



Justified by Faith Alone

Romans 4:1-12

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Our text this morning is the first 12 verses of Romans, chapter 4, as Paul continues to discuss justification by faith. Please give attention to the reading of God's Holy Word. For the Word of the Lord is completely without error, the Word of the Lord is completely sufficient, and the Word of the Lord is completely authoritative. Romans, chapter 4, beginning at verse 1:

"What then shall we say was gained by Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh? For 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 counted to him as righteousness.' Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness, just as David also speaks of the blessing of the one to whom God counts righteousness apart from works: 'Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin.' Is this blessing then only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? For we say that faith was counted to Abraham as righteousness. How then was it counted to him? Was it before or after he had been circumcised? It was not after, but before he was circumcised. He received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. The purpose was to make him the father of all who believe without being circumcised, so that righteousness would be counted to them as well, and to make him the father of the circumcised who are not merely circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised."

Thus far the reading of God's Holy Word. Let's pray for his blessing upon it. Heavenly Father, we come to you, for you have the words of life and you have opened them up before us, O Lord. We ask that by the power of your Holy Spirit you would show us the Lord Jesus Christ. It's in Christ's precious name we pray, amen.

We continue this morning with the apostle Paul discussing the central truth of the Bible. Paul has been setting forth the doctrine of justification by faith alone. He has previously explained the complete inability that anyone has to save themselves, and then he began to show that salvation is the gift of God by his grace. Now he is going to show us this truth from the pages of the Old Testament.

This is something Paul has hinted at previously. You may recall in chapter 1, verses 1-2, Paul wrote, "...the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures..." Telling us he's going to tell us about the gospel that the Scriptures speak of. Then just in the last chapter, chapter 3, verse 21,

he wrote, "But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it..."

In both of these instances, Paul wants us to see that the doctrine of justification by faith is not something that is new with Paul. It's not something he has made up. It is the way salvation has always been, and it is the tale of salvation in both the Old and New Testaments. This morning, I would like us to see three things about justification by faith.

First, we will see that we are *declared righteous* by God, that justification is a declaration of righteousness. Secondly, we will see that we are *counted righteous* by God in justification. That is, God accounts us or puts to our account a righteousness. Then finally, Paul will speak to us of the *sign of righteousness*, of circumcision in the Old Testament days, the parallel in our day, of course, being baptism as a sign of righteousness and the work of God. Declared righteous, counted righteous, and a sign of righteousness.

Declared Righteous

Let's start, then, by looking at how we are *declared righteous* by God. The first thing we have to understand is that we are declared righteous *not* by our works. Paul wants his hearers, especially the Jews, but he also wants you and me to know he's not bringing something new as he brings this doctrine of justification. It is not just that God is now, in Paul's day, saving sinners by faith. No. He wants us to know that is the way God has *always* saved sinners.

The way he is going to do this now is he's going to take us all the way back to Abraham. I want you to recall that Paul has a very varied audience he is speaking to. He's writing specifically to the church at Rome, which is made up of both Jewish Christians (believers who come from a Jewish ethnic background) and Gentile Christians (believers who come from a Gentile ethnic background).

More than that, Paul is writing to Gentiles who have not yet believed, who don't know the story of salvation, who don't know about Jesus. Paul is writing to them as well. He's sharing the gospel. Finally, he's writing to Jews who don't think they *have* to believe. They think they're just fine with God. They don't need Paul's gospel, thank you very much. They're glad just with what they have, their own righteousness in obedience to the law, so they believe.

In order to correct this and lay out his teaching, Paul turns to the most significant figure of the Old Testament for the Jews: Abraham. Abraham is the towering figure of the Old Testament, above all others, above Isaiah, above Ezekiel, above Samuel, above Moses. Abraham is the pinnacle of the Old Testament person of God.

He is an example to the Jews, supposedly, that Paul's teaching was new and innovative, because the Jews believed Abraham was righteous and that's why God had called him, that God had looked down and seen that

Abraham was a pretty good guy and had things pretty much together. "So maybe I should get Abraham on my team. I'm going to call Abraham, because I can see he's worthy." That was the mentality of the Jews.

Lest you think we're just setting up a straw man, a few quotes will suffice. A quote from the Book of Jubilees: "Abraham was perfect in all his deeds with the Lord, and well-pleasing in righteousness all the days of his life." We also have a quote from the Mekhilta, which is a commentary on the Old Testament Scriptures by rabbis. They wrote, "Our father Abraham became the heir of this and of the coming world simply by the merit of [faith]." That is, Abraham brought merit.

This last quote brings up what we looked at last week, that we need to avoid seeing our faith as a work we bring that's pleasing to God, because faith is, instead, the gift of God. Of course, the rabbis have misinterpreted the story of Abraham, and they have turned him into a paragon of virtue. They actually taught that Abraham could boast before men because of his righteousness.

So what does Paul do? I hope you're getting to know Paul by now; that is, that he doesn't mince words. He takes the problem on head-on. He asks this question. "Could Abraham boast before God?" You have to understand that that would be blasphemy even to the Jews who saw Abraham as a perfect man. You don't boast before God. Man is not God. This is not something Abraham would have done. But Paul pushes the point, because if Abraham *could* boast, then he could boast even there before God.

He works a very tight syllogism, for those of you who like logic. He says, "First, if someone is justified by works, that allows boasting, and if Abraham is justified by works, then he can boast. The problem is he *can't* boast. You've said it yourself, Brother Rabbi. He can't boast before God. Therefore, there has to be a problem with the logic. It must be that Abraham was not justified by his works, because otherwise, he could boast before God."

Paul does something that I think is good for us to see and to practice and emulate. Look at the beginning of verse 3. "For what does the Scripture say?" I want you to notice how important the Bible is to Paul. Paul has been making an extended argument about justification by faith alone, about salvation by grace, about how all are sinners, and he has had a very tight logical argument about how Abraham wasn't justified by his works; otherwise he could boast.

Then Paul turns, and rather than go on and on with proofs and logic and evidence, he just says, "What does the Bible say?" I wish in our day the church would emulate that more, that we would just say to people, "What does the Bible say? Let's look at the Bible." From the Bible we can get the truth, because God speaks to us in the Bible. One would think that the Bible is going to tell us about justification and how one is right with God.

He just quotes one verse, Genesis 15:6. "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness." He quotes this one verse to remind his opponents that the Bible says exactly the opposite of what they are

claiming. This is the first verse in the Bible that talks about justification and righteousness, and you will notice it does not say a word about works. The only thing it mentions is faith. As a matter of fact, if we were to dig more into the Bible, we would see that the rabbis' case that Abraham was perfect, always obeying every bit of the law his whole life, doesn't stand up to a cursory review of the Bible.

This is the same man who lied about his wife not once but twice. This is the same man who had to go rescue his nephew Lot. This is the same man who did not trust the promise of God, so rather than wait for Sarah to give birth to a child he brought Hagar into the picture. Abraham is not perfect. The Bible makes that very clear to us. He is a man we should look up to and emulate his faith, but he's not worthy of justification. As a matter of fact, if we study his life, he's worthy of condemnation, just like Paul has said about everyone else.

Paul says if salvation were by works, we would know it. Look at verse 4. "Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due." He's bringing the language of compensation in, describing this. Genesis 15:6 describes justification as a gift that comes by faith to Abraham. It is the gift of God, but that's not how works work. You all know this. I know that not all of you but a good many of you go to a job for a living, or maybe if you're retired you did for years.

When you go and work, my guess is, even if you enjoy your job, you don't go just for the fun of it. You don't hope on payday on Friday your boss will come up to you and say, "You know what? You did a good job this week. Here, take some money." No. You know how many hours you've worked, what your rate of pay is, and what you should be paid on Friday. And if you're *not* paid, you go and talk to your boss. "There's some problem here. I worked 79 hours this two-week schedule, and my pay rate is \$11.50. I should have a check for *X* amount. It's owed to me. This is not optional. I work; you pay."

That's how work works. Right? If your boss says, "Well, I just thought we could call it fun this week. You don't need to be paid," then you could take him to court, because there's an obligation. There's no way to get out of that obligation. Abraham, instead, receives justification, receives righteousness as a gift. It was *counted* to him as righteousness. There is no condition to salvation. There is nothing Abraham could do. There is nothing *you* can do to bring to God so that he would declare you righteous.

How is it that Abraham *is* saved, then? It's not that Abraham initiated anything. As we study Abraham's life in the Bible, we learn that Abraham was a pagan living in a pagan land, worshipping multitudes of gods with his family, worshipping the sun and the moon as gods. The Bible never gives the impression that God looked down and saw Abraham and said, "*There's* a guy I've got to get. Even though no one told him about me, he believes in me, and he knows all of my laws and keeps all of my ways. I owe it to him to go down there and call him into a rich land."

The Bible never says that. The Bible says God shows up and initiates with Abraham. That's because God never responds to man. He always initiates. We even see this in this brief verse that Paul quotes from Genesis 15.

"Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness." We might revise our syllogism in a different way. We might say, "Abraham was counted as righteous." Well, why was that? Because he believed God. And what precedes that? Abraham had to believe something that God told him.

God had to start with Abraham. He had to bring Abraham the promise. If God doesn't bring Abraham the promise, what can Abraham believe? How can he be found righteous? It all begins with God. Now what is it that Abraham believed? Well, Genesis 15:6 is a very important verse. It's quoted at least three times in the Bible. Here, and one other place for our purposes this morning is Galatians 3:6. "...just as Abraham 'believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness'."

Paul goes on in Galatians 3 to speak about what it is that Abraham believed, and what he believed was the Scripture. "...foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, 'In you shall all the nations be blessed.'" What Abraham believed was the promise God had brought to him that all of the nations of the world would be blessed through him. In short, the gospel, Paul tells us.

Abraham believed the gospel, and that was counted to him as righteousness. We might say, in the substantive sense, what Abraham believed was not different at all than what *you* believe in the gospel. It *is* separated by time. Abraham looked *forward* to the consummation of the gospel. We look *backward*, but it is the same gospel. It is the same promise of God that comes to us that the only way to be right with God is for God to make us righteous and for us to receive it by faith.

That's what Abraham believed. He believed he could not make himself righteous. He had to receive it at the hands of the Lord by faith. God brought this promise to Abraham, and faith is the instrument by which salvation comes not only to us but to Abraham as well. That's because everything that is necessary for salvation occurs outside of us. Otherwise, we would have something to boast about, wouldn't we? Even if it was 99 percent God and 1 percent you, you could still say, "I did my 1 percent. More than *you* did. I listen to God. Don't you wish you could be like me, be a 1 percenter?"

All of it has to come from God. None of it can come from us. But how does it come to us? That's where faith comes in. It comes to us by faith, by believing on the promise of God and by holding on to that alone. When Paul is making a distinction here, he's not distinguishing between the one who works and the one who doesn't work. This isn't like going to work and you see some people work hard and some people are lazy. That's not what Paul is talking about. He says the distinction is between the one who works and the one who believes.

Look at how Paul puts it in verse 5. "And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness..." Paul is saying that Abraham was declared righteous by God through faith, because if anyone could have worked it was Abraham, but even *he* couldn't work here. God came to him by faith. What Paul says to us in verse 5 is that it's not just any old faith. It's not just believing

that things will get better. It's not just believing that everybody is basically good. It's not just believing in a higher power.

It will not get you right with God to believe that life is a Hallmark movie where everything works out in the end and all of the puppies and cats are saved and everybody gets married. Just thinking that doesn't make you right with God. You have to have specific faith in what Paul says, in the one who justifies the ungodly. You have to have faith in God and what he has done. It's a very specific faith, because we have to hold on to a very specific promise.

Notice the extent of this. It's not just that God justifies the unrighteous, that he brings righteousness to those who have none. What does the text say? He justifies the ungodly. Paul reminds us that he justifies liars, murderers, thieves, adulterers, and blasphemers. He justifies the ungodly. There is nothing in them for God to declare them righteous. As a matter of fact, it's the exact opposite. They are declared unrighteous and ungodly. You need to know that righteousness before God can only come to you by faith.

Counted Righteous

Paul next turns to another giant of the Old Testament. If Abraham was the father of God's people, David was their greatest leader. He was the man, after all, who was after God's own heart. He established God's people's kingdom, which is something they were still looking forward to in Paul's day. He turns to the concept of being not only *declared* righteous but being *counted* righteous, and to do this he picks up a statement from David in Psalm 32.

He says in verse 6, "...just as David also speaks of the blessing of the one to whom God counts righteousness apart from works: 'Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin.'" At first glance, this seems to be Paul wandering off into another topic, the topic of forgiveness. Paul, stay on justification here. Stay on righteousness. Why are you on forgiveness? But Paul links these two concepts closely.

Notice the way he introduces this. He says, "Just as David also said." He wants us to understand that this quote from Psalm 32 is about justification by faith, receiving righteousness by faith. As a matter of fact, David uses the same language that is used in Genesis 15, that God *counts* righteousness apart from works. "Blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not *count* his sin."

What does this mean? *Count* is an accounting term. If you lived in Paul's day and went to the "University of Athens," accounting division major, you would learn about counting, or in the old King James, *reckoning*. It was an accounting term that we would think of in terms of a ledger. You have profit on one side, loss on the other, income and expense, and you count these things up.

You could reckon a loss an income, but would that make it so? You could move something from one side of the ledger to the other side of the ledger, but unless there's a reality behind it, it doesn't mean anything. It's just bad Enron accounting. What Paul is telling us here through David is that God counts something because he makes it real. It's like *this*.

Just a few weeks ago, my son headed back off to East Texas to go to college. I reckoned his bank account a couple hundred dollars higher than it should be or was. The way I reckoned or accounted that was I took something out of *my* bank account and put it into *his* bank account. I changed the reckoning of his account by giving him a gift. He has that now. It is his, but it came *from* somewhere. It's not fictitious accounting.

This is what God does. To put a theological term on it, it's called an *imputation*, a *reckoning*, a *counting*. There are three great imputations in the Bible, two that we see here in our text and then a third we'll deal with very briefly, because we can't understand the two in our text without a brief understanding of the third.

The first imputation that is not in our text is the imputation of the sin of Adam upon all of mankind. That is, that in Adam's sin *all* have sinned. Paul puts it this way: "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." That initial sin, original sin, is counted to our record in Adam, and from that all of our regular sins come. That's why nobody is perfect, to use a phrase. That's why nobody does good all the time.

The only one who does not feel the effects of that original sin is our Lord Jesus Christ. That is because he is the God-man, and the special circumstances of his conception and birth kept him from sin. No one else is sinless. Mary is not sinless. Joseph is not sinless. None of the prophets are sinless. All feel the effects of Adam's sin. Now, if you want to delve into the theology of that, you'll have to wait a little bit. Paul does it in great depth in Romans 5 that we'll study.

But I can make it much simpler for you. Have you ever known anyone who either didn't die or wasn't going to die? I'll wait. No. Right? It's something that every person has in common: death. Now what is the wages of sin? It's death, isn't it? So we see here that every descendant from Adam receives the wages of sin. Everyone dies. No one escapes sin. No one escapes death. All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

This brings us to our second imputation. It's the one David refers to. He says in verse 8 that the man is blessed against whom the Lord does not count his sin. David says that because of this, all of his sins are forgiven. They are covered. Then the question should come to us...*How can they be forgiven?* How can his sins be covered? How can God not punish sin? Remember, Paul told us the wages of sin is death. David is not only saying *everyone* sins; he's saying, "*I* sinned." He's taking the confession upon his lips.

So how can they be forgiven? Well, what happens here is they are accounted, or reckoned, to Christ. That's why Jesus had to go to the cross. He didn't die on the cross to give us a good lesson. He didn't die on the cross

so we might be moved with compassion or pity. No, he died upon the cross because the wages of sin is death, and Jesus paid the wages of sin.

The second great reckoning, imputation, in the Bible is that the sins of those who believe on Jesus are taken off *their* ledger and put onto *Jesus'* ledger. You couldn't pay for your sins, but Jesus can, because Jesus is like you but *not* like you. He's fully human, but he's also fully and completely God. He can pay the infinite price for sin because he's God. It's the only way sin can be dealt with.

No one else can take that ledger. No one else can zero out the column. Only the God-man, Jesus Christ. We have to understand you can't have imputation and merit or works in the same transaction. It doesn't work, because with works I get what I earned. I don't get to pass it off to someone else. I don't get to get something besides what I have earned.

Again, if you were to go in to your boss and say, "Listen, I have an idea this week. Instead of you giving me *my* paycheck, could I get the vice president's paycheck? I'd like that one, because I'm guessing it's a little bit more. So how about that?" What's your boss going to say? "No. You haven't earned it. That's not your job. You haven't done his work. I don't owe you that." That's how works work. But with imputation, it's of grace. It's a gift. Your sins are put on Jesus. This is good news.

Now, you may have been wondering if there's hope for you with all that you've done in your life. You may ask yourself, "How can I undo it?" The answer is you can't. You don't get a do-over in life. You can't undo all of the bad things you've done, but if you believe on Jesus Christ, God does not count your sin against you. You don't *need* to undo it. Jesus has paid that debt for you.

There is a third imputation. It's not just that the sinner is forgiven, because there is more to what we receive by faith. The sinner is actually counted righteous by God, Paul tells us. He says the one who believes is counted righteous. Not just not guilty, not just forgiven, but actually positively righteous. There is a righteousness that comes to the believer that was earned by Jesus Christ.

You will note and recall that Jesus did not simply be born and then go straightaway to the cross. He lived for 30-some-odd years, and in all the time he lived he kept the law of God perfectly. He never violated any of the smallest of God's law. He did what mankind was called to do in Adam: to perfectly obey God's law, and by perfectly obeying God's law Christ earned righteousness. He was righteous in *fact*. He had earned it. He has the ledger to prove it, all of the times he did what God commanded, all of the times he resisted temptation. Jesus Christ was righteous.

That's why he lived his life. It's not just so he could die an atoning death and we could have our sins forgiven. We also need the righteousness of Christ to come to us. There is an actual righteousness that comes to the

believer. The one who believes in Jesus stands before God as righteous and worthy. How is that? It's by having the righteousness of Christ credited to him.

The Bible gives us a good picture of what this looks like. It talks about, as sinners, how we are clothed in filthy rags, and Jesus, by faith, strips off our rags of sin and clothes us in the glorious, holy, white, righteous robes of Christ. We don't make up our own clothing. We don't go to the laundromat and try and get the stains out. We get the righteousness of another.

When you stand before the judgment seat of God, as every single man, woman, and child will, if you have believed on Jesus Christ by faith, God will not look at you and say, "I don't know. I remember that January 23 when you picked on your sister. I saw you cheat on that quiz in Spanish in eleventh grade. When you were in the car that day and didn't think anybody could hear you, I heard the things you said."

That's not what God is going to say, because he won't see that. All he sees is the righteousness of Jesus. There's nothing to be laid to the account of a redeemed sinner, because all God sees is the righteousness of Christ. It is imputed to the sinner by faith.

The Sign of Righteousness

A final question we have is... *What do we have to do or bring to get this great salvation?* How much do we have to do to get God to love us so much to apply salvation to us? "Why would God stoop down to love *me*?" you might ask. The answer is that there is nothing you can do or bring. Salvation by grace is free. It cannot have any condition; otherwise, it wouldn't be salvation by grace. So we need to stop trying to buy the free gift. It's insulting. There's no value there.

It would be as if someone came to you and said, "I would like to give you a mint condition, original parts, cherry red 1978 Corvette as a gift," and you said, "Oh, I can't take that as a gift. No, no, no. I need to give you something of value back. We need to trade. Do you know what I have? I have a 1989 Honda Civic with 283,000 miles on it. You have to be careful where you put your feet when you sit because the floorboards are a little rusted out. If you push too hard, you'll be hitting the pavement with your feet, but we can call that a trade. Let's call that even. I've given you what *you* need. You give me what *I* need."

It's ridiculous, yet that doesn't even come close to the comparison of what we think we can bring to God for the righteousness of Jesus Christ. We have to receive the gift. We cannot try to purchase it. There is a reason Paul wants us to know and to trust in the freeness of justification. He begins to describe the *sign* of the righteousness God gives to Abraham and thence to us. He gives us some information about Abraham's life. You see, from the very beginning of the spread of the gospel, from Acts 15 on, people were constantly trying to show you had to *do* something in order to be able to get the gospel.

In Acts 15, there was a major controversy around the issue of circumcision, because people said, "Well, this is all well and good that you believe in Jesus, but you really need to be circumcised. Unless you're circumcised you can't be saved, because you need to do your part. Circumcision is really important. That's *your* part." In Galatians, it got so bad that Peter got swept up into it, thinking there was a difference between Jews and Gentiles, and Peter was the one who first preached the gospel to the Gentiles. That's how messed up this can get.

Paul anticipates this issue, and he says to us, "Who can have this blessing?" Look at verse 9. "Is this blessing then only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? For we say that faith was counted to Abraham as righteousness. How then was it counted to him? Was it before or after he had been circumcised?" Do you see what he says? How, then, did Abraham have it counted to him?

Notice he doesn't just say, "When did Abraham have it counted to him?" He says, "How then..." In other words, what kind of state was Abraham in? What were his circumstances? What would he have been counted as a category of a person? It's more than about time. It's a brilliant point Paul makes, because he says, "So was Abraham circumcised or not when he believed and it was counted as righteousness?"

Everyone has to answer, "Uh, not," because in everybody's Bible...in *my* Bible, in *your* Bible, in the rabbi's Bible...Genesis 17 comes *after* Genesis 15. It's very clear. Abraham believed not *because* he was circumcised, not as a *result* of his circumcision. He wasn't even circumcised at the same time. God had intentionally pushed circumcision off so we would not be confused and think there was something we had to do to be justified.

As a matter of fact, people mess this up all the time now, and God took the precaution, as it were. There are people all the time now, in our day, who say, "Well, it's all well and good you believe in Jesus, but have you been baptized? If you haven't been baptized, you're not really saved." We have priests and ministers running into neonatal units, baptizing infants, because they're afraid if they die they won't be saved, because you have to be baptized to be saved. I think someone should assign them two Romans 4's. Read those, and call me back in the morning.

Abraham wasn't circumcised. He was circumcised *after* his faith. Paul is hammering this point home. Even Abraham, the father of God's people, had his consummate testimony, circumcision, *after* he was justified by faith. What this means is that anything you're trying to do is just delaying your coming to God. You need to give all of that up *now*. You need to come to Jesus Christ *today, now*. Trust *him*, not anything you have done.

One final point. Some would say this makes the sign useless. If baptism or circumcision doesn't save, why bother? Of course, we know *God* bothered, so it must mean something. God doesn't think the sacrament is useless. He established it after the principle of faith. We see God's wisdom in this, because faith takes the priority, but circumcision is a sign. It is a sign of an inward spiritual reality. It points us to the promise of God. It is something we can see that drives us to the promise.

Abraham could look at his body and remember the promise of God. He could be driven to that. It's not as if the sign means nothing, but it's not to be confused with the reality. You've heard me use this illustration before. If you're driving east on I-10 and see a sign that says, "Beaumont," that sign is not Beaumont. It is an indication of the reality of Beaumont and your relationship to Beaumont. It is a sign. That's how signs work.

Circumcision is also, Paul tells us, a seal; that is, a confirmation of the reality of the promise. It assures us of the reality of God's promise. This is important, because it does not assure you of what *you* have done. The sign and the seal assures you of what *God* has done. Did the sign cause God to love you? No. Is it a condition for God to love you? No. It is a reminder that God already loved you. That's what it does for Abraham.

It was a sign and a seal of faith, of the covenantal relationship of God's people. God's sacraments are encouragements to us of his promise. They're encouragements of his relationship to us, and all of this comes to us only by faith. They are a testimony of his grace. Will you believe him now? There is nothing you can do or need to do. It is so simple, but it is so powerful. This is so like our gracious God who justifies his people by grace alone through faith alone.