**"Sola Fide"**

**Romans 4:1-12**

 ***Overview***  It is probably fair to say that, if presented with a problem, there will be any

 number of opinions on how to solve that problem. In fact we may very well have

 as many suggested solutions as there are people considering the question.

 How will we get from point A to point B? What is the best way to decorate a

 room? Who is the best person for the job? What will we have for dinner tonight?

 How should we invest for the future? The list of possibilities is endless.

The interesting thing about Christianity is the assertion that, when it comes to solving the problem of our separation from God, there is one (and only one) answer – to have faith (and to place our trust) in Jesus Christ.

 ***Getting Started*** *A Matter of Trust*



1. If someone offered to pay for it, would you go skydiving? Why or why not?

 2. What do you rely on (put your trust in) when you need to pick a good restaurant? Find a good doctor? Plan a good vacation? Pick a church to belong to?

3. Aside from your spouse (or significant other), who is the person in your life that you trust the most?

 ***The Text*** What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, discovered in this matter? 2If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about—but not before God. 3What does Scripture say? “ Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.” w

 4Now to the one who works, wages are not credited as a gift but as an obligation. 5However, to the one who does not work but trusts God who justifies the ungodly, their faith is credited as righteousness. 6David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the one to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:

7“Blessed are those

whose transgressions are forgiven,

whose sins are covered.

8Blessed is the one

whose sin the Lord will never count against them.” z

9Is this blessedness only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? We have been saying that Abraham’s faith was credited to him as righteousness. 10Under what circumstances was it credited? Was it after he was circumcised, or before? It was not after, but before! 11And he received circumcision as a sign, a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. So then, he is the father of all who believe but have not been circumcised, in order that righteousness might be credited to them. 12And he is then also the father of the circumcised who not only are circumcised but who also follow in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.

 Romans 4:1-12 (NIV)

 ***The Video (optional)*** *“Sola Fide” – Romans 4:1-12* - by Kyle Corbin, Nov. 1/20 (view at www.immanuelonline.ca)



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 ***Understanding***

 1. To understand the context of the passage, read Romans 3:27-31. How are we justified (made right) before God according to these verses? What other path to justification is mentioned? What example of this alternate path does Paul mention (and why do you think he picks that one)?



 2. What Scriptural character does Paul focus on in Romans 4:1? What is the significance of Paul involving this character in the discussion (check out verse 2 and Gen. 26:1-5)?

 3. In Romans 4:3, Paul quotes Gen. 15:6. Interestingly, the rabbis of Paul’s day would use this very same verse to suggest we are made right before God by our works. How does Paul counter this argument (see verses 3-5)?

 4. To reinforce his argument, Paul quotes Psalm 32:1-2 in verses 6-8. How does David’s example support Paul’s teaching on faith?

 5. In verses 9-12, Paul considers another aspect of the life of Israelites. Why does he choose to talk about this aspect here (review Gen. 17:9-14)? How does it support his argument about faith? Why is it important for the rest of the world beyond Israel (see Gal. 3:1-9)?

 6. Is faith a belief (Hebrews 10:19-23), a perspective (Hebrews 11:1-3), an action (Hebrews 11:8-10), a trust (Hebrews 11:17-19) or something else?

 ***Applying***

 1. Many people today say...”I am a person of faith. I have my faith and you have yours. So I am no different from you – I just believe in different things.” How would you respond to someone who says that? (Remember Romans 3:21-26)

 2. Abraham’s example of faith is remarkable given all the obstacles he faced (consider Romans 4:18-22). What were those things that would have challenged his faith? Have you ever chosen to have faith in God despite challenges to your faith? What was the result of that choice?

 3. “The concept of “salvation by grace through faith” is actually a violation of Gods character since God has declared “I will not acquit the guilty” (Exodus 23:7)”. Agree or disagree? Explain your reasoning (remembering Romans 4:6).

 4. There are many who argue that, while it is an asset, faith is not required for salvation because all people will be saved. They base this belief on verses like Rom. 11:32, 1 Cor. 15:22, Col. 1:19-20, Phil. 2:10-11, 1 Tim. 4:10. How would you respond to this assertion (balancing this argument with verses such as Matt. 25:41-46, John 3:16, John 5:28-29, Rom. 2:5, Rom. 11:21-22, 2 Thess. 1:9, Rev. 21:8)?

 5. What are the blessings of living as a person of faith in Christ (consider Psalm 32:10, Psalm 37:3-4, Psalm 103:11-13, Matthew 17:20, John 3:16, John 14:12-14, John 16:13, Romans 8:1, 16-17, Eph. 6:16). What blessing(s) are you particularly thankful for today? Why?

 6. It would appear that the nation of Israel placed great faith (and found their hope and security) in the signs of their faith (like circumcision). Are there any modern-day “signs” or “symbols” in the church today that people place their faith in?

 7. Paul speaks of the spiritual gift of faith (1 Cor. 12:9). How do you understand this gift (i.e. what is it and how does it work)? Do you have the spiritual gift of faith?

 8. How do you sense that your faith is being challenged today? Is there anything that is making it hard for you to maintain your faith?

 9. What steps could you take to strengthen your faith in the coming week? (Consider John 6:44 as well).

***Memory Verse(s)*** (same as last week)

8For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—9not by works, so that no one can boast. 10For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.



 Ephesians 2:8-10 (NIV)

***Extra Resources***



* *“Sola Fide” – Romans 4:1-12”* - by Kyle Corbin, Nov. 1/20 (view at [www.immanuelonline.ca](http://www.immanuelonline.ca)). Pastor Kyle reviews the nature and necessity of the conviction that we are saved by faith alone.
* *“How Good is Good Enough?”* – by Andy Stanley (Multnomah Publishers, 2003). This booklet shows the danger of trying to be good enough to get to heaven. A great introduction for those who are exploring the Gospel.
* *“Faith and Thinking”* – by Justin Taylor (from Taylor’s blog on [www.thegospelcoalition.org](http://www.thegospelcoalition.org), Sept. 10, 2010). Here’s an interesting (and short) article on the role of thought in the practice of faith.