

The Great Liberator

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Date: 07 November 2010

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[0 : 00] Well, turn with me, if you would, to the passage that we read together in Romans chapter 4, which you'll find on page 941 in the Church Bibles.

Now, last time we saw how Paul drives home the implication of his gospel of justification, of being declared in the right with God by grace alone, through faith alone, how that is the death of all human pride.

A church that really grasps the gospel cannot be a proud church. A Christian who really grasps the gospel cannot be a proud person.

A proud gospel church is an oxymoron. What becomes of boasting, says Paul, of pride in chapter 3, verse 27, in the light of what God has done for us in the death of Christ our Saviour?

What becomes of it? It is, he says, excluded, finished. Faith is the great leveller. And that, says Paul, and he's particularly speaking to the Jews, who were the people of the book and who were proud of that, who were boasting in their Bible knowledge, that, he says, is what your own Bible tells you from start to finish.

[1 : 28] The law that you so cherish, verse 27 of chapter 3, is not a law of works. It's all about faith from start to finish.

And our gospel, he says in verse 31, just upholds, establishes that very thing. And he goes on to prove in chapter 4 by showing that the Old Testament itself is what has always taught about God's saving grace.

And saving grace alone. It's not by performance, he says, by any, that you'll be saved. It's by faith alone, for everyone. Verse 4, it's not a wage.

It's a gift of God's free and merciful grace. Even for great Abraham, verse 5, the ungodly man. Or verse 7, even for great King David, the lawless man.

And furthermore, it's not salvation by pedigree, even for a few, the Jews alone. No, it's by faith alone, for everyone who is of faith.

[2 : 37] You're a true child of Abraham, says Paul, not by circumcision, but by walking in the faith of uncircumcised Abraham. Abraham was the great Gentile believer.

And what a shock that was to the Jews. But faith, says Paul, levels us all. So there can be no superiority for anybody ever in their status before God.

Now what a very humbling thing that is. The vilest offender who truly believes that moment from Jesus, a pardon receives.

And that moment then receives the same status, the same standing before God Almighty as the longest serving, most respected Christian in the church.

Very humbling, isn't it? But very, very wonderful too. And just because our salvation is 100% by the grace of God, faith is not only the great leveler, but the great liberator.

[3 : 42] It means that all of us can have absolute security about our status before God. A security that is immediate and permanent for all who believe.

It's a strange thing, isn't it, that pride and insecurity so often go together. Proud people are often very insecure people. And that's because their security is based on their performance or their pedigree or their image before other people or whatever it is.

And so they live in fear of that status being undermined. Either by their own underperformance or by other people outperforming them, outshining them to others.

That's why proud people tend to be very critical people. They do others down all the time to lift themselves up. And yet at the same time, inside, they're very, very insecure, often very, very self-critical.

And many Christians are like that. In fact, by nature, we're all like that, aren't we? Because by nature, we all resist God's sheer grace.

[4 : 53] We hate to be so humbled, so leveled by grace. Because we hate to think that we ourselves can claim absolutely no merit of our own.

None at all in our status before God. But you see, friends, because we instinctively do that, we don't allow ourselves to be truly liberated by God's grace, as God wants us to be, and to live with the absolute security that the gospel really does bring to us.

Many Christians believe the doctrine of justification by faith alone, but they just don't breathe it. They don't live as though it was true.

And so in reality, they base their sense of their standing before God on their own performance of godliness, not on God's sheer promise of grace.

So if you're like me, and I suspect you are, you swing from being rather puffed up and pleased with yourself. If things have been going well, if you've been having good Bible studies, if you've been praying well, if you've been sharing the gospel, although people seem to think that you're a good Christian person, you feel rather pleased, and you feel, yes, God must be quite pleased with me at the moment.

[6 : 14] And then you swing into despair and desolation because you're feeling spiritually dry. Or you haven't had great fruit in your Christian life for a time.

Or the battles that you sometimes face are raging again. And you haven't been victorious this last week. You've lapsed into those struggles that you have with whatever it is for you.

Drunk, perhaps. Or pornography. Or gossip. Or swearing. Or losing control of your weight. Or whatever it is that makes you feel a failure.

It makes you doubt if God can really look on you at the moment in exactly the same way as he does when you're firing on all four cylinders in your Christian life. Is that right?

Or is it just me? Haven't you felt like that at times? Lacking in that assurance about your faith.

[7 : 13] Maybe you feel like that this morning as you sit in church. What you so often say to yourselves at times like that is this. This is awful. I know what I need to do.

I need to get myself right with God again. I need to pray more. I need to read my Bible more and get disciplined. Or maybe you think, well, perhaps there is something lacking in my faith.

Maybe there is a secret to that confident faith that others seem to have that I haven't found. Maybe there is some special blessing or experience that will help me recover that sense of being on track with God again.

And maybe somebody will be able to help me find it. And on and on it goes. But notice that key thing that we are saying to ourselves. I need to get myself right with God again.

Have you said that? I bet you have. Many times. But do you see what that means? It means you may say that you believe in the gospel of justification by faith alone.

[8 : 19] But you don't, really. At least you are denying it by the whole way that you are seeking to live your Christian life. No, no, no, no, says Paul.

Your status before God is not ever about what you must do to get yourself right with God for the first time or any other time.

It's all about what God has already done to put you right with Him permanently, forever. Will you get that into your heads and into your hearts that that is what the whole Bible teaches us?

That right standing with God that we all long to be assured of is by faith alone from first to last.

Another one, verse 17.

As it is written, the righteous shall live by faith. Faith is the great liberator and nothing else, says Paul. And we can have absolute security in our status with God because our righteousness, our right standing with Him in His sight is guaranteed not by our godliness but by His grace and by His grace alone.

[9 : 36] Nothing added, nothing for you to do to help it along a little bit except to believe and trust and be liberated by that gospel truth.

Liberated into the utter security, the blessedness, wickedness. As David spoke of, of the man to whom the Lord will not count his sin but has already counted the righteousness of saving faith in Jesus Christ.

And that is what Paul continues to ram home here in verses 13 to 25 of chapter 4. Our status before God, he says, is secure. It's guaranteed.

That's the word he uses in verse 16. And it's guaranteed because it rests not one iota upon us but all on God alone.

On God's certain promise and on God's creative power and on God's completed purpose in Jesus Christ our Lord.

[10:44] Well, if our church, just like the church in Rome, is to be a confident and secure and an outward-looking missionary church instead of a diffident, inward-looking, introspective, insecure church, then we also need to understand just what Paul is writing in these verses.

So let's look at them very carefully. First, in verses 13 to the first half of verse 17, Paul says that the status of all believers, whatever their background, is absolutely secure because it rests on God's certain promise.

Verse 16, that is why it depends on faith in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring. Now, if you look, that word promise dominates this second half of Romans 4 and it explains why Abraham is the father of all who believe, whether Jew or Gentile, as verses 11 and 12 declared.

That's so, says Paul in verse 13, for the promise did not come through the law but rather through the righteousness of faith. Now, to see why that's so, we need to grasp just how extraordinary was this promise of God that we're talking about here.

It was God's promise given, Paul says, to Abraham and his seed that he would be, verse 13, heir of the world, the whole cosmos. That's the word, the universe.

[12:19] That's what all those promises from God to Abraham in Genesis were all about. It wasn't just a promise about Abraham's personal salvation. Nor was it just a promise about Abraham having a great big family on earth and having a promised land that they would live in.

What God said to Abraham was that in you all the families of earth will be blessed. That your offspring will truly be like the stars in the heavens.

And when he said that, he meant that this was a certain promise. That God was going to undo all the calamity of the curse that followed from Adam's sin.

And that God was going to recreate the whole cosmos, the whole world. restoring humanity to its true purpose of reigning over God's world as true heirs, as true sons of God, as God first created human beings to be.

This was the promise about the recreation of the whole universe. That's what it means that God promised Abraham and his seed to be heirs of the world.

[13:35] Those who are Christ, Paul says in chapter 8 of Romans, are heirs with Christ to be glorified with him. It's a glory that we will see in the whole cosmos when it's released, he says, from bondage to decay and it obtains the freedom of the glory of the children, the heirs of God.

Every time this word heir or inheritor is used in the New Testament, that's what it means. We are inheritors of the kingdom, the kingdom of light, says Paul in Colossians 1. We are heirs of eternal life, he says in Titus 3.

We are heirs together of the grace of life, Peter says. Hebrews chapter 1 tells us that Christ, the glorious Son of God, has been appointed the heir of all things.

And then it goes on and on repeatedly to say that this internal inheritance will be a shared thing with all of those who are Christ's by faith. So don't be in any doubt about the nature of this promise.

On this promise to Abraham hangs the future of the entire universe. Well, how then is such an extraordinary promise going to be fulfilled?

[14:52] Well, says Paul in verse 13, not through the law, not through any human beings, however privileged they might be to possess God's law, his blueprint for righteousness.

Why not? Well, that's obvious, says Paul, from what I've argued already in verse 14. If it's those of the law, if it's the Jews who are to be heirs of the faith, then the faith itself is null and the whole promise is void.

In other words, the whole thing has already failed manifestly. Why is that? Well, look at verse 15. Because, as I've already said to you in chapter 2 and 3, the law brings wrath.

Israel had the law and boasted in the law. But chapter 2, do you remember, tells us just as plainly they broke the law. Far from bringing God's light to the world, let alone saving the world, they did the very opposite.

They caused God's name to be blasphemed among the nations. Christians. They just further wrecked God's world. They couldn't possibly save God's world.

[16:05] And whereas, as Paul says here in verse 15, where there is no law, then strictly speaking there's no transgression, well Israel couldn't possibly have that excuse of ignorance. They had a clear knowledge of God's commandments and therefore a clear knowledge of their own sin.

And justly and rightly they could then only possibly expect God's wrath. far from saving anyone, let alone the universe. They couldn't even save themselves. But that's why verse 16, it never did depend on Israel to save the world somehow by their righteousness.

How could it possibly? There are some people actually who have suggested that that's what the Old Testament teaches, that Israel somehow by being given God's law were God's instrument to save the world.

Paul is saying here very plainly that is not the case. Couldn't possibly be. No, he says. It depends and it always did depend upon faith.

It is faith in God. So that it might rest on grace, God's free gift and therefore, and only therefore, be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring.

[17:21] All his true offspring that is, whether they're of the law, that is Jewish Christians, or those who simply share Abraham's faith but have never been Jews at all. Abraham is their father, their true spiritual father of all who have that faith.

Just as the Bible says, verse 17, as it is written, I have made you the father of many nations. Many Gentiles, that's the word that's used. You see what he's saying?

If salvation were only for an elite group, those who had special insider information to get them right with God, then it would be for no one. Because the more you know about God, the more culpable you are, and the more conscious of your own sin.

For the law brings wrath. If the fulfillment of God's promise for the world depended in any way on mere human beings, and their choices, and their decisions, the promise would be utterly void, useless, and helpless.

That's why people who talk about a God who can't know the future, because somehow he's dependent upon the decisions and the responses of human free will, called open theism, you think that, you must be greatly pitied.

[18:45] Because there's no guarantee at all, is there? about the future and how it's going to turn out. That's what you believe. But no, says Paul, faith is the great liberator, because our salvation depends totally and utterly from first to last upon God.

That's why it can be guaranteed. His promise, he says, rests on grace and is guaranteed to all his offspring as it is written.

That's what the Bible says, says Paul. That was Billy Graham's great phrase, wasn't it? The Bible says. The Bible says. Well, the Bible says God's promise is certain.

And so we can have absolute security if we trust this God. God. But how can we be sure that God really will keep his promise?

He may want to, he may mean to, but perhaps he can't. Perhaps he is dependent on human beings and their decisions. Can God keep that promise?

[19:53] Can he guarantee? He guarantees only as good as the company that issues it, isn't it? He can have a lifetime guarantee on your double glazing, but once the business has gone out of business, it's worthless.

How do we know God can deliver on these extraordinary promises? It does seem unbelievable, doesn't it, that God can undo the curse of sin, undo the whole tragedy of man's rebellion.

After all, the Bible tells us repeatedly of the depth of the disaster of human sin. Romans 1-3 has hammered it home to us. And how the wrath of God is unveiled from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of this world.

The whole world stands condemned before him. And we've got evidence right before our eyes constantly, haven't we, of that? Humanly speaking, it seems absolutely impossible that God could really reverse the tragedy of this world.

Don't you think that at times? Don't you think that when you read your newspaper or you look at the TV news and you see the misery that fills our world? Perhaps you look at that and you think, how can God possibly sort out the mess of this world?

[21:19] Maybe you just look at your own self and your own life and you think, how could God, even God, sort out the mess that I've made of my own life and relationships and family and everything else?

Maybe you look at somebody that you love, perhaps in your family or a friend. Somebody you long to find faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and yet you find yourself thinking, I just can't see it. Not him. Not her. That's just impossible to imagine. Not even God. can turn him around. No, says Paul.

God's salvation can be relied upon and it is absolutely secure because his certain promise rests on his creative power.

Notice how from the second half of verse 17 through to verse 22 where Paul homes in on Abraham's personal trust in God's promise. Notice how the focus isn't nearly so much on Abraham's faith as on the God in whom Abraham puts his faith.

[22 : 34] It's not Abraham's personality or performance that we're to look to. That simply emphasizes his weakness. His body was as good as dead, so was Sarah's womb. It's God's creative power that undergirds his certain promise.

verse 17. In the presence of God in whom he believed in hope, Abraham believed.

Which God? The God who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. That's the God on whom the salvation of the universe depends.

And that's why Abraham believed verse 21 because he was fully convinced that God was able, literally, that God had power to do what he had promised. Now do you see how those two verses, 17 and 21, about the power, the extraordinary creative power of God, how they surround the story of Abraham's life that we're given here in verses 18 to 20.

And the story of his life is one not characterized by Abraham's strength or greatness, but by his abject weakness and hopelessness. Verse 18. He considered his body, a hundred years old, as good as dead.

[23 : 55] He looked at his wife and considered her womb, also dead. I don't know why the ESV puts barrenness there. It's to make that point. Also dead. And yet, from his first calling until his final breath, he cast his life and his destiny on the promise of this God because he is the God who gives life to the dead, who calls into existence things that do not exist.

This is the God who said, let there be light. And there was light, who brought into being a world that did not exist out of absolutely nothing. And so in salvation, just as in creation, God alone is the one who brings life, new life, eternal life, from the darkness and from the death and from the chaos of sin and guilt and shame.

He calls into existence that which did not exist, but now does exist and lives by the word of his grace. In chapter 9, Paul talks about the God who called out from Jews and Gentiles both a people to be his own, those who were not my people I will call my people, he says.

He who was not beloved will be called beloved. He calls those who were dead in their sins and makes them alive together with Christ.

Behold, says Jesus, the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear shall live.

Paul says to the Corinthians, God, who said, let light shine out of darkness, has shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

[25 : 49] And Abraham says, verse 18, in hope believed against all mere human hope because he believed in a God who gives life to the dead. The God who has power to do all that he has promised.

And Abraham himself saw that power, didn't he, after many years of waiting when God brought life out of the deadness of Sarah's womb, calling into existence that which was impossible for human beings.

A son, Isaac, born of their old age, just as it had been told him. And he never wavered in unbelief. He never lost his faith in this God.

So that ultimately, as we know, he trusted God even with the life of Isaac, his son, on the altar. The son that he loved, his only son.

Why? Well, as Hebrews 11 tells us, in just the same way, because he considered that God was able to raise him even from the dead.

[26 : 52] A God who is able, a God who has power to do what he has promised. Now, don't mistake this. It's not Abraham's faithfulness that was heroic.

When it says in verse 20 that he didn't waver, that doesn't mean that Abraham never wobbled or doubted or did anything wrong and that that's why God blessed him. Of course not. We know just as well as Paul's first readers know the story of Genesis.

It's very plain. Abraham was a weak man, a sinful man. He made many blunders. But despite that, he never distrusted. He never disbelieved.

He never turned away in his heart from this God as being his God. Despite everything, he kept on trusting.

And that's why, as verse 20 says, as he gave glory to God, he grew strong in his faith. Literally, it says he was strengthened in his faith. Strengthened, of course, by God.

[27 : 58] Abraham wasn't naturally strong in his faith. He was weak. But the God who calls into existence that which is not, God made him strong and God kept him strong right to the end.

And that's why Abraham's faith, which was itself a gift from this God, that's why it was credited to him for righteousness. He looked to his God to do what only the God of creative power could do. And God did what he had promised. And that's the wonder of the Gospel, says Paul. God's promise of salvation rests solely on grace so that it can be guaranteed to all of us.

However weak we are, however weakly, we simply reach out and receive that grace from this God. Because it depends not on our great performance on faithfulness, but solely upon God's power to give life to the dead, to call into existence that which doesn't exist, that which we need more than anything else, righteousness, right standing before God, the judge of heaven.

And what we do not have, he calls into being and says, right with God. That's why the most wonderful words in this chapter come in the last three verses.

[29 : 39] Do you see them? Verse 23. Because this is not Abraham's story that Paul's reciting. It's God's story. It's a story of the wonderful saving grace of God at work through the ages to bring redemption in Jesus Christ to all that he will call his own.

And what that means, friends, is that this also is our story. Just as much as it was Abraham's story. These marvelous words in verse 23 says it was counted to him was not written for his sake alone, but also for ours.

For us who believe not for an inheritance that rests merely on the certain promise of God, rock solid though that is. Not just on the creative power of God to do one day what he has promised he will do. Now, our hope, our security, our assurance that we have acceptance with the God who will be the judge of all the earth, our security rests, as the book of Hebrew tells us, on even better promises than Abraham had.

Our security, Paul says in these last three verses, rests upon God's completed purpose. We believe, verse 24, on him who raised from the dead our Lord Jesus.

[31 : 02] He was delivered up, that is to death, says Paul, for our trespasses. Referring to Isaiah 53, the promise of the servant of the Lord who surely would be delivered over for our transgressions.

And, says Paul, he was raised up for our justification, just as that servant surely would declare many to be righteous. It's finished, says Paul.

The Messiah dies, cut off for sins and not his own. completed is the sacrifice. The great redeeming work is done. What was for Abraham still in the future has now been accomplished, says Paul, in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

And Jesus, the seed of Abraham, has become the heir of the cosmos, the heir of all things. He has inherited eternal life, never to die again.

And his resurrection is his justification. It's his vindication before all the world by God that he is forever God's holy and true and glorious Son.

[32 : 16] Jesus was condemned before the world. Yes, he was. But now, as Romans 1 verse 4 said, right at the beginning, he is declared to be the Son of God in power by his resurrection from the dead.

He is vindicated, he is justified before all the world by his resurrection. He was seen by angels and proclaimed to the nations, as Paul puts it in 1 Timothy 3.

But you see what Paul says here in verse 25. Christ's resurrection is not just for his own justification, it's for ours as well.

He was raised, he says, for our justification. His resurrection declares with absolute certainty our right standing with God. And therefore, our inheritance of the promise of eternal life, our inheritance to reign with him over the whole cosmos, the whole world.

He was raised for our justification, that is, ultimately, our own resurrection, to the same glorious eternal life as his. Jesus. And that is the great reversal that God promised to Abraham.

[33 : 32] It's now begun at last in Jesus. And it's for us too, says Paul. It will be counted to us who also believe in the God who gives life from the dead and who has already given it in Jesus Christ, our risen Savior.

It's a fact of history, says Paul. And that's why the promise is guaranteed. Christ has been raised from the dead. He's the first fruits, as he says to the Corinthians.

And at his coming, all who belong to him will certainly be raised just as he is. Will be publicly justified just as he has been.

Will be inheritors of the cosmos just as he has become. Will be raised together with Christ. But the decisive reversal has been completed.

He was raised in the past. That's why in chapter 8 of Romans, as we'll see when we get to it, Paul goes on to say, there is therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

[34 : 38] For the law of the spirit of life has set you free from the law of sin and death. And if the spirit, says Paul, of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his spirit who also dwells in you.

That's the certain promise of our justification for all who believe that the status with God that we have now and on that great resurrection day to come, the day of judgment is certain.

Because the God of certain promise whose grace is guaranteed, because the God of creative power who gives life to the dead is the God whose completed purpose has been declared in human history in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus.

The people of this world, that means, have seen, have borne witness to life from the dead, which is the hallmark of this God. For Abraham, it was a mortal life from the womb of death.

But for us, it is eternal life. It's the resurrection life of Jesus from the tomb of death. His rising, His justification declares His destiny as the heir of all things and guarantees ours forever.

[36 : 06] So these things, these glorious words, counted righteous with God by faith alone, they're written not just for Abraham, but for us, for every one of us who will believe now in the risen Lord Jesus Christ.

Do you see what that means? It means that if you trust the God who has done what He has promised, then you also can be liberated forever from the fear of death, from every fear that God may somehow condemn you, or that God may somehow ever desert you because of your faithlessness.

When you stumble, when you're ashamed deeply of what you've done, and when you feel condemned, the question is not, can God still accept me, can God still love me because of all these things I've done?

That's not the question. The only question is, has Jesus been raised from the dead? And the answer is yes, raised for my justification, for my acceptance with God, for my forgiveness, for my right standing with Him, never mind the fact that I keep falling in the dust.

All depends on His grace and His power, not on my godliness and my performance. And that's the liberation of real faith.

[37 : 34] Maybe, maybe when you fear death, perhaps you're approaching death, maybe somebody you love is approaching death and you fear uncertainties arise in your heart and you wonder, can it really be sure that I'll be saved?

Can I really be sure that my beloved one who's fading fast, or perhaps who's already been lost, can I really know that they're with Christ? And the gospel shouts, yes, you can be sure, rock solid, certain.

That's why, says Paul, it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all His seed.

to all who believe on Him who is already raised from the dead, our Lord Jesus. He was delivered over for our trespasses, so there is now no condemnation.

Sin and death have no hold upon you. And He was raised for our justification. That's the liberation, that's the absolute security that comes only in the true Christian gospel.

[38 : 48] It's the very antithesis of every human religion. Think of the superstitious fear of pagan religions, frantic offerings to the gods, unknown gods, perpetual insecurity, never knowing if you can possibly have done enough and whether God at the last will accept you.

Think of the same superstition in all kinds of perversions of what's called by the name of Christianity where pious souls are tortured by their burden of relentless confessions and penances and

absolutions and still there's no security.

Not even to the last so that you even have to pray for the dead once they've departed. Still there's no security. What a contrast to the liberating gospel of God's grace alone guaranteed to all who believe who trust solely in the salvation that's completed forever in the Lord Jesus.

Sometimes people think how can you dare say that you can have this certainty, security about acceptance with God? Isn't that arrogant? Isn't that presumptuous?

No, says Paul. The gospel of grace alone by faith alone means there can be no superiority for anybody, no pride, no presumption, that is absolutely excluded.

[40 : 20] Faith is the great leveler. But there can be and there must be absolute security. Faith is the great liberator precisely because it's not at all about us and our performance.

It's about God and what He has done in Christ Jesus and what He will do for every single person who will throw their trust upon Him.

God and God and let me ask you as I close this morning, have you done that? Have you trusted this God who gives life to the dead?

Have you done what Abraham did to throw your whole life, to throw your whole eternal destiny into His hands alone? God and God.

Maybe you've thought to yourself, I'm not good enough for this God yet. Maybe you've started reading the Bible and you're drawn to the Lord Jesus Christ, but the more you read your Bible, the worse you feel.

[41 : 26] Because you find exactly what Paul says is true. The Bible just exposes me, it exposes my sin all the more. The law brings wrath. Yes, it does.

Yes, it does. But it also says this God is a God who is able to do what He has promised.

He can bring life out of deadness and disaster and brokenness in any human life. It doesn't matter how dark, it doesn't matter how devilish, it doesn't matter how dead that life has been.

He breaks the power of cancelled sin. He sets the prisoner free. His blood can make the foulest clean. His blood availed for me.

He speaks and listening to His voice, new life the dead receive. Friends, that is the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[42 : 35] And these things are written not for Abraham's sake alone, but for ours also. From the God who gives life to the dead, who calls into existence things that do not exist.

From the Lord who bestows His riches, as Romans chapter 10 tells us, on all who call upon Him. So Paul says to us this morning, call upon Him.

Trust Him. Believe Him. And you will find liberation in life and in death. The liberation that comes through faith alone, in Christ Jesus alone.

Amen. Let's pray. how we thank you, Lord, that these things are written not only for Abraham, but also for us. May we receive them with open hands of faith and rejoice in you, the God who brings life even from the dead.

So fill our hearts, we pray, with the assurance of your great grace, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.