

Sola fide

(Insights from Romans 4:1-16)

Pastor Bob Johnson, Grace Point Church, October 15th, 2017

Where does Romans 4 fit in to big picture?

Two Salvation Strategies that don't work ...

God's Solution is thru ...

(Romans 3:21-25)

Paul's Exhibit A:

(Romans 4:1-3)

Abe and Sarah's Story ...

Gen. 12:1-4 at 75, God's invite & promises
Gen. 15:1-6 at 85, Abram's faith & God's response
Gen. 16:1-4 at 86, Sarah's plan to help God out
Gen. 17:1-6 at 99, New name and symbol

We are made right with God by Faith not _____

(Romans 4:4-5)

Paul's Exhibit B:

(Romans 4:6-8, Psalm 51:16-17, Psalm 32:3-5)

We are made right with God by Faith not _____

(Romans 4:9-16, Romans 2:28-29)

Truths To Take Home ...

- 1. Peace grows when we ...**
(Matthew 11:28-29, Isaiah 26:3)
- 2. Strength grows when we ...**
(Isaiah 40:28-31)

This Week's Discussion Guide:

Welcome to "Week 6" of this Fall season of our small groups at GPC! This is a 10 week session of small groups as we will wrap up the week of November 12th. Our small groups are where folks move from 'believers' to 'belongers'. May we receive lots of encouragement and support and deepening friendships as we meet together this fall to pray, support each other and study God's Word together.

Looking Back:

Each week we'll look back and have an opportunity to share with our group how the past 7 days went and also share a few things to help us get to know each other better. What is something encouraging or not so encouraging that happened since our last meeting?

Last Sunday Bob shared how Romans 4 fit into the big picture of whole book. Speaking of pictures ... what is a picture (mental, digital or physical) that you treasure?

In Romans 4, Paul continues to make a case that works and religion are not 'salvation strategies' that work. We are saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8-9). Although no effort on our own can make us right with God, some effort does allow us to accomplish certain things. Looking back, what goal that took some effort are you glad you stuck with after it was accomplished?

Early in last Sunday's message, Bob shared some key words that Paul used over and over to emphasize certain things (i.e. justified, faith, counted etc.) What is a word that describes you in some way that we might not know about you? (or we might already know :)

Each week in 'looking back', we also want to give each other the opportunity to look back since our last meeting and have an opportunity to share how we applied something to our daily lives that God prompted us from the Bible.

Looking Up:

As part of looking up and seeing what God can teach us this week, was there anything from last Sunday's message that particularly caught your attention, challenged you or needs some clarification?

1. This week we heard how Israel's national hero, Abraham, was saved by faith and not his works just as we are today. Yet, looking closer at Abraham's story, there are times when God chooses to be silent and also chooses to wait on fulfilling what He has promised. Choosing to be patient and faithful to God during times of waiting is a challenge for all of us. How do the following verses help us remain faithful and patient even when God seems to be more silent and/or his schedule is not the same as ours?

Psalm 37:7-9, James 5:7-11

Which verse above or possibly another Bible passage encourages you the most when it comes to being patient and faithful?

2. The Pharisees in the New Testament were arguably the most religious people of their time and the ultimate example of having a "religious faith" rather than a "saving faith". How does Jesus' response to the Pharisees in Matthew 23 further illustrate how they thought they could "earn" their faith but missed the mark on having "saving faith"?

Matthew 23:15, Matthew 23:23, Matthew 23:25-26

3. It is incredible news that there is nothing we can do to earn our salvation and that it is a free gift offered to all. Yet, it is also true that an authentic saving faith cannot remain dormant, hidden or silent. Jesus gave us eight beatitudes that demonstrate an authentic faith in action, which is also a natural outflow of God's Spirit changing us from the inside out. As you read through Matthew 5:1-11, reflect on each beatitude and the questions that are provided.

How can you explain each beatitude to someone who asks what it looks like for a follower of Jesus to put into action? (you may want to refer to 'The Message', 'Living Bible', 'Today's English Version', or another paraphrase to add further explanation of each beatitude.

Which beatitude catches your attention the most or is the more challenging for you to live out in your own life?

How might the beatitudes relate to being 'salt and light' in Matthew 5:13-16?

Looking Forward:

This last section is based on passages like the one below.

But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. 23 For if you listen to the word and don't obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror. 24 You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like. 25 But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it.

James 1:22-25 (NLT)

Let's all take a few minutes to silently pray and reflect back on this last week's message and what we discussed in our group. As we reflect, let's all pray and ask God for a specific application that He might prompt us to live out this week.

To help us as we reflect, here are some possible applications to get us thinking ...

- Look back over the 8 beatitudes in Matthew 5:1-11 and prayerfully choose one to reflect on more this week and lead you to live it out some how.
- Re-read Romans 4 a few more times this week to gain a better understanding of what Paul was writing and to get more prepared as Bob wraps up Romans 4 next Sunday.
- Make a list of the things God is asking you to wait well with and reflect on some Bible verses (like Isaiah 40:28-31) on how to develop patience.
- As we are waiting on various things, there are others all around us that need our prayers as they are waiting as well. In Philippians 2:4, Paul says, "Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others." Ask some folks God leads you to how you can pray for them.

As we look forward to this week, let's pray for one another!