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Valley Church

April 28, & May 1, 2022
Week 11: Too Good to Be True?

Introduction:

Key Thoughts from Romans 4:9-25

Verses 9-10

“Blessedness” – a sense of happiness and completeness in one’s life

“Credit” in the true sense of the word, is a free gift...not an “advance”

Verses 11-12

“Father of all who believe” = in the Jewish mind, a radical statement to apply Abraham’s “fatherhood” to Gentiles.

Not all Israel is truly Israel, but only those who believe in Christ... (Romans 9:6)

Verses 13-17

Verses 18-21

Abraham “did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God...”

- Question: What? How can Paul say such a thing?
- Answer: Only because of justification by grace through faith!

Verses 22-25

The Big Idea:

The extent to which righteousness exists *subjectively* (in your outward practice) is directly proportionate to the extent to which you trust that righteousness exists *objectively* (in your inward position) in Christ.

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS AND PERSONAL REFLECTION

Personal Life:

1. Thinking back to the weekend message, were there any parts that particularly challenged you to think or re-think your assumptions? In what specific way(s) is the radicality of the Gospel continually causing us to re-think the status quo in our assumptions?

Ponderings:

2. Give some examples of how our culture misuses or mis-defines concepts like “free” and “credit” and “gift.”
3. Abraham was justified by faith at least 14 years before being circumcised, and about 600 years before God gave the law through Moses. His life was also marred with doubt and sin, yet Paul says that he did not waver in his faith (Rom. 4:19-21).
 - Explain how God's disposition toward Abraham applies to you specifically, since Paul says clearly that this is “also for us” (vs. 24).
4. Our justification (right standing before God) and our sanctification (right living before God), though distinct, are inseparable. The latter is squarely anchored upon the former. Being honest, are you ever guilty of over-compartmentalizing the two, assuming that your justification is by grace, but your sanctification is by works of law or performance? Explain...
5. Why would Paul invest so much effort solidifying the Romans concerning their *position* in Christ before ever really diving into their *practice* as Christians?
 - Are you aware of any of Paul's other writings in which he uses the same strategy? If so, share some specific examples...

Promptings:

6. Romans 5-8 are commonly regarded as the “heart” of the letter, where Paul moves from the positional aspects of our righteousness to the actual, literal realities of our righteousness (i.e. the reality that we have a new nature!). As you close your time, pray that God will use this part of our journey through Romans to ignite Valley church with fresh passion for living out the Gospel in full dependence upon the Holy Spirit.