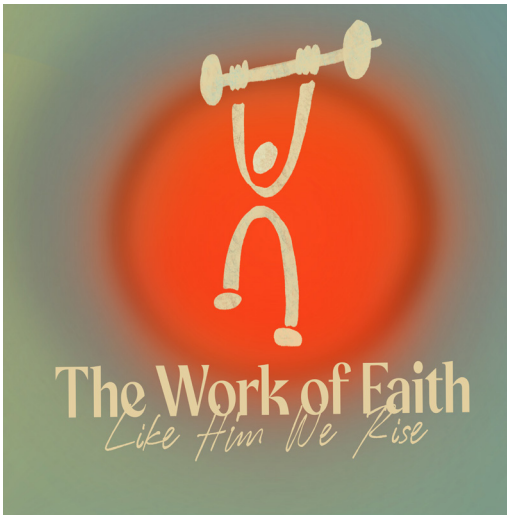

Sermon Growth Guide

Author: Rochelle Bruhn, elder

The Work of Faith | Romans 4:1-12

March 8, 2026

Key Verse: What does Scripture say? Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness. (Romans 4:3)

Big Idea: God's plan for his people has always been a loving relationship grounded in faith and trust in Him.

Foundations

Paul of Tarsus, the writer of the letter to the Romans, was no ordinary Jew. Raised in the multi-culturally, polytheistic, and philosophically rich city of Tarsus during the times of a Roman occupation, Paul would be keenly aware of the crucial distinctions that marked the Jews as God's chosen.

Paul's family belonged to the most strictly observant sect of the Jewish people, the Pharisees. His father was likely a Torah scholar. As to Paul's command of Scripture, NT Wright writes, "He gives every impression of having swallowed the {Hebrew} Bible whole."

Paul, zealous for his beliefs, set out to destroy the budding Christian faith that threated to destroy his Jewish heritage. Then comes the road to Damascus. Then comes Jesus.

After meeting Jesus, the shift in Paul's understanding of God's plan of salvation is seismic. Paul does not deviate from the teachings of the Law and the Prophets, rather he finally understands. In Romans 4 he is building a bridge from Abraham, to David to Jesus. He makes clear that the promise of salvation is for all people not just the circumcised Jews. The gospel is a gospel of faith, faith in God rather than faith in one's actions. We need to meet Jesus to get it

Understanding God's Word

Read together Romans 4:1-12 and Genesis 15:4-6. Discuss together what connects the passage in Genesis 15 with Psalm 32 and to Paul's argument that belonging to the family of God is not about circumcision.

Review Romans 1:1-2 In Paul's opening he calls himself a servant of the gospel of God-the gospel he proclaimed beforehand through his prophets. How might this statement align with his discussion of Abraham in Romans 4?

Discuss the meaning of the phrase the "Gospel of God."

Applying God's Word

Like the Pharisees we sometimes believe that God's blessing and our salvation is based on our obedience to God's laws. Where do you put your faith when you feel trapped by circumstances or when you have failed again? Where do you put your faith when your newsfeed is frightening?

Witnessing God's Word

In Martin Luther's treatise, he states, "A Christian man is the most free lord of all, subject to none. A Christian man is most dutiful servant of all, and subject to everyone" How is this statement true for you? How does it demonstrate your faith to the world? How does knowing Jesus make it possible?