

Romans: Verse-by-Verse

Romans 4:23-25

Student Notes:

- **Recorded For Our Benefit:**

How Abraham's story applies to our salvation and justification: v.23 -- "The words 'it was credited to him' were written not for him alone, but also for us..."

Abraham's story, like the rest of Scripture, was recorded for the benefit of those who would come later. See: Romans 15:4; I Corinthians 10:11:

Paul's intention: 1. Combatting the Jewish theology that says justification comes by works. 2. Encouraging his Gentile friends, that, in the same way -- they, too can be justified by faith.

The overall point: The same God who credited faith to Abraham as righteousness, will also credit righteousness to us if we believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead.

Abraham believed God, who, "gives life to the dead", applied to 2 different situations: 1. His and Sarah's inability to produce children. 2. God's ability to resurrect Isaac, if he sacrificed him.

- **Applied To Our Salvation:**

We must have the same faith about God's power to resurrect the dead -- in the context of Jesus' death and resurrection: "... For us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead."

What fundamentally must we believe in order to become a Christian? "But what does it say? "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming: [9](#) That if you

confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.” -- Romans 10:8-10

We cannot say, “Jesus is Lord”, without believing that God raised him from the dead.

- **He Was Delivered Over:**

Verse 25: “He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.”

C. H. Hodge: “It is a comprehensive statement of the gospel.” Was verse 25 part of an early Christian creed -- or perhaps a worship song?

Now for some linguistics. Jesus was “delivered” over to death -- same Greek verb, “paradidomi”, that is found in such passages as Luke 24:7, which says, “The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.”

In Romans 4, it's the Father who delivers Jesus over to be crucified. (See, also, Romans 8:32)

The linguistics and interpretive issue: 1. “He was delivered over to death for our sins.” 2. “He was raised to life for our justification.”

For interpreters, the issue is with Paul's use of the phrases, “(dia) for our sins”, and “(dia) for our justification”.

The Greek preposition, “dia” usually means, “on account of”, or “because of”. It gives a reason for something that has happened. It also has a retrospective nuance.

The problem: Jesus was delivered to death “because of our sins”, but then was resurrected “**because of our justification**”.

In the pure sense of “dia” -- “on account of” or “because of, Paul would seem to be saying Jesus was raised because of our justification.

Two Solutions:

1. Translate the “dia” as meaning that Christ was delivered over and raised to life “for the sake of” our justification. Example: John Murray translates it as, “He was delivered up in order to atone for our sins and was raised in order that we might be justified.”.

A 2nd view: The “dia” in those verses doesn’t have to have the exact same meaning in both clauses. In that case, we can read those statements as, “He was delivered ‘because of our sins’, and “He was raised ‘with a view to our justification’”.

- **The Overarching Lesson of 4:23-25**

Just like Abraham, we all face what seem to be impossibilities in our lives. We have to use both faith and reason when we approach the difficult things in life.

John Stott: “On the contrary, faith is a reasoning trust. There can be no believing without thinking”.

Faith doesn’t ignore facts and it doesn’t close its eyes to them. Abraham didn’t give up on God’s promises because of the physical realities he faced. Instead, he reflected on God’s promises to him, and on the character of the God who made them to him.

Abraham considered how God, “Gives life to the dead, and calls things that are not as though they were.” (v. 17) He became fully persuaded God could do what he said. (v.21)

Application: We are living on the other side of Jesus’ resurrection. We know what God did to raise His Son from the dead. We, above all people, ought to know God as the God who “gives life to the dead” and “calls those thing that are not -- as though they were”.