

## Chiseled Faith!

### I. Slide#1 Intro:

- A. **Slide#2,3** We use the idiom *Nails in the coffin* as, An action or event that leads to the end of something.
- Paul now adds **3 more nails to the coffin** of **Salvation by Faith + anything!**
    - The 3 Nails are: **Works, Ritual, Law.**
- B. Here Paul will masterfully lay out what the Reformers called *Sola Fide!* (Faith Alone)
- “Any church which puts in the place of justification by faith in Christ **another method of salvation, is a harlot church**”. (Spurgeon)
- C. Let’s go over **justification** one more time!
- It is** a process by which an individual is brought into an **unmerited**, right relationship w/God.
  - It does not** encompass the whole salvation process.
  - It does** mark that instantaneous **point of entry** that makes a person **right w/God**.
- D. Paul in ch.4 gives a “PS” to ch.3 as if to say, “By the way, this isn’t some new doctrine...look it up yourself back in Moses’ books!”
- E. **Outline:** Wiping Out **Works**; Ripping **Ritual**; Leveling The **Law**.

### II. Slide#4 WIPING OUT WORKS! (1-8)

- A. Paul seems to say...“hmmm, **who** could I pick that would best prove that God’s righteousness comes from faith not works?”
- Slide#5** Interesting, **Abraham** is one of the few individuals that **Judaism, Islam, & Christianity** esteem as their father!
- B. **Slide#6** Rom.4:2-5 Message **So how do we fit what we know of Abraham, our first father in the faith, into this new way of looking at things? If Abraham, by what he did for God, got God to approve him, he could certainly have taken credit for it. But the story we’re given is a **God-story**, not an **Abraham-story**. What we read in Scripture is, “Abraham entered into what God was doing for him, and that was the turning point. He trusted God to set him right instead of trying to be right on his own.” If you’re a hard worker and do a good job, you deserve your pay; we don’t call your wages a gift. But if you see that the job is too big for you, that it’s something only **God** can do, and you trust him to do it—you could never do it for yourself no matter how hard and long you worked—well, that trusting-him-to-do-it is what gets you **set right** with God, by God. **Sheer gift. Slide#7blank****
- C. (3) **He believed God** – He trusted in God’s goodness. He believed God would keep His word!
- D. (4) **No**, he **didn’t work** for his right standing w/God, **nor** try to earn it as his **rightful wage**.

1. **No**, he took his place w/the rest of the **ungodly people**. (remember his father Terah “*served other gods*”. Joshua 24:2)

E. (5) **God justifies the ungodly not the righteous!**

1. Mt.9:11-13 **Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?"** When Jesus heard that, He said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a **physician**, but those who are **sick**. "But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.' For I did not come to call the **righteous**, but **sinners**, to repentance.

F. **Slide#8** (6-8) To strengthen his argument Paul calls **David** to the stand.

1. Paul uses Ps.32:1,2 to show *forgiveness, covering, & the promise not to credit the sin any longer to his account.*
2. Corrie Ten Boom, “When we confess our sins, God casts them into the deepest ocean, gone forever. And even though I cannot find a scripture for it, I believe God then places a sign out there that says, **NO FISHING ALLOWED!**”

G. **Slide#9 Impute** – (Lo-GEEZ-oh-my) “accounted, credited, reckoned.”

1. An accounting term, “to enter into the account book”.
  - a) Paul uses **10 times** in ch.4.
2. When Paul wrote to Philemon regarding Onesimus he said, **But if he has wronged you or owes anything, put that on my account.**

H. Justification requires a **double accounting** then:

1. **Negatively** – God will never count of our sins against us.
2. **Positively** – God **credits** our account w/righteousness, as a free gift, by faith, altogether apart from our works.<sup>1</sup>

I. So, Paul **Wipes Out Works**, from our check & balance list.

### III. **Slide#10 RIPPING RITUAL! (9-12)**

A. Here’s his exceptional argument:

1. **When was Abraham Justified by Faith(saved)?** Gen.15:6!
2. **When was Abraham circumcised?** Gen.17:22-27!
  - a) So, it was several years later [Ishmael was 13]
  - b) **Slide#11** Kent Hughes **Sola Fide** was a Gentile Principle long before it was a Jewish reality!

B. So **what was the importance** of circumcision then?

1. It was not **the work** that attained him a right relationship w/God.

<sup>1</sup> John Stott, Romans, Pg.127

- a) “It was a **sign** of faith, **not a substitute** for it.”<sup>2</sup>
- b) Just like what **baptism** is to us today!
- C. **So**, **before** the **seal of circumcision**, was God’s **covenant of faith**.
- D. **So**, Paul *Rip’s the Robe of Ritual*...from top to bottom!

#### IV. Slide#12 **LEVELING THE LAW! (13-25)**

- A. God’s promises to Abraham & his descendants were not tied to their keeping a law. The promise was of **grace**.
  - 1. It all **starts** w/faith. **And**, it always **has**. **And**, it always **will!**
- B. **Slide#13** (16) **Grace** - “You’re worried about *permissiveness*--about the way the preaching of **grace** seems to say it’s okay to do all kinds of terrible things as long as you just walk in afterward and take the free gift of God’s forgiveness. ...While you and I may be worried about seeming to give permission, Jesus apparently wasn’t. He wasn’t afraid of giving the prodigal son a kiss instead of a lecture, a party instead of probation; and he proved that by bringing in the elder brother at the end of the story and having him raise pretty much the same objections you do. He’s angry about the party. He complains that his father is lowering standards and ignoring virtue--that music, dancing, and a fattened calf are, in effect, just so many permissions to break the law. And to that, Jesus has the father say only one thing: “Cut that out! We’re not playing **good boys** and **bad boys** any more. Your brother was dead and he’s alive again. The name of the game from now on is **resurrection**, not *bookkeeping*.”<sup>3</sup> [Robert Farrar Capon]
- C. (18) **Contrary to hope in hope believed!**
  - 1. **Slide#14** This is **chiseled faith** – **not rose-colored glasses** faith; **not positive outlook that denies pain & struggle** faith.
    - a) We’re talking “*wrestle, cling, persist, endure, & hold on for dear life*...kind of faith!”
  - 2. Faith **didn’t** come easy for Abraham!
    - a) This one called *exalted father*(Abram)...was childless, in a culture in which it was a **disgrace** to the whole family.
    - b) **Slide#15** At **75** he was called to leave home & given the promise of an heir of his own, “**surely now the child will come**” – He didn’t.
    - c) **Slide#16** **10 years past** he’s **85**, he receives a re-promise.
    - d) **Confident** God would do it, **but still unclear** how; he takes Hagar as his **surrogate solution!** **Slide#17** At age **86** **Ishmael** is born (but this wasn’t the child of God’s covenant)
    - e) **Slide#18** **13 more years** & he’s **99** now. He hears from God again. He gets a name change “*father of a multitude*” [ok, that helps!] Promise is **reconfirmed**.

<sup>2</sup> Shepherd’s Notes, Romans, pg.31.

<sup>3</sup> Robert Farrar Capon, Between Noon & Three. Christianity Today, Vol.30, no.7.

f) **Slide#19 Finally**, at age **100** Isaac was born...**Slide#20 25 YEARS AFTER GOD'S PROMISE!**

3. **“Hope prevents us from clinging to what we have, and frees us to move away from the safe place, and enter unknown and fearful territory.”**<sup>4</sup>

D. (20) He **glorified God** by letting Him be God! (John Stott)

1. **Slide#21,22 True Faith** would never put its own name in **lights**, **but** instead it always **tips a searchlight** to point up to **God & His Grace!**

E. (21) (Moody) **“God never made a promise that was too good to be true.”**<sup>5</sup>

F. (23) Paul says this has application to you this morning also, listen up!

1. This wasn't just **a blast from the past!** (Swindoll)

2. **In whom is your faith placed?**

a) [1] **In yourself?** [2] **In your good works?** [3] **In your faith's faith?**  
[4] **In your ability to lead a “good enough” life?**

b) **Or**, is it placed in **His provision** of Jesus Christ?

c) **Only He** can wipe your slate clean **& give you** His own righteousness!

3. We had read in the Message Bible, **“But the story we are given is a God-story, not an Abraham-story.”**

a) **How does your story of faith read?** Is it a **“God-story”** or a **“you-story”**?

G. (24) **So how is a person saved today?**

1. **A:** Simply by believing God's promises as Abraham did.

2. **“Faith & promise go together just as law & works go together.”**<sup>6</sup>

3. **Imputed/credited/accounted** – **At Calvary**, our sins were **put on Christ's account**;  
**When you trusted Christ**, God **put Christ's righteousness on your account**. 2 Cor.5:21

H. (25) **Was raised - He gets up again!!!** – I've watched the faces of people seeing the Jesus Film for their 1st time in different countries, where they **aren't** as desensitized to **graphic Film media** as we are.

1. I heard of a church in Chittagong, Bangladesh, where the **Jesus Film** was being shown. Weeping and gasps of unbelief could be heard in the shocked hush as Jesus was **crucified**. As the Bengalis watched, they were feeling the agony of Jesus' pain and the disappointment of the disciples. In that emotional moment, one young boy in the crowded church suddenly cried out, **“Don't be afraid. He gets up again! I saw it before.”** **Slide#23**

<sup>4</sup> Henry J. Nouwen in The Wounded Healer. Christianity Today, Vol.40, no.13.

<sup>5</sup> D.L.Moody, Christian History, no.25.

<sup>6</sup> Warren Wiersbe, pg.773.

a) A small boy's encouraging cry gave new hope to the viewers of the film. He is risen is the cry that gives new hope to **all**.

I. So, **before** the Law of Moses, **was** God's covenant of faith.

J. **Slide#24,25** Paul Leveled the Law, from those who would hold to the **Faith + Law** theory.

1. **Works, Ritual, & Law, 3 nails** closing for good, the coffin of **self-confidence!**

#### **K. Communion:**

1. **Bread - Confess:**

a) **Works:** self confidence; good works **but for** the wrong reason; good works **w/the** wrong heart.

b) **Rituals:** holding to rituals; putting you in our own personal ecclesiastical box; for being caught up in traditions; for running after the letter of the law **instead of** the spirit of the law; for making fun off the way other churches worship You or do things that are different than ours;

c) **Law:** embracing the law instead of Grace; thinking that life was going to be easy since meeting you; thinking that having a positive outlook is actually faith; for trusting in "our faith" rather than in YOU;

2. **Cup - Thanks:** Lord, we tip our searchlight upward now. TY for Your pardoning Grace; for helping us to wrestle, cling, persist, & endure; for helping us to hold on for dear life; TY for our **God-story** you've done & are doing in our lives. TY Your Son Jesus **got up again!**