

Abraham, Justified by Grace, Part 1

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I. Introduction.

A. Text: Romans 4:9-12.

B. Abraham is an illustration of justification by faith.

C. We are legally justified by faith and also made righteous by the work of Jesus Christ. (Luke 15)

D. Abraham was justified by grace and not law. God saves undeserving sinners.

II. The part religious rites play in salvation.

A. Many rabbis taught that Jewish circumcision played a role in salvation.

B. Abraham's circumcision was a model for the Jews, but Paul turns the table on them. (Acts 15, Philippians 3:4, Galatians 5)

1. Circumcision does not impart grace. Christ freed believers for freedom.

2. Some claim today that the sacraments pour out saving grace, but salvation comes apart from this.

3. Saying that sacraments save is a religion of human achievement that negates grace.

4. Abraham was not circumcised until after he was made righteous.

5. Circumcision is not a reality, it is a sign.

a. It is a sign of racial identification. (Acts 16)

b. It is a mark of God's covenant. (Joshua 5)

c. It is a spiritual sign of Abraham's uncircumcised faith.

C. God always wanted to change the heart and not the outside only. (Deuteronomy 3:6; Jeremiah 4:4; 9:24)

D. Communion shows forth the Lord's death today. Baptism demonstrates union with Christ's death and resurrection. These are outward signs of an inward reality.

III. Abraham is the father of all who believe since his salvation came before circumcision. (Philippians 3)

Application Questions:

1. Why is it important that Abraham's circumcision came after his salvation?

2. What role should sacraments play in our faith?

3. What are some ways that believers slip into the trap of doing works for their salvation? Explain.
