

## **Introduction:**

**Good morning...It is good to be back with you this morning...** I am Byron Bradshaw the Pastor here at Calvary Bible Church...If you are interested in becoming a member or joining one of the many Sunday school classes, I encourage you to see me following the service...

**Well...Last week was officially the end of John 3:16...** No not the verse...the lawnmower John Deere 3:16...The R-Force is a group of servant-minded men here at Calvary that come here every Thursday morning to mow all these acres of land and to set up for events...Some of them have been doing it for 25 years...

**Thank you gentlemen** for serving us in such a faithful way...

**Before we begin let us go to the Lord in prayer...**

## **ME:**

**Today...justification is on trial and you are the jury...** Today we try the case that we are truly justified by grace through faith...

**Where were you June 17, 1994?** Some of you are thinking, "I wasn't even born yet..." But for the rest of us I imagine many of you remember where you were on June 17<sup>th</sup>, 1994...

I imagine you are going through the catalog in your mind...thinking of the president at the time, your stage of life at the time...The sporting events at the time...

**If you are flipping through the memory catalog...** Allow me to help you...For all of you my age and older I'm going to give you two words to describe the event on that day.....

**"White Bronco"**

**On June 17<sup>th</sup>, 1994, the drama of the century began...** The entire nation tuned in on that day and witnessed a slow speed car chase with a car passenger named OJ Simpson...

**I imagine many of you remember** where you were on that date...I remember as a child watching a white car on TV and not really getting it...I remember watching the chase on my mother's TV not really understanding all the "hoop-la" and especially the people standing on the overpasses...

**But then what confused me was all the next year...** It seemed that every channel was always centered around a courtroom and a trial... I vaguely remember some of the evidence and conversations that took place...

**If you remember, the entire nation became obsessed in what became called the “trial of the century”...**

**Transition:** As in any court case, there is evidence...There are witnesses, testimonies and jury members...And all of these pieces are essential to arrive at a legal conclusion called a “verdict”...

**Transition:** In recent weeks we have discussed our verdict.....What is our verdict? What is the verdict for every person’s soul?

**Transition:** The verdict for mankind is that we are declared guilty...Guilty of sin deserving of the eternal death penalty... but in a pivot based on God’s love...We can now declared innocent by grace through faith...

**Transition:** Yet perhaps, just as important as the verdict is the evidence for our verdict.....

**WE:**

**Friends, Allow me to ask a question... If a Muslim came up to you and asked you, “What proof do you have that God declares us righteous by faith and not by work?” How would you respond?**

**If an agnostic attempting to push your buttons came up to you and said.... “Ya know Christians just think they are special...Because every other religious person believes they have to be good enough to get to heaven...What makes you so sure Christianity isn’t the same?”**

**If someone came up to you and asked, “What evidence do you have that you are justified by faith...and not by works?” How would you respond?**

**Transition:** Well...if you do not know how to respond...Then you are in luck...Because this is the very question Paul answers in Chapter 4...

**Transition:** In one sense...the Book of Romans is a letter...But in another sense...it is also a legal treatise of the gospel...

**Transition:** And so in the passage today Paul puts on trial the case for justification by faith and not works...At the end of Chapter 3 and throughout Chapter 4 Paul gives us evidence and witnesses to prove our new eternal verdict...

**Transition:** So, come with me to Romans 4...Romans 4... and today we will be in verses 1-8 being witnesses to the Part 1 of the trial for justification by grace through faith...

## **GOD:**

### **Review:**

**As you turn there...** I want you to think about something... What evidence has Paul already given for mankind to be justified by faith and not by works?

If you remember Paul gives us his verdict in 3:21-26...

That we are all, all men and women who have ever lived are sinful and continue to fall short.... But God declared us innocent by means of His grace... Through the instrument of purchase... And that cash payment was blood... With Jesus as the Buyer..... And now salvation is freely given to all by faith... as God's satisfaction with Jesus' payment is displayed with Him passing over our sins...

Simply, the verdict is GUILTY... BUT DECLARED INNOCENT BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH... (Slide)

### **Point #1: The Verdict is Justification by grace through faith**

But what were the first two pieces of evidence for this verdict? (Slide)

**Evidence #1:** God is the God of the Jews and the Gentiles... 3:29... Since God is God over all nations... Why then would he justify some by the Law and some by faith?

**Evidence #2: God is One...** 3:30... Since God is one God... Since there is only one true God... So, then the verdict is true... God will justify all people the same... He will not justify the Jews one way and the Gentiles another... God is one and consistent to all of mankind...

**Transition: To further prove his case.....** Paul in Romans 4 now puts two witnesses on the witness stand... The two witnesses are two of the most famous Jews to ever live... And they further prove Paul's verdict of justification outside of works...

Transition: Notice with me verses 1-2, "What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found? 2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God."

### **Point #2: The Verdict is Justification by grace through faith witnessed by Abraham...**

What is he introducing? He is introducing the first witness to the witness stand Abraham...

What does Paul use again here? Paul uses a rhetorical question... Paul often uses rhetorical

questions throughout the Book of Romans to introduce a new topic, a conclusion or another evidence...Paul's question is a bit difficult to determine...To iron it out just a bit...

Paul is literally asking... "Therefore what shall we say? What did Abraham find out who is our father according to flesh?"

Notice again verse 2... "For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God."

What did Abraham find out? Or discover? Abraham discovered that Paul's verdict is true...Not even Abraham (who is a bit perfect in the Jewish people's eyes) could boast...WHY not? Because not even Abraham could justify Himself by doing enough good works...

Testimony Piece #1: Abraham not even good enough...The person that the Jews idolized the most was not even good enough....And since Abraham was not good enough then he cannot boast or brag before God...

Illustration:

Think about it: In a sense...The Jewish nation has a bit of revisionist history...What is revisionist history? Looking back on something that was imperfect and choosing to only remember its perfection...

We all do this...When we think about a family trip we took Colorado...We only think about the campfires and laughter with our children but quickly forget about the 23 hour car ride...

As human beings ... We don't just have revisionist history on memories but also do regarding people...Who is a person that people in our culture typically think of as perfect? Think of an athlete that we look back on as being a "perfect athlete"? I think of Michael Jordan...The media, fans, people think of him as the perfect basketball player...but in reality he missed more shots than he made...

The Jewish nation, In a sense, prop up a memory or a famous person as perfect when in reality they are not...

It is easy for us to be puzzled by the Jewish nation's view of Abraham as perfect...It is easy for us to remember that he wasn't because all we have to do is flip back to Genesis 16? And remember he gave his wife Sarai to the Pharaoh of Egypt...But what is blinding the Jewish nation to Abraham's imperfections? It all has to do with their intertestamental culture...

In which I will clearly explain next week...Come back next week to understand their culture...

Haha...

Transition: So, the Jewish nation are stuck in revisionist history...But in order to break their false idea of Abraham Paul puts Abraham on the witness stand and says that not even Abraham was good enough to make it to heaven....

Transition: Two key pieces of Abraham's testimony...Verse 2...He isn't good enough...And notice the second part of Abraham's testimony...Verse 3, "For what does the Scripture say? "ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS."

**What is Piece #2 of Abraham's testimony?** Testimony #2: Righteousness was "credited" through faith... "And Abraham believed in God and it was credited...Or consciously determined or inventoried (same word as in 3:28 for "maintain" to him as righteousness...

Piece #1: Abraham not even good enough...Piece #2: Therefore righteousness must be credited by faith

Paul puts Abraham on the stand and proves to the Jewish jury through Abraham that not EVEN ABRAHAM WAS GOOD ENOUGH...And if the jury would just listen they would realize their false idea...

Transition: But notice God's reason for justification by faith...apart from works...Paul in verses 4-5 gives us the reason we are justified apart from works...notice 4-5,

**Read verses 4-5**, "Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due. 5 But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness..."

What is the reason for justification by grace not works? "His wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due..." That word "favor" in verse 4 is the Greek word "charis" which is grace...

I have two massive problems with anyone, any religion that says one has to be good enough to get to heaven...Why?

Well...

Problem #1: If we work to attain it, then it can't be grace...If God "owes" us salvation, then it can't be grace...

But Problem #2: How many good works must you do? How many good works does it take to get

to heaven?

To tell you a quick story...Ya know Christianity is very unique because it is the only religion (to my knowledge) that mankind is saved by grace rather than works...

To demonstrate the issue I have in Problem #2...I recently had coffee with my good friend, Andy, at Dunkin Donuts and he told me about his friendship with a Muslim...

His Muslim friend was proud that he had callouses on his forehead...This young Muslim developed callouses on his forehead from bowing in prayer...He was so consistent and devout in prayer...from bowing and rubbing his head that he actually developed callouses...

I am not a scholar on Islam...But according to Sunni Islam...they essentially proposes 5 pillars to earn justification...Declaration of Faith, Obligatory Prayer, compulsory giving, fasting in the month of Ramadan and a Pilgrimage to Mecca...

All 5 are works based...But there is a problem...As I understand Islam...Even if you do all 5 of these compulsively...obsessively...That Allah can still reject you...In others words, you can live the best you can...Earn every drop...Earn the right to heaven...But Allah can still reject you...

That is my problem #2: How many good works does it take...Imagine the bondage it is to be a devout Muslim...That you can do your best...You can be the most devout Muslim in the world...and still be rejected...

Whereas Islam and every other religion is bondage...Christianity is freedom...

Think about this...Think about the difference in love from Islam to Christianity...Friends, God does not owe anything... But rather God decided for us not to earn it rather to give it to us freely...

But let us ask a very, very important question...WHY in the world would God choose Grace and not works? I mean He is God, right? God could have logically said...Ok, if you do 10,000 good deeds that last 5 minutes a piece then I will let you in...

God could have said...When you read the Bible 500 times I will let you in...If you give 25% of tall the money you make to the church then I will let you in...

God could have made it works...God could have established justification by works...But why didn't He choose too? In my opinion, it has less to do with his love than his Glory...

If we earn our salvation, then who gets the glory for justification? We do...Right? If we earn salvation then I imagine if we make it to heaven then there will be other heavenly people giving us high fives as we enter heaven's gates...

However, if we cannot earn it and it is only by grace, then who gets the glory for justification? God...The only person to give credit to for our salvation is God...God receives all the Glory...And HE SHOULD HE IS GOD...ALL OF THIS MUST BE DESIGNED TO GLORIFY HIM...HE IS GOD!!! I AM NOT...

God deserves all the Glory, honor and praise... Piece #1: Abraham not even good enough...Piece #2: Therefore righteousness must be credited by faith

**Point #3:** The Verdict is Justification by grace through faith witnessed by Abraham and Abraham proves faith justifies not works...

Transition: As further evidence to the jury of Jews and to us today, Paul then takes Abraham off the witness stand...and puts another famous Jew to again prove justification is by grace through faith and not works...

Notice verse 6-8, "just as David also speaks of the blessing on the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: 7 "Blessed are those whose lawless deeds have been forgiven, And whose sins have been covered. 8 "Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will not take into account."

Who is the second witness on the stand? David...

Point #3: The Verdict is Justification by grace through faith witnessed by Abraham and by David...

And notice verse 6...It links that David also understood that justification was by grace through faith...So, not only did Abraham know it but also David...But I want you do notice the uniqueness of verses 7-8...

What do you instantaneously notice about them? They are in all caps...Paul is quoting Psalm 32:1-2a...

David himself witnesses to the same verdict...Proving once again his premise in 3:21-26...But I want you to notice the difference in the witnesses...Abraham's testimony affirms that it is not by works because otherwise Abraham can boast...

But David's testimony affirms something else... "Blessed are those whose lawless deeds have been forgiven, And whose sins have been covered. 8 "Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will not take into account."

Justification is not by works Abraham...And David's testimony is that justification is through grace seen through the forgiveness of sins...

Blessed is He  
Whose lawless deeds are forgiven  
Whose sin is covered  
Whose sin is not accounted...

Justification is not through works but through forgiveness of sin...What does that remind you of? 3:25...That when we believe...Our justification before God is seen as God does not hold our sin against us...

He passes over our sins...over...and over...and over...and over...We can be justified by grace through faith because God passes over and over and over our sins again and again...

And who can take credit for these truths? Only God...

Testimonial evidence for Paul's justification...Justification is by grace (seen in God's forgiveness) through faith

Transition:

YOU:

Proving Justification by Faith? How can you prove God justifies by faith?

Application #1: There is one God...Since there is one God then why would He save people differently? If God justified by works, then people do not all have the same opportunity to be saved...If we are justified by works, then only those who have the instruction to do good works can be saved...

If we affirm that Allah is true and salvation is earned...Then only those with a copy of the Qu'ran and those who have access to a mosque really stand a chance at being saved...

Application #2: Glory to God...If man can earn it...Then what glory is that to God? In the end, isn't this entire world designed to give glory to God and not to us...Essentially, in any religion, glory is given to their god...But if we can earn it then we are robbing glory from God and giving it to ourselves...

If we are justification by works...Then how many is enough?

Application #3: How many? How many works is enough?

Application #4:

Since there is one God...

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”

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Vs 1 rhetorical question -

verse 2 draws it back to chapter 3:27 connecting the two as the same

Not even Abraham can boast...why are they obsessed with Abraham?

Vs 3 witness testimony evidence for justification genesis 15:6

The reason for justification by faith- if works then owed and it won't be grace...

If works then how many works? Then It must be based on sincerity...if based on sincerity then we cannot get to heaven because none of us are naturally sincere but rather naturally sinful.

If by works we stand hopelessly condemned

Christianity is unique it is by grace not works

Muslim 5 pillars Andy sharples story of callous on face but allah still may not let you in

Witness #2: David- evidence in text of God's forgiveness

What's up with Abraham? Why are they so culturally idolizing him?

Michael Jordan we idolize him but he still missed more shots than he made

Examine the trial of justification

By

Evidence of justification by faith: God is one

God is God of Gentiles and Jews

Romans 4:1-5: evidence #1 Abraham justified by works- nothing to boast about

The five pillars of Islam

Romans 4: 6-8: evidence #2 David realized it was not works

Romans 4:9-12: evidence #3 faith before circumcision

If you doubt justification, examine Abraham, David and Timing (faith before circumcision)

How many good works does it take? If that isn't enough or a number cannot be determined then it must be about sincerity...and sincerity doesn't cut it because no one is sincere

Jewish culture idolizing Abraham falsely why?

The trial

Put justification in trial... listen to its witnesses examine the evidence only one conclusion...it's true