

Crossroads Baptist Church
January 21, 2007 10:00
Romans 4: 5-8
Romans #18

“The Pursuit of Happiness”

Will Smith has recently starred in a movie “The Pursuit of Happiness” which is based on book by the same title by Chris Gardner.

Everyone wants happiness. There is not a person who does not want to be happy and we’ll do whatever is necessary to pursue that goal.

God is not against you being happy. In fact, it was his idea.

Paul uses Abraham and David, the two greatest figures in the Jewish heritage, to declare the message that faith apart from works is what justifies a sinner before God. This morning, we will look at the message of David in Romans 4: 5-9.

I. You are to be happy because God said that you were.

The word for blessedness is the word for attribution of good fortune. It is only used three times in the New Testament with one of the other two usages being in verse nine.

The New Living Translation does translate the word “happy.”

Verse 7 and 8, the word “Blessed” is the same word used in the Beatitudes meaning supremely blessed, well off.

God says that He wants you to be supremely blessed, well off, to have good fortune.

God is for us, not against us. God wants the best for us, not the worst. God wants us to have life, not death. He wants us to succeed, not fail.

He is the God of a Party. Remember the parties he threw in Luke 15 over the lost sheep, the lost coin and the lost son. And the best party is when we get to Heaven.

You might be tempted to think that God has “His favorites.” If you are “in the crowd” then He will treat you better than others.

Well, let’s look at who God says should be blessed:

Verse 5 – ‘the ungodly’ – wicked, irreverent.

You see, Jesus actually sees things just the opposite as we do. We would be tempted to think that God likes the religious and hates the ungodly. But, when Jesus was here on earth, it was the religious that He didn’t like and the ungodly that he hung out with.

In fact, when the Pharisees asked Jesus why he ate with publicans and sinners, Jesus replied, “They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.”

Look at verse 5- it’s to the person who “doesn’t work” that God imputes righteousness. You see God may be more angry at all the religious people who think they are doing God a favor and some mighty work today by just being in church and think because of all they do for God that God owes them. God hates that.

But He loves the sinner who comes in and doesn’t even feel worthy to lift his eyes but will beat his chest and ask for mercy on his sins.

And don’t forget who Exhibit B is here. Exhibit A was Abraham, now Exhibit B is David.

We know David as the great King, the one who loved the law and was after God’s own heart. But David was also the one who had lust, envy, committed adultery, got a man drunk, had him killed and lied all about to cover it up. Sounds serious.

Is there any good news for David? Oh yes, that is why David is so jubilant here. This is a quote from Psalm 32.

II. You are to be happy because of what God has done with your sins.

The deal killer with our joy is not that we don’t have enough money or that we haven’t had the breaks in our employment. The killer of joy is sin.

Since joy is an inside job, then sin kills the joy from the inside.

First, look at how God describes our sins:

- Lawless deeds – iniquities – violation of the law - wicked
- Sins – offenses (same word as in verse 8)

So, “what can wash away my sin?”

Verses 7-8 tells us that we are to be happy because of what God has done with our sin.

Now look at how God describes what happens to our sin:

- They are forgiven

They are “carried off.” This reminds us of the scape goat of the Old Testament that was sent away in the wilderness bearing the sins of the people.

John 1: 14 Behold the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world.

Psalms 103: 12 “As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.”

I’m glad He didn’t say, As far as the north is from the south because that can be measured. East and west can’t.

- They are covered

“They are hidden.” What are they hidden under? The blood of Jesus Christ.

Isaiah 43: 25 “I, even I, am he that blot out thy transgression for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.”

- They are not imputed to our account.

Impute is an accounting term that literally means, “to the credit to the account of.” God does not credit to our account our sin.

We are justified. Go back to verse 3, God “accounts to him for righteousness.”

Justification transcends forgiveness. I am not just made clean, but I am now accepted as a saint, a member of God’s family, I have exchanged my righteousness for His righteousness. I have exchanged my standing for His standing. I have exchanged my sorrow for His joy.

My Dad used to sing this old song:

“You ask why I am happy so I’ll just tell you why,
Because my sins are gone;
And when I meet the scoffers who ask me where they are,
I say, my sins are gone.

They’re underneath the Blood, on the Cross of Calvary,
As far removed as darkness is from dawn;
In the sea of God’s forgetfulness, that’s good enough for me,
Praise God, my sins are gone.

I’m living now for Jesus, I’m happy night and day,
Because my sins are gone;

My soul is filled with music, with all my heart
I say, I know my sins are gone.