

Crossroads Baptist Church
February 4, 2007 10:00
Romans 4: 9-16
Romans #19

“The Vehicle of Happiness”

Paul keeps hammering home this wonderful truth of faith alone saves us. John Piper said, “Paul, we get it!” We got it in Romans 3:22 We got it in Romans 3:28. We got with the example of Abraham in Romans 4: 1-5. We got it with the example of David in Romans 4: 6-8.

But Paul believes so strongly in this glorious truth that he is unwilling to “let it go.” And I believe he so wants us to have the blessings of God, that he keeps on going with this wonderful truth.

And it is the blessings of God that is his secondary theme here. We saw that two Sundays ago.

Romans 4:6 “describes the blessedness of the man....”
Romans 4:7 “Blessed are those....”
Romans 4:8 “Blessed is the man....”

Now in our text in verse 9: “Does this blessedness.....”

Its that word for happiness. Its that word for being supremely blessed, well off, the rich person who has no more worries. In simple, it is the word “happy.”

How can you be happy? The vehicle of happiness is not an expensive car or a hot chick or stud. The vehicle of happiness is not a winning lottery ticket or a cure for your disease. The most precious possession you have or need is your own soul and the question is, how can it be saved?

Psalm 49: 6,8 (Amplified Bible) “They that trust in their wealth and boast about their riches. none of them can by any means give to God a ransom for the soul. For the soul is far too precious to be ransomed by more earthly wealth.”

Thus the greatest blessings in life are not what can be bought, but wrought through faith as described in Romans 4. So how do we get these blessings? How can we be assured we will have happiness?

I. **The vehicle of happiness will not come because of who you are.** Verse 9

The Jews thought that because they were circumcised that they could receive God’s favor. A first century Jew name Trypho wrote of this common belief in a letter to Justin Martyr : “The seed of Abraham according to the flesh, shall share in the eternal kingdom simply because we are Jews.”

The Jews had the belief that they, and only they, could receive God’s favor.

This is still true today of people who believe that they are right with God or saved just because their birth within a Christian family, or living in a Christian nation. But salvation is not by natural birth.

John 1: 13 “who were born, not of blood,but of God.”

Your bloodline naturally will not produce happiness and right standing with God.

II. **The vehicle of happiness will not come due to any religious ceremonies.** Verses 9-12

Circumcision was the one act of obedience that defined a person as a Jew. But the question Paul raises is did the blessing come on Abraham while he was uncircumcised or circumcised?

The answer clearly is that before he was circumcised.

Look at the timeline.

Genesis 15:6 “HE believed in the Lord, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.”

Then Genesis 17, Ishmael is 13 years old and the rite of circumcision is initiated.

In Genesis 15, Ishmael was not even conceived so the rite of circumcision had to be at least 14 years after Abraham believed God and some Jewish tradition says it was 29 years afterwards.

The point is clear, being a Jew because you have been circumcised does not alone qualify you for the blessings of God.

III. **The vehicle of happiness will not come by keeping religious rules.** Verses 13-15

While many of the promises of God in the Bible are conditional, those made to Abraham and his seed were unconditional. They were based not on the faithfulness of Abraham, but of God. They were not based on the ability of man to carry them out, but on the ability of God.

Hundreds of years after Abraham God gives to the world through Moses the law. God has not changed His mind about what it takes to be righteous by giving the law. The laws of Moses did not affect the unconditional promise of God.

Neither for us does it mean if we live by the teaching of Paul or John or Peter make us holy and righteousness, it simply proves that we already are.

Look at two things Paul said about the law here:

- a. If you are trusting rules, faith is made void – verse 14

A promise is either conditional or its not, there is no middle ground. If the promise of God to Abraham was by faith alone, then you can not add any rule keeping or any condition to that.

If salvation is on the basis of “trying” then its not “trusting.”

- b. If you are trusting rules, failure is made certain – verse 15

The practical outcome of the law is not to save, but to condemn. The law does not assure us of how well we are doing; instead, it shows us how short of a person we are.

IV. **The vehicle of happiness will come by faith alone.** – verse 16

The conclusion is that it must be by faith. “Therefore, it (the blessing) is of faith, that it might be by grace.”

Grace is that God did something for us that we did not deserve. The work is done by God. What does He do?

- Romans 4:5 “He justifies the ungodly.”
- Romans 4:6 “God imputes righteousness apart from works”
- Romans 4: 7 “whose lawless deeds are forgiven, whose sins are covered”
- Romans 4: 8 “to whom the Lord shall not impute sin.”

I do not seek to understand that I may believe, but I believe that I may understand: for this I also believe, that unless I believe I will not understand.” Anselm

Faith is the most universally fundamental act of the human heart.