

Romans 4:4-6 Commentary

PREVIOUS

NEXT

CLICK VERSE

To go directly to that verse

- [Romans 4:1](#)
- [Romans 4:2](#)
- [Romans 4:3](#)
- [Romans 4:4](#)
- [Romans 4:5](#)
- [Romans 4:6](#)
- [Romans 4:7](#)
- [Romans 4:8](#)
- [Romans 4:9](#)
- [Romans 4:10](#)
- [Romans 4:11](#)
- [Romans 4:12](#)
- [Romans 4:13](#)
- [Romans 4:14](#)
- [Romans 4:15](#)
- [Romans 4:16](#)
- [Romans 4:17](#)
- [Romans 4:18](#)
- [Romans 4:19](#)
- [Romans 4:20](#)
- [Romans 4:21](#)
- [Romans 4:22](#)
- [Romans 4:23](#)
- [Romans 4:24](#)
- [Romans 4:25](#)

Romans 4:4 Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due. [\(NASB: Lockman\)](#)

Greek: [to de ergazomeno \(PAPMSD\) o misthos ou logizetai \(3SPPI\) kata charin alla kata opheilema](#)

Amplified: Now to a laborer, his wages are not counted as a favor or a gift, but as an obligation (something owed to him). [\(Amplified Bible - Lockman\)](#)

NLT: When people work, their wages are not a gift. Workers earn what they receive. [\(NLT - Tyndale House\)](#)

Wuest: Now, for the one who works with a definite result in view [his wages], the remuneration is not put down on his account as an undeserved, gratuitous gift, but as a legally contracted debt.

Young's Literal: and to him who is working, the reward is not reckoned of grace, but of debt;

ROMANS ROAD to RIGHTEOUSNESS

Romans 1:18-3:20	Romans 3:21-5:21	Romans 6:1-8:39	Romans 9:1-11:36	Romans 12:1-16:27
SIN	SALVATION	SANCTIFICATION	SOVEREIGNTY	SERVICE
NEED FOR SALVATION	WAY OF SALVATION	LIFE OF SALVATION	SCOPE OF SALVATION	SERVICE OF SALVATION

God's Holiness In Condemning Sin	God's Grace In Justifying Sinners	God's Power In Sanctifying Believers	God's Sovereignty In Saving Jew and Gentile	Gods Glory The Object of Service
Deadliness of Sin	Design of Grace	Demonstration of Salvation		
		Power Given	Promises Fulfilled	Paths Pursued
Righteousness Needed	Righteousness Credited	Righteousness Demonstrated	Righteousness Restored to Israel	Righteousness Applied
God's Righteousness IN LAW	God's Righteousness IMPUTED	God's Righteousness OBEYED	God's Righteousness IN ELECTION	God's Righteousness DISPLAYED
Slaves to Sin	Slaves to God			Slaves Serving God
Doctrine				Duty
Life by Faith				Service by Faith
Modified from Irving L. Jensen's excellent work " Jensen's Survey of the NT "				

NOW TO THE ONE WHO WORKS: to de ergazomeno (PAPMSD):

- Ro 9:32; 11:6,35; Mt 20:1-16

Works (2038) (**ergazomai** from **érgon** = work) means to work out, engage in an activity involving considerable expenditure of effort. It was used to describe one toiling energetically and diligently in the vineyard. **Ergazomai** is **present tense** indicating habitual activity.

Paul now uses a common illustration to amplify his point making it clear that the legal act of declaring a man righteous (justification) is completely apart from any kind of human work. If salvation were on the basis of one's own effort, God would "owe salvation" as a debt—instead of righteousness being a gift of God's grace to those who believe. Since faith is contrasted with work, faith must mean the end of any attempt to earn God's favor through personal merit and this same principle applies to us once we have become believers. We are sanctified (our daily growth in grace and progress toward greater Christlikeness) by faith not by deeds we do in our strength. Nothing of the old flesh can please God Who is holy.

Although faith is required for salvation, it has no power in itself to save. It is the power of God's redemptive grace alone, working through the atoning work of His Son on the cross, that has power to save. Note carefully that faith is not, as some claim, a type of work. Paul here makes clear that saving faith is completely apart from any kind of human works.

HIS WAGE IS NOT RECKONED AS A FAVOR BUT AS WHAT IS DUE: o misthos ou logizetai (3SPPI) kata charin alla kata opheilema:

"his wages are not counted as a favor or a gift, but as an obligation (something owed to him)" (Amplified)

Wage (3408) (**misthos**) refers to compensation or pay for service, whether that service is good (a reward) or bad (a retribution).

Reckoned (3049) (**logizomai** from **lógos** = reason, word, account) means to take something that belongs to someone else and credit it to another's account.

Favor (5485) (**charis**) in context refers to an undeserved or gratuitous gift. If he worked, he earned it. That formula does not work for salvation however!

What is due (3783) (**opheilema** from **opheilo** = owing a debt or having a strong obligation moral obligation and personal duty) refers to a debt, to that which is owed or to that which is strictly due.

Think of it this way: when a man works for a living and gets his paycheck at the end of the week, he is entitled to his wages. He has earned them. He does not bow and scrape before his employer, thanking him for such a display of kindness and protesting that he doesn't deserve the money. Not at all! He puts the money in his pocket and goes home with the feeling that he has only been

reimbursed for his time and labor.

Kenneth Wuest explains that "Paul uses an illustration here taken from human affairs. He calls attention to the fact that when the employer gives the workman his pay, that is not counted as a favor, but as a legal obligation which the employer is bound to discharge. It is a debt which he owes his employee. The latter, out of courtesy, thanks his employer, but he is not legally obligated to do so. He earned the wages and he deserved them. If the sinner earned salvation by good works, God would be indebted to man and obligated to give it to him. It would not be a favor which God would do for man. And man would not need to thank God nor glorify Him for it." ([Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: Studies in the Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament](#))

Wages have nothing to do with grace (unmerited favor) but with what is due.

John Piper explains that

"In other words, if you receive circumcision (or let's say, attend church, and keep the second table of the Ten Commandments) as a way of obtaining right standing with God, then what you would get would not be grace, but what you are due. In other words, "working" calls attention to the worker and the work and expects what is due. Therefore, working does not exclude boasting, it supports boasting (Ro 4:2) On the other hand, faith does not call attention to itself, but to the grace of the one trusted. Faith corresponds to grace. Work corresponds to debt. Therefore faith excludes boasting, and work supports boasting. If you are the beneficiary of grace in all that you are and have, you cannot boast in yourself. Paul said in [1Cor 4:7], "What have you that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if it were not a gift?" When all is gift, boasting is excluded. But what happens if you try to perform a "work of Law" as a way to get right with God? Three things:

- 1) you nullify grace ("to the one who works, his wage is not credited according to grace");
- 2) you turn justification into a wage that you are due, rather than a free gift;
- 3) you re-establish boasting which the entire plan of salvation was meant to destroy.

So I plead with you on this Lord's Day, humble yourself under the great saving work of God in Christ; turn away from all pride and boasting and self-reliance; renounce all efforts to show yourself worthy of the gift of justification; and trust in free grace alone, "apart from works of the Law," as the way to get right with God. Don't respond to God's offer of salvation with [Ro 4:4]; respond with [Ro 4:5]."(Read the full sermon [Justification By Faith Is the End of Boasting](#))

Romans 4:5 But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness (NASB: Lockman)

Greek: [to de me ergazomeno](#). ([PMPMSD](#)) [pisteuonti](#) ([PAPMSD](#)) [de epi ton dikaiounta](#) ([PAPMSA](#)) [ton asebe, logizetai](#) ([3SPPI](#)) [e pistis autou eis dikaiosunen](#).

Amplified: But to one who, not working [by the Law], trusts (believes fully) in Him Who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited to him as righteousness (the standing acceptable to God). ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

NLT: But people are declared righteous because of their faith, not because of their work. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Wuest: But in the case of the one who does not work with a definite result in view [salvation] but who places his trust upon the One who justifies the person who is destitute of reverential awe towards God, there is put to his account his faith, resulting in righteousness

Young's Literal: and to him who is not working, and is believing upon Him who is declaring righteous the impious, his faith is reckoned -- to righteousness:

BUT TO THE ONE WHO DOES NOT WORK: to de me ergazomeno (PMPMSD):

- Ro 4:4,25; 3:22; 5:1,2; 10:3,9,10; Acts 13:38,39; Gal 2:16,17; 3:9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14; Phil 3:9

But - Always pause and ponder this **term of contrast**.

Works (2038) (**ergazomai** from **érgon** = work) means to work out, engage in an activity involving considerable expenditure of effort. It was used to describe one toiling energetically and diligently in the vineyard. **Ergazomai** is **present tense** indicating habitual activity.

in the realm of the moral and spiritual, if a sinner does not perform good works in an effort to earn salvation, but instead puts his trust in the God who justifies the ungodly person, that act of faith is put down to his account as the efficient medium through which God bestows a righteous standing upon that person.

The Futility of Works: An Illustration

An Englishman by the name of Ebenezer Wooten had just concluded a preaching service in the village square. The crowd had dispersed, and he was busily engaged in loading the equipment. A young man approached him and asked, "Mr. Wooten, what must I **do** to be saved?" Sensing that the fellow was trusting his own righteousness, Wooten answered in a rather unconcerned way, "It's too late!" The inquirer was startled. "Oh don't say that, sir!" But the evangelist insisted, "It's too late!" Then, looking the young man in the eye, he continued, "You want to know what you must **do** to be saved. I tell you it's too late now or any other time. The work of salvation is done, completed, finished! It was finished on the cross." Then he explained that our part is simply to acknowledge our sin and receive by faith the gift of forgiveness.

BUT BELIEVES IN HIM: pisteuonti (PAPMSD) de:

- Ro 4:24; 3:26-30; 8:30, 31, 32, 33, 34; Jn 5:24; Gal 3:8

But - To reiterate, always pause and ponder this **term of contrast**.

Believed (4100) (**pisteuo [word study]**) as used in the NT to describe saving faith denotes more than mere intellectual assent to a fact. **Pisteuo** describes an adherence to, a committal to, a reliance upon or a trust in a person or an object. Thus genuine belief involves not only the consent of the mind, but an act of the heart and will of the subject. Biblical saving faith is not passive assent but an active staking of one's life on the claims of God. The **present tense** signifies belief as one's lifestyle (you behave the way you behave because you believe the way you believe - if you say you believe, your life should back it up).

To paraphrase the respected linguist, W E Vines, saying faith involves (1) A firm conviction which produces full acknowledgment of God's revelation of Truth, (2) a personal surrender to the Truth and (3) a conduct inspired by & consistent with that surrender.

Someone has quipped belief is what you hold, while conviction is what holds you.

Only those who relinquish all claims to goodness and acknowledge they are ungodly are candidates for justification, for Jesus Himself declared

"I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." (Luke 5:32-)

Thus **belief** stands in stark contrast here with **"work"** and those who say that "belief" is a "work" have not understood Paul's point. We can do nothing to merit being declared righteous. Yes, we believe but that is not a work of our flesh that merits God's salvation. It is analogous to a drowning man holding up his hand to the one who has reached down to save him.

WHO JUSTIFIES THE UNGODLY (destitute of reverential awe towards God): epi ton dikaiounta (PAPMSA) ton asebe:

- Ro 1:17,18; 5:6, 7, 8; Josh 24:2; Zech 3:3,4; 1Cor 6:9, 10, 11; 1Ti 1:13, 14, 15; Titus 3:3, 4, 5,6, 7

Justified (1344) (**dikaioo** is derived from the noun **dike** = righteousness) (Click more detailed analysis of **dikaioo**) defines the act by which a man is brought into a right state as related to God. Justified means **"being declared righteous."** Note that verbs which end in **-óo** generally indicate bringing out that which a person is or that which is desired, but not usually referring to the mode in which the action takes place. It is not something the sinner does but something God does for the sinner when he trusts Christ and it represents a once-for-all declaration which never ever changes or is rescinded! To be justified means that the believer is now viewed in Christ as righteous, and is treated as such by God. This is good news for the ungodly!

Dikaioo never means to **make** anyone righteous or to do away with his violation of the law, by himself bearing the condemnation

and the imposed sentence. Abraham or any man in his fallen condition can never do anything in order to pay for his sinfulness and thus be liberated from the sentence of guilt that is upon him as it happens in the world - when a guilty person has paid the penalty of a crime, he is free from condemnation.

Ungodly - In very simple terms this is one who is unlike God in their thoughts, words and deeds.

Ungodly (765) (**asebes** from **a** = without + **sébomai** = worship, venerate) describes an absence of all fear and reverence for God. The ungodly person is thus unrestrained by the awe due Him. The ungodly man is one who practices the opposite of what the fear of God demands. The ungodly is the man who has little or no time for God in his life and is someone who has ruled God out of his affairs and his thinking even though God is the greatest Being in the universe, the One who makes sense out of life and the One around whom all of life revolves. To eliminate such a Being from your thinking is to be wicked, to be ungodly.

Asebes means lack of interest in the things of God and a behavior and lifestyle consistent with such an irreverent attitude. Click for an in depth study of the related word **ungodliness** (asebeia). It pertains to violating norms for a proper relation to deity, and in short means irreverent (lacking proper respect of God) or impious. Living as if God does not exist and with no regard for Him. Read and study [Psalm 1](#), an excellent summary of the righteous versus the ungodly (wicked).

Those who are righteous in their own eyes have no part in God's redemptive work of grace. This is an amazing to think that Abraham was a wicked, ungodly man, but he was. Anybody who tries to earn acceptance, to earn God's love, to earn a place of respect and standing before God by trying hard to do things for him, is a wicked, ungodly person.

What is the fate of the **ungodly**, those who are never justified? Jude writes...

"(Enoch even before the Flood, prophesied about Christ's second coming in judgment) Behold, the Lord came (spoken as prophecy but in the past tense because it was certain to take place!) with many thousands of His holy ones, to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the **ungodly** of all their **ungodly** deeds which they have done in an **ungodly** way, and of all the harsh things which **ungodly** sinners have spoken against Him."
(Jude 1:14-15-note)

We come to God just as we are -- nothing in our hands we bring, simply to His Cross we cling -- sins as scarlet but made white as snow by His judicial decree

"This one is he or she who has the righteousness of Christ accounted to their debit column".

Sola fide, the doctrine of faith alone, offends our natural sensibilities. We naturally think justification ought to go to the good, those who are trying to do their best. But not to the ungodly!

HIS FAITH IS RECKONED AS RIGHTEOUSNESS: *logizetai (3SPPI) e pistis autou eis dikaiousunet*

- Ro 4:3; Hab 2:4

His faith - Note it is not the faith of his saved parents, but his own personal faith. No one enters heaven unless they express genuine personal faith in the Messiah.

Faith (4102) (**pistis**) is synonymous with trust or belief and is the conviction of the truth of anything, but in Scripture usually speaks of belief respecting man's relationship to God and divine things, generally with the included idea of trust and holy fervor born of faith and joined with it.

As **pistis** relates to God, it is the conviction that God exists and is the Creator and Ruler of all things well as the Provider and Bestower of eternal salvation through Christ. As faith relates to Christ it represents a strong and welcome conviction or belief that Jesus is the Messiah, through Whom we obtain eternal salvation and entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven. Stated another way, eternal salvation comes **only** through belief in Jesus Christ and no other way.

Wayne Grudem defines faith that saves one's soul...

Saving faith is trust in Jesus Christ as a living person for forgiveness of sins and for eternal life with God. This definition emphasizes that saving faith is not just a belief in facts but personal trust in Jesus to save me... The definition emphasizes personal trust in Christ, not just belief in facts about Christ. Because saving faith in Scripture involves this personal trust, the word "trust" is a better word to use in contemporary culture than the word "faith" or "belief." The reason is that we can "believe" something to be true with no personal commitment or dependence involved in it. ([Grudem, W. A. Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine](#)

[Zondervan](#) (Bolding added)

Denney writes that "The whole Pauline gospel could be summed up in this one word— God who justifies the ungodly"

Arthur Pink explaining "**righteousness**" writes that "It is called "the righteousness of God" (Ro 1:17-note; Ro 3:21-note) because He is the Appointer, Approver, and Imputer of it. It is called "the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (2Pe 1:1-note) because He wrought it out and presented it unto God. It is called "the righteousness of faith" (Ro 4:13-note) because faith is the apprehender and receiver of it. It is called man's righteousness (Job 33:26) because it was paid for him and imputed to him. All these varied expressions refer to so many aspects of that one perfect obedience unto death which the Saviour performed for His people."

An Acrostic on Faith

F	FACTS. Faith is not based on a blind leap into the unknown and unknowable, as many liberal and neo-orthodox theologians would have us believe. It is based on the facts of God's redeeming work through His Son Jesus Christ.
A	AGREEMENT. It is one thing to know the truth of the gospel; it is quite another to agree with it. The believing heart affirms the truth it receives from God's Word.
I	INTERNALIZATION. The inner desire of a believer to accept and apply the truth of the gospel to his own life. Internalization also involves the genuine desire to obey Christ as Lord.
T	TRUST. In some ways and in some contexts, trust is a synonym for faith. But trust also carries the idea of having unreserved confidence in God to keep His promises to never forsake us as His children and to provide all our needs.
H	HOPE. Every believer is saved in the hope (firm assurance) of going to live eternally with God in heaven, although he has never seen heaven or seen the Lord in whom he believes. The vast majority of those who have trusted in Christ over the centuries have never seen Him. Even those who saw Him after the resurrection and witnessed His ascent to heaven had only the HOPE, and not yet the reality, of their joining Him one day in heaven. Until he meets the Lord through death or by rapture, every believer must live in HOPE of that which he has not yet fully received

Nothing For Something -f you're looking for a great deal, you'll want to carefully examine the ad for a national donut store chain:

FREE! 3 MUFFINS WHEN YOU BUY 3
AT THE REGULAR HALF-DOZEN PRICE

If that rather confusing statement means you can buy six muffins for the price of six, it's not exactly a bargain!

So many of the seemingly great buys in our world are like deceptive advertisements. You end up receiving nothing for something, when you thought it would be the other way around. Think about it in spiritual terms. Various religions require a long list of activities in exchange for what amounts to hopelessness. One Eastern religion, for example, expects its adherents to eat only leftovers, never injure a living thing, and denounce all preferences of sounds, colors, smells, and people. In return for all this meaningless (and impossible) self-denial, the individual hopes to be reincarnated to a better life.

In reality, spiritual rewards are God's to give, and He does so on the basis of His grace. Only God's plan of salvation offers something that is truly free (Rom. 4:5). Jesus paid the price for our redemption; all He asks is that we put our faith in Him. Any other plan is nothing for something. --J D Brannon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Nor silver nor gold has obtained my redemption,
The way into heaven could not thus be bought;
The blood of the cross is my only foundation,
The death of my Savior redemption has wrought. --Gray

**If we could earn our salvation,
Christ would not have died to provide it.**

Romans 4:6 just as David also speaks of the blessing on the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:

Greek: [kathaper kai Daid legei \(3SPAI\) ton makarison tou anthropou o o theos logizetai \(3SPMI\) dikaiosunen choris ergon.](#)

Amplified: Thus David congratulates the man and pronounces a blessing on him to whom God credits righteousness apart from the works he does: ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

NLT: King David spoke of this, describing the happiness of an undeserving sinner who is declared to be righteous: ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Wuest: even as David also speaks of the spiritual prosperity of the man to whose account God puts righteousness apart from works:

JUST AS: kathaper kai:

Just as ([2509](#)) (**kathaper**) is an emphatic marker of comparison between events and states and can be translated just as, precisely as, even as, as well as. So in the same way as Genesis continuously speaks of Abraham, David in the Psalms continues to speak of the blessings of righteousness reckoned apart from works.

Paul's training under Gamaliel shows through here, since it is evident that he is utilizing a principle of rabbinic interpretation made famous by Hillel, namely the principle of analogy. This means that in situations where the same word occurs in two passages of Scripture, the sense in one may be carried over to explain the meaning in the other. In the case of Abraham, righteousness was credited (Ro 4:5 = logizomai) to him, apart from works, on the basis of faith. In the case of David obviously no good work is involved, but on the contrary, iniquity has been committed but is not "imputed" (LXX of Ps 32:2 = logizomai) to the man who has received the awesome gift of justification.

IVP Bible Background adds this note as to why Paul may have chosen (Psalm 32:1-2): "Using the Jewish interpretive principle *gezerah shavah*, which links different texts containing the same key word or phrase, Paul introduces Ps 32:1-2, which explains what "reckons" means. Omitting the next line on moral righteousness (not yet relevant to his point), Paul recognizes that the "reckoning" of the psalm is based on God's grace rather than on the psalmist's perfection (Ps 32:5)." Paul would certainly be aware of this rabbinic principle of interpretation that when the same word is used in two Biblical passages, each can be used to interpret the other. (**logizomai** = reckon or impute is used in the Greek Septuagint of both [Ge 15:6](#) and [Ps 32:2](#)). ([Keener, Craig: The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament. 1994. IVP](#))

DAVID ALSO SPEAKS OF THE BLESSING UPON THE MAN TO WHOM GOD RECKONS RIGHTEOUSNESS APART FROM WORKS: Daid legei (3SPAI) ton makarison tou anthropou o theos logizetai (3SPMI) dikaiosunen choris ergon:

- Ro 4:9; Dt 33:29; Ps 1:1, 2, 3; 112:1; 146:5,6; Mt 5:3-12; Gal 3:8,9,14; 4:15; Eph 1:3
- Ro 4:11,24; 1:17; 3:22; 5:18,19; Isa 45:24,25; 54:17; Jer 22:6; 33:16; Da 9:24; 1Cor 1:30; 2Cor 5:21; Php 3:9; 2Pet 1:1
- Ro 3:20,21,27; Ep 2:8, 9, 10; 2Ti 1:9

THE BLESSING

The blessing ([3108](#)) (**makarismos** from **makarizo** = consider or count blessed) (see study of related noun **makarios**) describes a state of happiness which is independent of external circumstances. In context the blessing is imputation of Christ's perfect righteousness to our account. We had "bad credit" and were destined to "debtor's prison" (Hell) for eternity. We had a debt we could not pay. Christ paid a debt He did not owe. See "**Paid in Full**" (**tetelestai**)

Makarismos - Only 3x - Ro 4:6, 9; Gal 4:15 = Where then is that sense of blessing you had? For I bear you witness, that if possible, you would have plucked out your eyes and given them to me.

In the NT, **makarismos** is blessedness of a person indwelt by Holy Spirit because of faith in Jesus Christ. It refers overwhelmingly to the distinctive religious joy which accrues to man from his share in the salvation of the kingdom of God.

John Piper reminds us that blessing "does not mean "untroubled are you" or "healthy are you" or "admired are you" or "prosperous

are you." It means "between you and God all is well." You are deeply secure, profoundly content, happy in God – even if you are weeping over the pain of a struck body, a perplexed mind, or a heartbreaking relationship. ([When the Lord Does Not Take Account of Sin](#))

Blessing is a word which, when used by ancient Greek writers, usually referred to the state of the gods. For instance, Homer, in his *Odyssey*, has Minerva rebuke the council of gods because apparently they are totally unconcerned about the desperate plight of Ulysses while living in **makarios**—eternal blessedness—themselves. As discussed above, in New Testament usage, the word has to do with the sense of spiritual joy and ecstasy that comes from participation in the gracious activity of God in human affairs.

Reckons (3049) (**logizomai** from **lógos** = reason, word, account) means to take something that belongs to someone else and credit it to another's account. It is notable that 11 of 16 uses in Romans are in chapter 4 (Ro 2:3, 26; 3:28; 4:3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 22, 23, 24; 6:11; 8:18, 36; 9:8; 14:14)

Righteousness (1343) (**dikaiosune** from **dikaios** = being proper or right in the sense of being fully justified being or in accordance with what God requires) is the quality of being upright. In its simplest sense **dikaiosune** conveys the idea of conformity to a standard or norm. In this sense **righteousness** is the opposite of hamartia (sin), which is defined as missing of the mark set by God. In this sense **righteousness** is the opposite of hamartia (sin), which is defined as missing of the mark set by God.

Dikaiosune is rightness of character before God and rightness of actions before men. Righteousness of God could be succinctly stated as all that God is, all that He commands, all that He demands, all that He approves, all that He provides through faith in Christ (Click here to read Pastor Ray Pritchard's interesting analysis of **righteousness** in the Gospel of Matthew).

Righteousness is attitude and action which conforms to a standard and can be either man's imperfect standard (as exemplified by the self-righteous Pharisees) or God's standard of perfect holiness.

In its original meaning, **righteousness** meant a right relationship (attained to by faith as in Ge 15:6) with the covenant God that led to loving others as oneself and doing good in order to lead others into the same right relationship with God. Over time, the Jewish interpretation of **righteousness** narrowed into acts of doing good without the vital root of a right relationship with God.

William Cunningham described righteousness as follows writing that

“Under law God required righteousness from man. Under grace, He gives righteousness to man. The righteousness of God is that righteousness which God's righteousness requires Him to require.”

Charles Hodge says “That **righteousness** of which God is the author which is of avail before Him, which meets and secures His approval.”

Someone else has well said that **righteousness** is that which the Father required, the Son became, the Holy Spirit convinces of, and faith secures.

Another has said that **righteousness** is "the sum total of all that God commands, demands, approves, and Himself provides."

Apart from (5565) (**choris** from **chora** = room, space of territory) means at a space from and so apart or separate from. **Choris** is a marker of dissociation, indicating a distinct separation from something, in this case the distinct separation of faith and works in regard to justification. And this statement also serves to separate every other religion in the world (What must I "do" to gain salvation?) from Christianity (The work of salvation is done, Jn 19:30! Now simply believe!) Faith alone saves, but the faith that saves is not alone (see Eph 2:8-9 and compare with Eph 2:10 - note that the later verse begins with "for" - What is Paul explaining?)

Works (2941) (**ergon**) refers to toil as an effort or occupation. Good works are acceptable unto God **only** through God's grace activating one's heart and are always the result of salvation and not the means of salvation. (See study of **Good Deeds**) The person who has no faith demonstrates by his evil works his separation from God.

Paul supports his argument with David's psalm written after his adultery with Bathsheba and murder of her husband Uriah (2Samuel 11:1-27). In spite of the enormity of his sin and the utter absence of personal merit, David knew the **blessing** of **imputed** righteousness (apart from any works)

Paul points out that Abraham failed to find righteousness by being devout and moral. Instead, he found it when he believed in God's promise, ultimately of Jesus, the Seed. He was called the friend of God not because he was such an obedient servant, but because he believed in what God said. And the bloody-handed, lustful king, David, failed to find righteousness by being the king of Israel. In the midst of his evil he found it in Christ when he believed God. He believed that God did not require the sacrifice of animals, but a broken spirit that trusted in what God had to say about the great sacrifice that was yet to come. And so, David is called a man after God's heart.

Would you like to be a friend of God, a man after God's own heart? There is a way but it is not by your performance, but by your trust in Jesus' life and death and work and what it means for you every day.

Note in (Ps 112:1 [-note](#)) **blessedness** is correlated with **fear of the Lord**.

Praise the LORD! How blessed is the man who fears the LORD, who greatly delights in His commandments.

God's imputing has a positive side in that He counts righteousness to the ungodly, but the negative aspect of His imputing ministry is no less exciting for He also declines to impute sin to those who have broken His law when they come to Him in faith. A bookkeeper would look at it as if a generous donor was placing vast credits to our account and also refusing to debit the withdrawals but rather was placing them against his own account. This is indeed a "blessing" beloved!