

# **BELIEVE JESUS; BELIEVE IN GRACE**

**GRACE COMMUNION INTERNATIONAL, NEW BRUNSWICK, CANADA**

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## **SCRIPTURE READING ROMANS 4:1-8 (ESV)**

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**“1 ¶ What then shall we say was gained by Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh?**

**2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.**

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**3 For what does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness.”**

**4 Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due.**

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**5 And to the one who does not work but trusts him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness,**

**6 just as David also speaks of the blessing of the one to whom God counts righteousness apart from works:**

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**“Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered;**

**8 blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin.”” (Ro 4:1-8 ESV)**

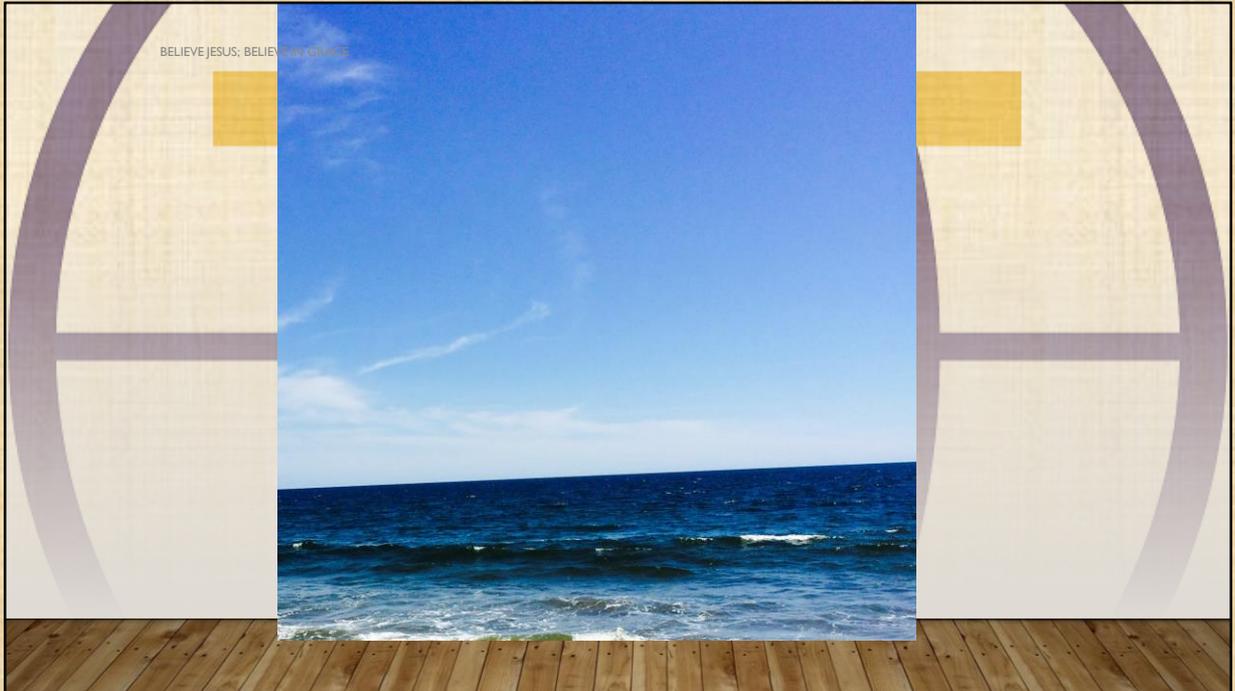
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**THESE ARE THE INSPIRED WORDS OF  
GOD!**

**THANK YOU GOD FOR YOUR  
GRACIOUSNESS AND FAITHFULNESS.**

**AMEN**



When we look at the vast ocean with the sky in the background, we automatically enjoy the surface beauty. We do not often think about the beauty and the mystery hidden in the depth of the ocean. We do not often think about the grandeur of the universe. Both hide mysteries and wonders that we still have not understood or know.

When we focus on Jesus, the second person in the Godhead sent to earth to reveal who God is, we sometimes miss his grandeur. We read in the book of Hebrews that God the Father has spoken to his Son Jesus Christ. We read that God the Father has appointed him the heir of all things. We also read that the Father through Jesus Christ created the world.

When we think of it, is there anyone in the whole physical universe who deserves to be known as he?

The apostle Paul wrote that he was given the grace to preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ (Ephesians 3:8). ***“To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ,” (Eph 3:8 ESV)***

What this verse tells us is the pursuit of knowing Jesus is a life long learning.

How can we be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth, the length, the depth and height and to know the love of Christ which surpasses all understanding?

We can know Jesus now but to more fully know him, we will need to wait until the resurrection. In this life, we only know through a mirror darkly, dimly!

The good news is with the help of Holy Spirit and through the Word, who is Jesus, we grow in the grace and knowledge of who he is.

This is only possible through faith in him. Today, we are going to consider this important subject of faith.

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## WHAT IS FAITH?

**Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.” (Heb 11:1 ESV)**

It is important to realize that we are saved by grace. Grace is a complete gift of God.

We are not saved by our works. We are not saved by how much or little faith we have. God’s word makes it clear that we have been saved by grace. **“4 ¶ But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—” (Eph 2:4-5 ESV)**

Jesus became one of us to rescue us not from the oppression of governments, taxes, the injustices of this world but from the tyranny of sin which leads to death. He came to rescue us because all of us were dead in our sins.

This is very important to understand as we consider faith.

Let us quickly consider the parable of the prayer of the Pharisee and the tax collector found in Luke 18.9-14.

Jesus spoke this parable over 2000 years ago. We need to see it from the perspective of the audience at that time. Today, looking at the parable from a distance, we perceive the Pharisees differently from how the Jews saw them. The people in Jesus

did not look down upon the Pharisees. They were religious leaders. The Jews looked up to them. This is why the parable was so shocking for the audience at that time.

The Pharisees were those people who were encouraging people to go back to God through keeping the law. They were well regarded by the Jews. They were the spiritual elite of the day. They were seen as the religious heroes of the day.

The Pharisee in the parable saw himself as not like other men. He saw himself as so much better than those low-life tax collectors. He saw himself as close to God by what they did—he fasted 2x a week, paid his tithes dutifully. He was not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterer, etc...

The tax collectors, on the contrary, were seen as swindlers, thieves, traitors who were working and in cahoots with the hated Roman Empire.

**(From THE MESSAGE OF JESUS: A SIMPLE MATTER OF TRUST**

<https://www.gci.org/articles/a-simple-matter-of-trust/>)

***Do you see what is happening? The law— abiding Pharisee was seeking purity in the things he could do. But there is only one who is pure—Jesus Christ. The only way to be pure is to be in Christ, and to be in Christ is God’s gift, freely given to anybody who trusts him for it.***

***The tax collector trusted God for mercy and got it. The Pharisee didn’t need to trust God for mercy, he figured, because his deeds were, he believed, already pure. He did not, he figured, need to stand in the beggars’ line for mercy with the likes of the tax collector. So, he wouldn’t receive from God what God has, through Christ, already done for him.***

***We cannot be pure by acting pure. We cannot be pure by acting impure. We can be pure only by trusting in God who saves sinners. The only thing a person has to be to get into the kingdom of God is a sinner [and everybody is a sinner] who trusts God to wipe the record clean.***

***God says he has already done that in Christ [[1 John 2:2](#)]. God says cleansed sinners have Christ’s righteousness attributed to them. God says, “Trust me. It’s taken care of. You don’t need to justify yourself. You don’t need to punish yourself. You don’t need to qualify. You don’t need to clean up your act. Just trust me. I have taken care of everything. Trust me.”***

***Righteousness does not come by trying to be good [you are not and cannot be good by trying]. Righteousness comes by believing the word of God, which declares you righteous for the sake of Christ, who became sin for us all, so that sin could be defeated and our wickedness fixed.***

***Whatever Jesus takes upon himself gets sanctified, cleansed and saved. He took our sinful wicked minds on himself. That is how we get fixed—not by trying real hard to be good. We can believe it and begin living in the joy of the light, or we can scoff at it and keep right on being miserable sourpusses wallowing in the dark.***

***Either way, it has been done for us without our help. The heart that has some***

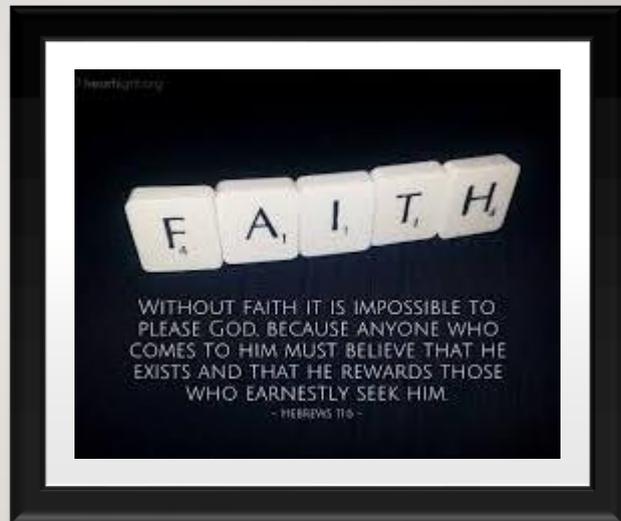
***inkling of how desperate is its need is the heart that is inclined to seize the truth. The gospel is not good news for good, decent folks; it is good news for wretched sinners.***

***People who consider themselves good, decent folks are not inclined to stand in the soup line for free salvation next to rag-tag spiritual underachievers. They prefer the special entrance for the spiritually well-to-do who have properly purchased tickets in the special VIP section. Only one problem: Their tickets are frauds, and at this banquet, everybody sits in the VIP section.”***

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## IF SAVED BY GRACE WHY IS FAITH IMPORTANT?

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The simple fact is we must receive God's gift of grace through belief and trust in him.

*And, in yet another sense, handing everything over to Christ does not, of course, mean that you stop trying. To trust means, of course, trying to do all that He says. There would be no sense in saying you trusted a person if you would not take his advice. Thus if you have really handed yourself over to Him, it must follow that you are trying to obey Him. But trying in a new way, a less worried way. (From: MERE CHRISTIANITY by C.S. Lewis page 73 PDF copy)*

Faith does not save us. We trust in the one who saves.

We trust in the one who gives the gift. We trust and what he says. Because we believe Jesus, this belief, this trust leads to obedience to him. Consequently, we receive his new life as a gift. Our life becomes change.

Faith causes us to obey God not to have Grace but because we are in his grace.

Faith is living. It leads to actions.

## II. MENTAL FAITH IS USELESS

James 2:19-20 19 You believe that God is one; you do well. The demons also believe--and they shudder.

20 Foolish man! Are you willing to learn that faith without works is useless? HCSB

**21 WAS NOT ABRAHAM OUR FATHER JUSTIFIED BY WORKS WHEN HE OFFERED UP HIS SON ISAAC ON THE ALTAR? 22 YOU SEE THAT FAITH WAS ACTIVE ALONG WITH HIS WORKS, AND FAITH WAS COMPLETED BY HIS WORKS; 23 AND THE SCRIPTURE WAS FULFILLED THAT SAYS, "ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS COUNTED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS"—AND HE WAS CALLED A FRIEND OF GOD. 24 YOU SEE THAT A PERSON IS JUSTIFIED BY WORKS AND NOT BY FAITH ALONE." (JAS 2:21-24 ESV)**

These verses speak for themselves. They are so clear!

## **IT IS BY FAITH WE RECEIVE GOD'S PROMISES**

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**“21 But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—**

**22 the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,**

**24 and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,**

**25 whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins.**

**26 It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus." (Ro 3:21-26 ESV)**

The work of God, Jesus said is, "...the work of God, that you believe on him whom he has sent." John 6:29

Through faith, we believe that Jesus came to save the world and not to condemn the world. The only way to lose out on the salvation is not to do work of God of trusting in Jesus.

If we trust in our own works and good life for salvation, we do not believe what Jesus says and we reject him.

Jesus came to save sinners. That is why he died on the cross for all of us.

If we accept that we are sinners, and trust Jesus to be our Justification, our Righteousness and our Redemption (1 Corinthians 1:30); it is a sign that we accept his gift of grace.

Knowing that Christ died for us because we are sinners and we still sin, through faith we also believe that he forgives. Consequently, we go to God and we can be completely honest with him and not hide from him because we are confident, in faith, that we are completely accepted.

God's grace is sure, trustworthy. Jesus, in teaching his disciples how to pray, told them to pray for the forgiveness "of our debts" (Matt 6:13). The apostle John wrote that when we sin, we are to confess our sins because we do sin. On our own, we do not meet God's righteousness, none of us do.

***"6 If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. 8 ¶ If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." (1Jo 1:6-10 ESV)***

**BY FAITH  
WE  
BELIEVE  
THAT:**

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You have died,  
and your life is hidden  
with Christ in God.  
Christ is your life.  
When He appears,  
you too will appear with Him  
in glory.

COLOSSIANS 3: 3,4

As we live our life imperfectly in our broken physical and sinful bodies, we realize that we will never be perfect in the flesh as God is perfect. However, united in Christ we are blameless because Jesus is blameless. He gives us his righteousness. He is our Righteousness. On our own, we have none before God.

We are assured that Jesus through the Holy Spirit is doing a beautiful and marvellous work in us as the master and capable Potter. As our flesh gets older, we are being renewed day by day in him in his likeness. **“So we do not lose heart. Though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day.” [2 Co 4:16 ESV]**

In this life, we go through various trials and temptations. We live in a suffering world. We are affected by the darkness of this world yet in Christ we are freed from it.

Although we have no physical evidence of what is happening, by faith, we know that we are the children of God.

**“15 For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’ 16 The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,” [Ro 8:15-16]**

## ESV]

We know by faith that our human righteousness which is like filthy rags does not qualify us for the kingdom of God, only the righteousness of Jesus given to us.

- By faith, we know we are loved.
- By faith, we know we are forgiven.
- By faith, we know that we are accepted by God in Jesus Christ.
- By faith, we know that what we will be will only be revealed at the resurrection when we see Jesus as he is.
- By faith, we know we are free from the slavery of sin because Jesus tells us.
- By faith, we know that God has prepared good works for us to do!
- By faith, we trust God for our loved ones, our neighbours, for our nation, for all world.
- By faith, we believe that Jesus has taken away the sin of the world [John 1:29].
- By faith, that God the Father did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.. [John 3:17].
- By faith, we believe that all who come to faith in him will receive eternal life.
- By faith, we believe that the promise of God made to Abraham are true and that his descendents will be as numerous as the stars of heaven and the sand on the shore. [I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore—Genesis 22:17]
- By faith, we believe and know that Jesus is the eternal Son of God who has come to the earth in our flesh to be our High priest, Our advocate, Our good Shepherd, our Brother, our Saviour, our Redeemer!
- By faith, we know that Jesus is the head of the church and that he has made his home in all believers. ***“For we are God’s fellow workers. You are God’s field, God’s building.” [1Co 3:9 ESV]***
- ***By faith, we believe “The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, [Ex 34:6]***
- ***By faith we believe that the riches of Jesus are unsearchable. (Ro 11:33 Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!***  
***Eph 3:8 To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ,***

## **BY FAITH, WE ALSO BELIEVE THE FOLLOWING:**

**Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne,**

**5 and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood**

**6 and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.**

**Revelation 1:4-6 ESV)**

Let us believe and trust Jesus. Let us believe in his grace.

Let us pray!