

# Romans 4:23-25

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*Abraham was credited as righteous in God's sight because of his faith. If we have faith that Christ died for our sins and was raised from the dead, we also will be counted as righteous.*

Paul brings the promise to Abraham, the father of all who believe, right to our doorstep. If Abraham is the father of all who believe, then God will give to those who believe in Him the same thing God gave Abraham: God will count the one who believes His promise as righteous before Himself. What exciting news this is, and the news is ancient. This is how God dealt with mankind from the very beginning. God wants us to believe Him.

What specific promise does God want us to believe? The next verse tells us. Abraham believed that his “as good as dead” body could bring new life. God wants us to believe essentially the same thing, that our bodies that are dead in sin (Romans 5:17) can be raised to new life (Romans 3:23–24).

If you have trusted anything but the death and resurrection of Jesus to make you just in the presence of God, right now is a time to believe that God is who He says He is, that He came to earth in the form of the human Jesus Christ, lived a perfect life, and then suffered and died on our behalf. Anyone who believes this is given eternal life (John 3:14-16).

Here Paul gives the ultimate good news, that God will do for us what He did for Abraham. *Now not for his sake only was it written that it was credited to him, but for our sake also, to whom it will be credited, as those who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead* (vv 23–24). Abraham simply believed God and God *credited* Abraham as righteous.

This is such good news because, as Paul has made clear, there is no way to become righteous before God on our own. It is popular in some circles to refer to “paths to God” and discuss whether there are many or one. But this letter of Paul to the Romans makes clear that there are no paths to God. There is no way for any person to bridge the gap between us and God. There is no way for us to do enough good to stand justified in the presence of God.

That is why Jesus had to become a human Himself. Jesus took on all our sins so that we could become righteous (2 Corinthians 5:21). We can be declared righteous in God's sight simply by believing that God came as a man, died on our behalf, and rose from the dead in victory over sin and death. The promise of God is that if we believe His promise to us of forgiveness and a new life, then God will grant it to us; He will *credit* us as righteous just as He did for Abraham.

The term *was it written* in the phrase *Now not for his sake only was it written* refers to the verse *written* in Genesis that says, speaking of Abraham “Then he believed in the Lord; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness” (Genesis 15:6). In this instance, God is disclosing to us something that we could know no other way. God discloses what He saw when He looked deep into Abraham’s heart: Abraham believed.

This was *written* by God in the Bible not just to commend Abraham. It was written *for our sake also*. This example of Abraham believing shows us that we too can believe God’s promise. When *we believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead*, we are believing as Abraham believed. Therefore, we can trust that we also will be *credited* as righteous in God’s sight.

Jesus left heaven, became a man, and came to earth to die on our behalf. *He who was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification* (v 25). His resurrection, being *raised*, is what allows us to be justified before God when we believe. Jesus was in heaven and was equal with God but did not hoard that privilege. Instead, Jesus set privilege aside to take on the form of a human and learn obedience, even to death on the cross (Philippians 2:5–8).

This was necessary *because of our transgressions*. The word translated *transgressions* is the same word used by Paul in Romans 5:15 to describe Adam’s sin against God. Paul has already clearly laid out the plight of humanity, that every one of us has sinned, every one of us has done something wrong; we have done something selfish, hurtful, or false (Romans 3:9–25).

Jesus was *delivered over* to death on the cross to redeem us from our sins. Every sin was nailed to the cross with Jesus (Colossians 2:14). Jesus did this through His own choice, His own obedience. God did this for the human race because of His love for us (John 3:16).

Thankfully, the story does not stop there. Jesus also rose from the dead. Jesus *was raised because of our justification*. His raising from the dead justified us before God. We are made new creations in Christ by the resurrection power of Jesus (Romans 8:10–11). We are raised to walk in newness of life by believing.

The next two verses in this letter to the Romans (5:1–2) discuss the new life we live, the life under God’s grace by faith. So in the verse preceding it (v 25), Paul concludes the topic of our justification in the presence of God. He summarizes Christ’s legacy, *He who was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification*.

The first four chapters of this letter have dealt with our eternal justification: our renewed relationship with God, our justified standing in God’s presence (accomplished by Christ’s sacrifice and our faith in His death and resurrection), saving us from Hell. Christ died for our sins and was raised from the dead to give us a new way of living, a resurrection life.

In this resurrection life, we have been given Jesus's resurrection power. Therefore we can live out our faith here and now, resulting in an experience of righteousness. "Righteousness" can be thought of as "living in God's design." Any created thing fulfills its purpose when it functions according to its design. To live "righteous" is to live consistent with how God designed us.

Our eternal destiny is sealed when we believe. We are saved by faith in Christ. The question then is "Will we now live by faith?" Our continued earthly existence can and should adhere to God's will. God's will for us is that we are not only justified in His sight, but that we also are sanctified/set apart in our walk with Him (1 Thessalonians 4:3). God desires this for us because it is for our greatest blessing and benefit.

Those who believe in Jesus are not only justified for eternity, but we are now also called to live out our new identity here on earth. We have the power to live this resurrection life. In Chapters 5–8, Paul discusses this new life for believers, a life that imitates Christ's obedience to God, all by continued faith in God.

### **Biblical Text**

**23 Now not for his sake only was it written that it was credited to him, 24 but for our sake also, to whom it will be credited, as those who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, 25 He who was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification.**