

Soul-Full: Living Out a Robust Faith

A Study in Romans

Week 3 – Romans 4 – Righteousness by Faith

*Yet with respect to the promise of God, he did not waiver in unbelief
But grew strong in faith, giving glory to God.
Romans 4:20*

Romans 1:18-32 – “The depravity of man and the downward pull of sin
Idolatry leads to moral perversion, which leads to mental perversion”
(Quote from John Phillips, *Exploring Romans*, p. 30-31).

Romans 2-3:20 – The guilt of all humanity

Romans 3:21-4 – Salvation is by faith alone

Romans 1-3 provides the evidence of man’s need for the gospel. The holiness of God and the sinfulness of man would have left us without hope – but we are “justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus” (Romans 3:24-26 NASB).

“By breaking God’s one and only rule, Adam and Eve made new rules necessary. God provided His Law (including the Ten Commandments) as a corrective lens, to help us see good and evil the way he does” (*Control Girl* by Shannon Popkin, p. 36).

I. **Justified by Faith** – Our example: Abraham Genesis 15:6

We act out of what we believe. *Take God at His Word and act accordingly.*

“Paul’s description of Abraham’s faith, though, goes deeper than simply an account of heroic trust in the face of overwhelming odds. It is a deliberate reversal of his description of the degeneration of the human race in Chapter 1.”

Romans 1	Romans 4
Humans ignored God	Abraham believed in God as creator and life-giver
Humans knew about God's power but didn't worship Him	Abraham recognized God's power and trusted Him to use it
Humans did not give God the glory	Abraham gave God the glory
Humans dishonored their own bodies by worshipping beings that were not divine	Abraham worshipped God who gives new life and his own body regained its power

The result in each case is telling. Humans dishonor their bodies by females and males turning away from one another into same-sex relationships (1:26-27). Abraham and Sarah, through their trust in God's promises, are given power to conceive a child (4:19). Deep within the heart of God's covenant promise lies the fulfillment of the basic command back in Genesis 1, the command which goes with the creation of male and female in God's image: Be fruitful and multiply (N. T. Wright, *Paul for Everyone, Romans Part One: Chapters 1-8*).

II. **God's Promise is Granted by Faith**

“Under a system of works, everything depends on the sinner; under grace, everything depends on the Savior. Under the first, God gives a fair trial, but under the second He gives a free pardon.” (John Phillips, *Exploring Romans*)

“Christ's death becomes our death, and His life becomes our life. The cross breaks the power of sin, and the resurrection opens the power of God (1:4). Jesus died that He might give His life; and in our dying with Him, we are resurrected to live the life of Him ‘Who was delivered up for our trespasses, and was raised for our justification’ (4:25).” (J. P. McBeth, *Exegetical and Practical Commentary on Romans*, p. 145).

Filling up with Faith

Christians are just a bunch of hypocrites.

According to Barna Research, seventy-three percent of Americans surveyed identify themselves as Christian. But only 9% of all Americans have a biblical worldview:

For the purposes of the survey, a “biblical worldview” was defined as believing that absolute moral truth exists; the Bible is totally accurate in all of the principles it teaches; Satan is considered to be a real being or force, not merely symbolic; a person cannot earn their way into Heaven by trying to be good or do good works; Jesus Christ lived a sinless life on earth; and God is the all-knowing, all-powerful creator of the world who still rules the universe today. In the research, anyone who held all of those beliefs was said to have a biblical worldview.

People’s views on morally acceptable behavior are deeply impacted by their worldview. Upon comparing the perspectives of those who have a biblical worldview with those who do not, the former group were 31 times less likely to accept cohabitation (2% versus 62%, respectively); 18 times less likely to endorse drunkenness (2% versus 36%); 15 times less likely to condone gay sex (2% versus 31%); 12 times less likely to accept profanity (3% versus 37%); and 11 times less likely to describe adultery as morally acceptable (4% versus 44%). In addition, less than one-half of one percent of those with a biblical worldview said voluntary exposure to pornography was morally acceptable (compared to 39% of other adults), and a similarly miniscule proportion endorsed abortion (compared to 46% of adults who lack a biblical worldview).”

(<https://www.barna.com/research/barna-survey-examines-changes-in-worldview-among-christians-over-the-past-13-years/>)

The following quotes were taken from: *The Scandal of the Evangelical Conscience: Why Are Christians Living Just Like the Rest of the World?* By Ronald Sider

The good news is that the small circle of people with a biblical worldview demonstrate genuinely different behavior. They are nine times more likely than all the others to avoid ‘adult-only’ material on the Internet. They are four times more likely than other Christians to boycott objectionable companies and products and twice as likely to choose intentionally not to watch a movie specifically because of its bad content. They are three times more likely than other adults not to use tobacco products and twice as likely to volunteer time to help needy people. Forty percent of all born-again Christians with a biblical worldview have volunteered more than an hour in the previous week to an organization serving the poor, whereas only 29 percent of born-again Christians without a biblical worldview and only 22 percent of non-born-again Christians have done so.

“Eighty percent of all born-again Christians said that having a ‘deep personal commitment to the Christian faith is a top priority for their future.’”

Isn't Christianity just a myth?

Sources outside of the Bible:

The following quotes are from *Everything You Always Wanted to Know About God (But Were Afraid to Ask): The Jesus Edition* by Eric Metaxes.

Josephus – non-Christian historian who lived in Rome in the first century. He was the author of *Antiquities of the Jews* written around AD 94. He said:

Now there was about this time, Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. He was Christ; and when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him. For he appeared to them alive again the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him; and the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct to this day.

Tacitus – author of *Annals*, written about AD 112,

Talks about how the emperor Nero, who was widely rumored to have been responsible for the burning of Rome, persecuted the Christians for the fire. ‘Hence to suppress the rumor, [Nero] falsely charged with the guilt, and punished with the most exquisite tortures, the persons commonly called Christians, who were hated for their enormities. Christus, the founder of the name, was put to death by Pontius Pilate, procurator of Judea in the reign of Tiberius: but the pernicious superstition, repressed for a time broke out again, not only through Judea, where the mischief originated, but through the city of Rome also.’

Suetonius, *Life of Claudius*, is a historical account of the life of the Roman emperor Claudius. “As the Jews were making constant disturbances at the instigation of Christus, [Claudius] expelled them from Rome.” This actually took place in AD 49 and is mentioned by Luke in the book of Acts.

The Jewish Talmud – “There are numerous references to Jesus the rabbi, saying that He was executed and had disciples and claimed to be born of a virgin. All of the references are hostile; and the idea, of course, was that Jesus had existed and had done many amazing things but had in actuality been a charlatan.”

Julius Africanus, who wrote around AD 221 -

In his writings he refers to a writer named Thallus, who wrote in AD 52, about 20 years after Jesus was crucified...In one passage he talked about the darkness that fell at midday, when Jesus was crucified. Thallus in the third book of his histories, explains away this darkness as an eclipse of the sun – (unreasonably, of course, because a solar eclipse could not take place at the time of the full moon, and it was at the season of the Paschal full moon that Christ died).