Paul even says that God did it this way on purpose! He did this so that it would clearly be for all who believe. If it is based on faith then it is for all his offspring. Abraham is the father of many nations. But all these nations are part of one "Faith Nation" with one "Father of Faith".

God gives life to the dead.

- Abraham and Sarah – dead reproductive organs (vs. 19)
- Christ – raised from the dead (vs. 24)

Abraham had no reason to believe God. It didn't make sense. There was no physical reason to believe. But Abraham believed. It is hard for us to agree that Abraham did not waver. Paul says that Abraham was convinced that God could do it. We know that Abraham tried several different methods to "help" God out. But in these acts of self-effort, he was still dependent on God to bring it to pass. Even when had affairs he must have believed that God could bring life from his dead reproductive organs. Abraham continued to move forward and when God told him it would be Sarah, he believed.

So we can follow Abraham

Abraham - Justified by Faith	Believers Today - Justified by Faith
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dead Body • God produced son's life • Abraham Believed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Son Died • God raised Son to new life • We Believe

D. Justification by Faith through Christ = Peace -> Rejoicing (5:1-11)

When we looked at our need we saw that Law and Circumcision couldn't help. We saw that all had the same need and were facing the same judgment. We saw the results of our condition.

Now we see that the Law and Circumcision don't compare to faith. We see that all are able to exercise faith. We will see in this section the results of faith.

1. Peace

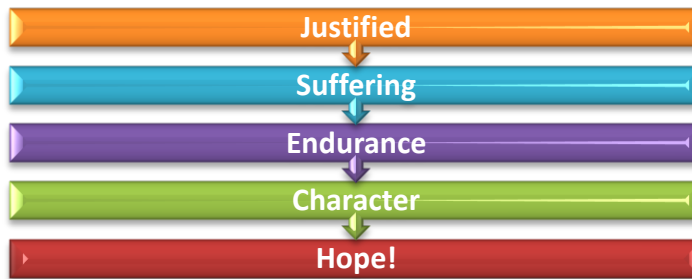
Justification by faith leads to peace. I stand before God in sinful condition but depending on Him. He justifies me without me doing anything. I can heave a huge sigh of relief and experience true peace!

2. Rejoice in Hope

I was falling short of the glory of God and could not meet His holy standard. Now I have "hope" of His very glory! Hope in Paul's way of thinking never carried the idea of something that may or probably will happen. Hope, to Paul, always meant certainty! We have the certainty of standing in God's glory. No longer missing the mark!

3. Rejoice in Suffering

Just like James 1 we are told to consider the progressive work of suffering on someone who is justified:



If I was trying to earn my justification then suffering would really frustrate me. It would feel like a roadblock that I need to remove so I can keep moving forward in doing good works that will gain me favor. But when I realize that I AM JUSTIFIED, then I can be patient in suffering. I can realize that it will pass. By being patient I am actually growing in character and this causes me to have even more confidence that God's way is best! I am moving towards God's glory and it is all because of God's work!

4. Rejoice through God's Work

a) Holy Spirit gives me God's Love

I actually have a stronger Hope as I realize that I have the Holy Spirit living in me. He produces God's character as I live by faith. My faith in my justification leads to me experiencing God's character!

b) Christ's Life produces rejoicing

2 Cor 3:17 "Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom."

Not only do I have the Spirit but I also have the Life of Christ. This seems to be an actual work of the Spirit in my life.

I am reconciled by Christ. I have peace by Christ. I have the Character of Christ.

WE HAVE BEEN BLESSED THROUGH JUSTIFICATION! – REJOICE!