

BIBLE LIFE MESSAGES

Can I Be Perfect?

Romans 4:1-8, 13-25

¹ How many times have you heard, “I’m not perfect. I’m just human!” But the Lord said, **Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect** ¹ ². If the Lord commanded you to be perfect, I guess you can be. But how?

Romans, Chapter 4, verses 1 through 8, say, ³ **What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather, discovered in this matter? If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about — but not before God. What does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.”** ⁴

Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation. However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness. David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: “Blessed are they

¹ Matthew 5:48.

whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him.” ⁵

Verses 13 through 25 continue, It was not through law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith. For if those who live by law are heirs, faith has no value and the promise is worthless, because law brings wrath. And where there is no law there is no transgression. ⁶

Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham’s offspring — not only to those who are of the law but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all. As it is written: “I have made you a father of many nations.” He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed — the God who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were. ⁷

Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, “So shall your offspring be.” Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead — since he was about a hundred years old — and that Sarah’s womb was also dead. Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, . . . 8

. . . being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. This is why “it was credited to him as righteousness.” The words “it was credited to him” were written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness — for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification. 9

There are two ways you try to be perfect enough to get into heaven.

I. You Can Try Working Your Way to Heaven By Living a Good Life ¹⁰

The most popular way is you can try working your way to heaven by living a good life. ¹¹ Most people try to use the Merit/Demerit System. This is the system the military uses. You do a good job, you get merits. You get in trouble, you get “gigs”. When you accumulate enough merits you can get a weekend pass. That’s good. If you accumulate gigs you can get extra duty, a G. I. party or kitchen detail. That’s not good. ¹²

The thinking here is if you do more good things than you do bad things God will accept you. That makes sense. But how do you know if you’re being good enough? Well, you simply compare yourself by passing judgment on others around you. For instance, if you have less faults than a church goer, God will accept you even if you don’t go to church. Right? ¹³ The whole idea here is I get to have heaven as a reward for being good! ¹⁴

But God's word says you can never be that good! ¹⁵

What's the problem here? Who sets the standards for acceptance? Only God can; and He says, . . . **for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. ² ¹⁶ This emphatically states that there's a big gap between your best efforts and God's minimum standards for acceptance! Going out of your way to do good things; treating people right, giving money to the poor, getting involved with religion and going to church; things like that just can't cut it! ¹⁷**

² Romans 3:23.

Holy God

Religion



But you can never be that good! ¹⁸ Verse 15 ³ tells us that the reward for the “working-your-way-to-heaven-on-your-own-steam” is God’s wrath. Why? ¹⁹ This way only leads to self-pride. Verse 2, “If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about — but not before God.” ²⁰ This way would also do away with faith, trusting God, and make His

³ v15 - . . . because law brings wrath. And where there is no law there is no transgression.

promises void. **“For if those who live by law are heirs, faith has no value and the promise is worthless.”**⁴

²¹ God gave you the Law of Moses in the Old Testament to show you what His standards are. ²² No one was ever completely successful obeying all the Law except Lord Jesus. ²³ So, nobody successfully worked his way to heaven by being good. ²⁴ Therefore, God’s wrath is the result for everyone who ever tried it that way! Verse 15 says, . . . **because law brings wrath. And where there is no law there is no transgression.**

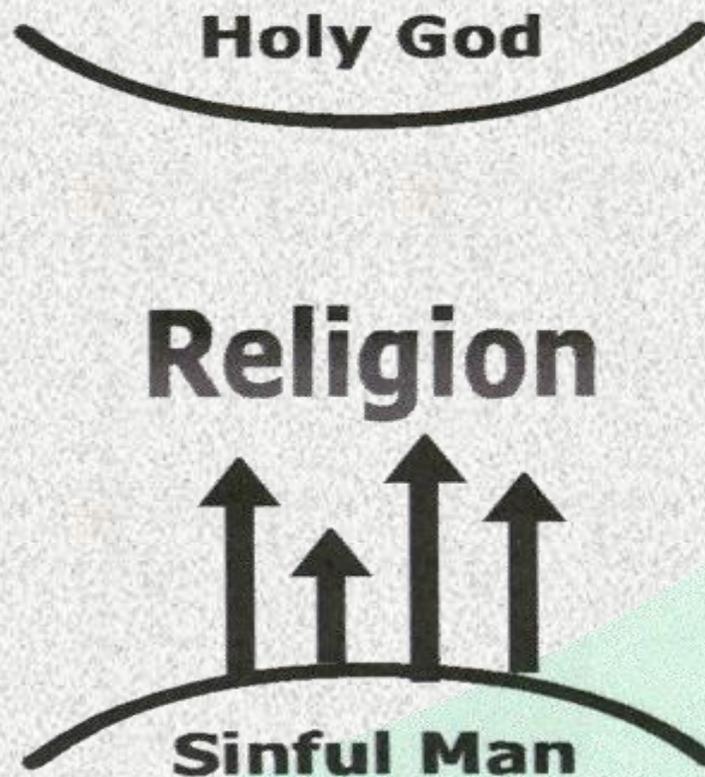
II. You Can Trust God to Count You Good Enough to Get to Heaven. ²⁵

Since you and I are not good enough to get to heaven by living good enough lives do we stand a chance? Will anybody get there? This scripture tells us that there is a way you can be perfect enough to get to

⁴ v14.

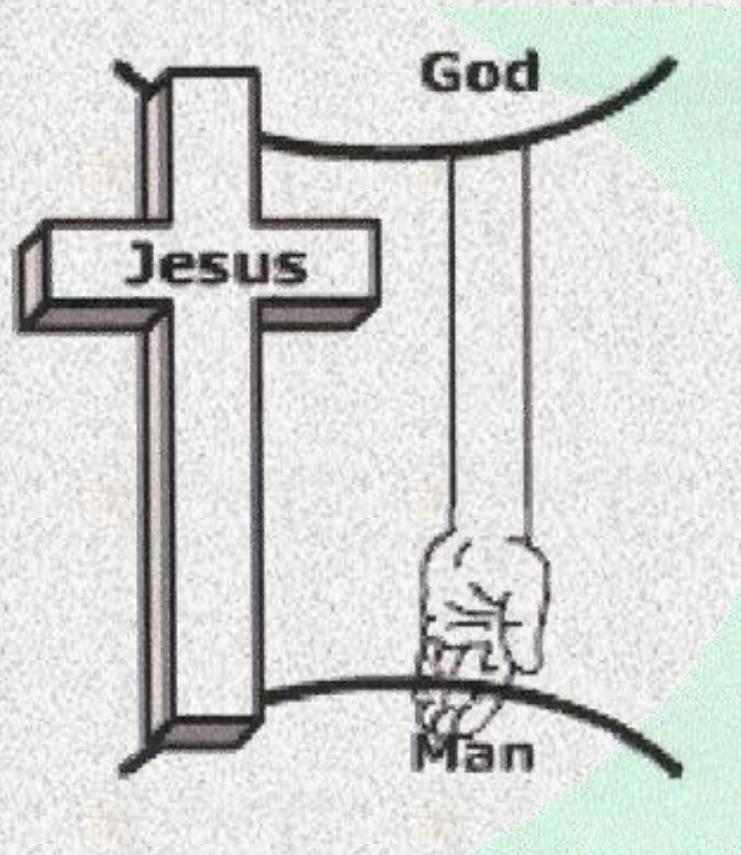
heaven. You can trust God to count you good enough to get to heaven! ²⁶

Lord Jesus paid the price for your sins when He suffered and died on the cross! ²⁷ He died to provide the difference between your best efforts and God's minimum standards for perfection.



Remember the trial of O. J. Simpson, the star running back for the Buffalo Bills during the 1960's and 1970's. He was accused of murdering two people. After a

lengthy trial the jury found him “not guilty” and he was set free. Later evidence was uncovered that would have convicted him but, judicially Double Jeopardy rules: “you can never be tried in the United States for the same crime twice”. O. J. will never be put on trial for that murder again. As guilty as he turned out to be, he was legally innocent! ²⁸



Because of what Lord Jesus did for you on the cross you can go to heaven! Romans 6:23 ²⁹, . . . **the wages**

of sin is death. With your sins, your imperfections, you deserve to die. ³⁰ But since Jesus never sinned, He didn't have to die to pay the wages for His sins. ³¹ When He volunteered for the cross, He paid a price He didn't have to pay! ³² When you identify with Jesus by faith, God credits the Lord's death, His price, to your account. ³³ So, salvation isn't a reward for living a good life – it's a free gift. Verse 5 puts it this way, **However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness. That's God's grace!**

Our scripture continues. ³⁴ Let's look at Father Abraham's example, **Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead — since he was about a hundred years old — and that Sarah's womb was also dead. Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. This is why "it was credited to him**

as righteousness.”⁵ Would you trust someone who promised that you would have a son when you were 99 years old? Abraham did! ³⁵

Remember, Abraham’s faith is what led him to the Promise Land. ³⁶ Remember, Abraham’s faith is what made him attempt to offer his son, Isaac, as a burnt offering to God at God’s command. He had great faith in God! ³⁷

When you use the same faith Abraham used to trust God to make good on His promises to you, you will be accepted just as Abraham was! God promised that when you receive Jesus, Jesus receives you. ³⁸ Your account is settled. Your sins are forgiven. God considers you perfect enough for heaven. You will have been judged “not guilty” from the throne room of heaven! ³⁹ You are indwelt with God’s Holy Spirit as a down payment of this grace. ⁴⁰

Now, you are free to live your life as an expression of gratitude for what Lord Jesus did for you on the

⁵ Verses 19-22.

cross. ⁴¹ You strive to please God by becoming more and more “perfect”; not in order to get saved, but because you already are! Colossians, Chapter 1, verse 28, says it this way, **We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ.** ⁴²

Here are some ways you can strive toward the perfection God already considers you to have. ⁴³

You can obey God and live according to His directions. In Genesis, Chapter 17, verse 1, **When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him and said, “I am God Almighty; walk before me and be blameless.** ⁴⁴ Again, First Kings, Chapter 8, verse 61, **But your hearts must be fully committed to the LORD our God, to live by his decrees and obey his commands, as at this time.**

⁴⁵ Again, behave so no one could truthfully blame you for doing wrong. Notice Deuteronomy, Chapter 18, verse 13, **You must be blameless before the LORD your God.**

46 Be filled with Christ. Ephesians, Chapter 4: verse 13, exhorts, . . . until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

47 Become fully equipped to do good. Second Timothy, Chapter 3, verse 17, states, . . . so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

48 Strive to have a mature understanding of spiritual things. Hebrews, Chapter 6, verse 1, Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God.

49 The next time someone tells you that you aren't perfect, you can tell them, "Yes I am!" I've been made that way by the blood of the Lamb! Then, strive to live it!

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