

When Habakkuk Cooks a Stew: The Righteous Shall Live by His Faith (Part 1)

Introduction

The Text

² And the LORD answered me: “Write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so he may run who reads it. ³ For still the vision awaits its appointed time; it hastens to the end—it will not lie. If it seems slow, wait for it; it will surely come; it will not delay. ⁴ Behold, his soul is puffed up; it is not upright within him, but the righteous shall live by his faith.” (Hab. 2:2–4)

The God of Galaxies

- A. I, like many of you probably, saw those stunning images of deep space revealed this last week, captured by the newly minted James Webb space telescope.
1. And as I looked at some of these, and especially when I came to that one that revealed in a small section of sky what must be some almost incalculable number of galaxies out there—not planets, not stars, not solar systems, but galaxies—I just found myself staggering back. No way.
 - a. The vastness of the universe. The scope of it. How could it be this big? How could I be this small? I can’t take it in. It just breaks your brain.
- B. And now, think of it, God is the one responsible for all of this.
1. He’s the Artist behind all the artistry.
 2. He’s the Poet behind all the poetry.
 3. He’s the Engineer (this is Silicon Valley, right?) behind all the engineering.
 4. He’s the Programmer behind all the programming.
 5. He’s the Creator behind all the creation—from the tiniest atom to the biggest star.
 6. He’s the Fountainhead of Life. All that has come to be flows out from the one who has always been. He’s God.
- C. And I just want you to pause and consider here at the outset of this sermon—while you congregate here like flecks of dust on this little pebble we call planet Earth:
1. What would it be like to be at odds with such a God, to make an enemy of him? What would become of us if we were to rebel against this God, flash the middle finger of our lives in his direction, and so merit his full and righteous wrath? What would it mean if this God were standing in opposition to us, if he were against us, coming soon in judgement?
 - a. Like John says of any who stand against God and reject his word and way: “[the wrath of God remains on him](#)” (John 3:36). What a horrifying thought that is—

especially when seen in context of the immensity of the universe over which he superintends.

- i. It's one thing to sin against your little brother or something—you steal his toy, thumb your nose at him, what's the worst he's going to do? Tell your mom?
 - ii. But sinning against this God? We should be dead right now. How are we even still alive?
 2. But, now, on the other hand, what would it be like to be friends with such a God? What would it be like to be reconciled to him, to be made right with him? What would it be like to be treated as his beloved bride, to be his cherished child, to be the "apple of his eye" ([Deut. 32:10](#); [Zech. 2:8](#))? What if a God like this weren't against you, but for you? What if he were coming not to judge, but to rescue and to save?
 - a. Such a thought—it's not horrifying—it's remarkably comforting and even exhilarating—especially when seen in context of the immensity of the universe over which he superintends.
 - i. If he can just make a universe—"poof"—for fun, out of an overflow of love and delight and joy, what in the world could he do for you?
- D. And so the question that presses itself upon us in these moments, then, is this: How do I avoid the former (his anger, his wrath) and secure the latter (his kindness, his blessing)? In other words: how do I get right with the God of galaxies? That's the question.
 1. Well, I'm glad you asked, because that's what the text before us is all about, and, therefore, that's what this sermon is all about.
- E. I said last week that today we'd be looking more closely at that verse there in [Hab. 2:4](#)—in particular, at the little statement that concludes it: "[the righteous shall live by his faith.](#)"
 1. In the English, it's just seven little words strung together, but there is perhaps no statement more important in all the OT than this.
 - a. Why? Well, because tucked within it is the answer to our pressing question, of course. These words tell us how we get right with God. They tell us how we can hinge from meriting his wrath to enjoying his favor. They tell us how we can get life from him and with him—not just momentarily, but eternally.
 - i. That's why the authors of the NT grab hold of this statement and quote it on three separate occasions as they attempt to expound for us the gospel and what it means to be saved and reconciled to God.
- F. So all I really want to for the next couple weeks is first consider this statement in its context here in Habakkuk and then we'll broaden the lens a bit and look at how it's developed in the NT in view of the cross of Christ and things.

1. So today we'll start in Habakkuk and then we'll move on to [Rom 1:17](#).
2. Then next time we'll tackle [Gal. 3:11](#) and [Heb. 10:38](#).

Habakkuk 2:4

The Coming Judgment

- A. So let's start by considering these words in their original context. Last week I just brushed over the surface of them. This week it's time for a deeper dive . . .

For Jew

- A. Remember, in the book of Habakkuk to this point we've seen that the people of Judah—the Jews, the people of God (supposedly), the people who should know better—they've abandoned YHWH and his law. They've turned from what they know and are walking contrary to it. They're living in sin and standing opposed to him, and are, hence, deserving of his righteous judgment.
1. So God says, "Judgement's on the way"—in the form of the Chaldeans or the Babylonians. He's raising them up, and they will soon rush upon Jerusalem there, and drive the Jews out of the holy city, the promised land, and take them off into exile.
- B. So God's own people get no favoritism or partiality here—not like what you see sometimes on the news when someone's kid commits a crime or something and the parents are interviewed:
1. "My johnny was so sweet, he wouldn't hurt a fly, I still remember the way he would play Barbies with his sister, he was so tender. Sure he popped off a few of their heads and threw them into the fireplace, but every good boy does that."
 2. "Okay ma'am, well, Johnny just shot a couple security guards, robbed a bank, and fled the country. I know he's your kid, but, for goodness sake, open your eyes!"
- C. That's favoritism, it blinds you. You refuse to see what's there because you "love" the person so much.
1. There's none of that with God. He holds his own people to account, to the standard of his holy law, just as he would anyone else—in fact, even more so: "[Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required](#)" ([Luke 12:48](#)).

For Gentile

- A. But he's not going to let the Babylonians off the hook either.
1. It's not as if, because they didn't have the commandments on tablets of stone, or they didn't have all the revelation in the Torah and things, that these brutes could go off and live how they pleased.
 2. No! As Paul says in [Rom. 2:15](#), "[the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness . . .](#)"

B. Though we like to deny it, we know—we know what’s right; we know what’s wrong; we know what God requires, at least in a general sense; and we rebel against him anyway.

1. So God can say of the Gentile Babylonians in [Hab. 1:11](#): they are “guilty men.”

C. And so God says, “After I use Babylon to judge my own people, I’m going to turn around and judge them as well. I’m going to right the wrongs they have committed in the end. Why? Because I’m just. Because I’m holy. Because I’m good. Because I ‘[can not look on wickedness with favor](#)’ ([Hab. 1:13 NASB](#)).” Only a bad judge turns a blind eye. And he’s good.

For Us

A. Pause and consider yourself for a moment. This poses a bit of a dilemma for us, doesn’t it? Because, it seems to me, God’s pulling the rug out from under us on both sides, really.

1. On the one hand you can’t assume you’re right with God because your family has been “Christian” for generations—you’re always in church, you know the lingo and things.

a. Yeah, but there’s no partiality or favoritism. Are you truly walking with him or not?

2. And on the other hand you can’t say well I didn’t know, no one ever told me.

a. Because, for one thing, I’m telling you right now, and for another thing he says it’s written on your heart.

The Key That Works (and Three Key Words)

A. So you say: “Okay, it makes no difference. Jew and Gentile, judgement’s coming. What a chipper sermon this is. What’s left for us, then? Are we all just doomed? What options do we have? (Again) How do we get right?”

1. Well, as I’ve said, that’s what this verse is all about. Look again at [v. 4](#) in full: “[Behold, his soul is puffed up; it is not upright within him, but the righteous shall live by his faith.](#)”

B. There are two kinds of people identified here:

1. The first half of this verse refers to those we’ve been speaking about to this point—those who, in their arrogance, have puffed themselves up over and against God. It’s not going to go well for them.

2. But there’s another kind of person, there’s another category. And it comes out in the second half of the verse. There’s a way of being righteous before God, of living, of escaping judgement, and it’s, in one way or another, by faith.

a. So we’ve got to know what this is!

i. I said last week that a lot of times in our sin, we take up our idols like keys, and we think they’re going to open the door for us to greater joy and

satisfaction when all they really end up doing is locking us in the prison cell of our own making.

- ii. Well, brothers and sisters, this latter part of v. 4, it's the key that works! We've got to get this right. If we get this right, we get everything right. If we get this right, we get right with God!

- C. Now, there are three key words here that are all worth considering on their own for a bit: "righteous," "live," and "faith." I want to try to discern what each of these could mean in the context of Habakkuk here.
 1. And I should say up front, what exactly is meant by these words is a matter of some debate. The semantic range of each word is a bit broad and we can't be certain which nuance is intended in each case or if, perhaps, as I should like to argue, something of the whole range is intended at once.
 - a. But let me show you what I mean . . .

"Righteous"

- A. First we come to that word "righteous"—*tzaddiq* in the Hebrew. Now, what does it mean to be righteous?
- B. Well, the word can certainly refer to the ethical quality of a person. So the righteous person is someone who follows God's law. They are morally upright. They are righteous because they live rightly.
- C. But, even within the OT, we see that this word can also refer to something forensic, something judicial. It can refer, not so much to the ethical quality of a person, so much as to the legal status of a person.
 1. Now, admittedly, usually the two go together. The ethical person, the one who lives rightly according to the law, is determined to be righteous in a forensic sense, by the court of law. He gets the "not-guilty" verdict.
 - a. The former refers to the person as he is in and of himself.
 - b. The latter refers to the person as he is deemed to be by the court of law, by the judge.
- D. But this is an important distinction. Because, though many times the two do go together, sometimes they don't.
 1. This use of the word comes out quite clearly in the OT, when God is condemning those courts that get it wrong:
 - a. [Prov. 17:15](#): "He who justifies [or 'declares as righteous'—a verbal form of *tzaddiq*] the wicked and he who condemns the righteous are both alike an abomination to the LORD."

b. [Isa. 5:23](#): “[Woe to those] who acquit [or ‘declare as righteous’—a verbal form of tzaddiq again] [the guilty for a bribe, and deprive the innocent of his right!](#)”

i. The bottom line is this: you can be counted as right in the courtroom, even when you’re truly wrong in reality.

E. So this word “righteous” could be referring to those who are ethically, morally, personally, practically righteous. But it could also be referring to those who are righteous by way of God’s decree—they’ve been declared as such, counted as such in the courtroom of heaven, even if, perhaps there are some spots on their record so far as their earthly lives are concerned.

1. Or perhaps this word could be referring, in some sense, to both.

“Live”

A. Now we come to that word “live”—[chayah](#) in the Hebrew.

B. It seems to me that this word can refer to a person’s way of life. So in this case, “[the righteous shall live by his faith](#)” means that this person’s life is characterized, in some sense, by faith—that’s the way he does things.

1. Have you ever heard the phrase: “[If you live by the sword you’re going to die by the sword.](#)” Well, that’s the idea. Your sword is your way of life, it’s a life marked by violence and things. And for those here it’s a life marked by faith. Faith is the manner by which you live.

C. But this word could also be referring here to the end result or the reward which God grants to those who are in some way righteous by faith.

1. In other words: those who are righteous by faith get life. They don’t die. They live.

D. This sense comes out especially, I think, when we consider the immediate context in Habakkuk.

1. God is saying judgment is coming for Judah and for Babylon. And, of course, with judgment comes the threat of death.

a. This, perhaps, is why Habakkuk when he hears of Babylon’s impending onslaught, he cries out to God on the basis of his covenant and promise and says: “[Are you not from everlasting, O LORD my God, my Holy One? We shall not die](#)” ([Hab. 1:12](#)).

i. He knows the threat is death, but he says, “I’m trusting in you. I’m not going to die in this. I want to be among the righteous by faith who live.”

E. So the word here could be referring to a person’s way of life. But it could also be referring to the reward of life that God will grant those who are righteous by faith.

1. Or perhaps, again, it could be referring, in some sense, to both.

“Faith”

- A. Finally we come to this word “faith”—*emunah* in the Hebrew.
- B. This word often in the OT, is translated “faithfulness” or “trustworthiness.” It again, like “righteous,” can point to a certain ethical quality that characterizes the person. It’s a virtue of sorts. It speaks to the kind of person you are. You’re a faithful person.
1. The accent in this instance would be on your integrity, your action, your works.
- C. In the context here in Habakkuk it would refer to the idea of living faithfully, even in the midst of hard times.
1. Where is God? What is he doing? He’s given you his word. He’s given you this vision of a future redemption. And so you’re still going to wait for him, trust him, obey him. In other words: you’re going to be faithful.
- D. But this word can also mean, as it’s translated in the ESV, simply “faith.” Meaning we’re not talking about your lifestyle of faithfulness to God at this point. We’re talking about your faith in God. You trust him. At some fundamental level you have turned from faith in yourself to faith in him.
1. The accent now is less on your integrity, your action, your works . . . and more on God’s. You trust him to act on your behalf. That’s faith.
- E. In the context of Habakkuk, this also is very plausible.
1. The people described in the beginning of v. 4 there are people, we could say, who have faith in themselves. Their soul is “puffed up.” There’s an arrogance to them—not a reliance upon God. It’s as the Babylonians are described earlier in [Hab. 1:11](#), where we read that their “own might is their god!” They are trusting or placing their faith in themselves. And, hence, they’re not righteous, and they won’t live.
 2. And this is, of course, put in contradistinction from the righteous who live by faith, not in themselves, but in God.
- F. The great reformer John Calvin, seeing the latter part of v. 4 in contrast with the former, casts his vote in on this meaning for the word *emunah*, writing as follows: [T]he Prophet understands by the word [*emunah*] that faith which strips us of all arrogance, and leads us naked and needy to God, that we may seek salvation from him alone, which would otherwise be far removed from us. [F]aith is not to be taken here for man’s integrity, but for that faith which sets man before God emptied of all good things, so that he seeks what he needs from his gratuitous goodness: for all the unbelieving try to fortify themselves; and thus they strengthen themselves, thinking that anything in which they trust is sufficient for them. But what does the just [or righteous one] do? He brings nothing before God except faith: then he brings nothing of his own, because faith borrows, as it were, through favor, what is not in man’s possession. He, then, who lives by faith, has no life in himself; but because he wants it, he flies for it to God alone.
- G. In the OT, we see a very important parallel to this idea in [Gen. 15](#).

1. God comes to Abraham, who at the time was childless and things seemed bleak. His wife was barren, they both were getting old, but God brought him outside and says: “Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them.’ Then he said to him, ‘So shall your offspring be’” (v. 5). (Wow, the God of galaxies is pointing up and saying, “Look at all that, let’s use the heavens as a picture of the immeasurable way I’m going to bless you.” That’s crazy!)
2. And then we read this: “And he [Abraham] believed the LORD, and he [the LORD] counted it to him as righteousness” (v. 6).

a. You see the overlap of a couple of our vocabulary words here.

- i. The word translated “believe” is the verbal form of **emunah**, faith. So Abraham had faith in the LORD.
- ii. And then we see that forensic use of the word “righteousness”—here in a positive light. The LORD, the judge of all, counts Abraham, in view of his faith, as righteous. He hadn’t even done anything yet. He just believed God could do something on his behalf. And he’s counted righteous.

- (1) We’re not talking about fidelity here, faithfulness, enduring in obedience or something.
- (2) We’re talking about a promise that God made to Abraham, in the face of impossible odds, that he could bring life to a dead womb, and myriad offspring to a childless family. And Abraham, though he couldn’t see how his God would work such a miracle out, he knew his God could do it, he had faith.

(a) And [Hab. 2:4](#) seems to be a deliberate echo of this event.

H. So the word here could be referring to a life of faithfulness to God, waiting obediently for him. But it could also be referring to the mere act of placing one’s faith in God—a fundamental transaction in humility, where we come and put the full weight of our hope on him, trusting him to do what only he can.

1. Or, perhaps, as with the others, it could be seen as referring, in some sense, to both.

Variations in Translations

A. The ambiguity in all of this accounts for the variations in Bible translations of this phrase (perhaps you’ve already noticed it):

1. The NASB and the NKJ are quite similar to our ESV:

- a. “the righteous will live by his faith” ([Hab. 2:4, NASB](#)).
- b. “the just shall live by his faith” ([Hab. 2:4, NKJ](#)).

2. But the NET, the NIV, and the NLT all bring out the other side of the range of meaning:

- a. “the person of integrity will live because of his faithfulness” (Hab. 2:4, NET).
- b. “the righteous person will live by his faithfulness” (Hab. 2:4, NIV and NLT).

Two Basic Options

A. It seems to me, in all of this, it really comes down to two basic options:

1. On the one hand, we could take this as there’s this initial act of faith whereby we place our trust in God and, in that he counts us as righteous, not because we perfectly uphold all the law, but because we trust him to save and intervene on our behalf.
 - a. We’re like Abraham. We’ve got nothing. We trust him to do it. He counts our faith as righteousness. And we live!
2. But on the other hand, we could take this to mean that, in some way or another, if we want to escape God’s coming judgment, if we want to be right with him, we have to walk with him, we have to endure to the end, we have to be faithful.
 - a. We can’t bail out on our obedience. We don’t just get to make a decision once and then go on our own way. We’re not just saved by faith, we need to walk faithfully day by day.

B. So which is it? I mean, we got into all of this because I’m saying: here is the key to opening the door to fullness of life and joy; here is the way we get right with the God of cosmos; here is how we escape the coming judgment and pass through to paradise.

1. You know I like to focus in on the details of the text, but I don’t usually go to quite this extent with the original languages and things. But I do so here because I think yours and my life are hanging on these words.
 - a. And yet, it seems, at this point at least, we still don’t know what they mean. Perhaps we’re even more confused than we were before we started!

C. So, again, which is it? What do we need to get right with God?

1. Is it an initial act of justifying faith, or is it an ongoing life of faithfulness?
2. Is it to be counted perfectly righteous in the courtroom of heaven, or is it to become more and more righteous practically here on earth?
 - a. Answer: (You knew it was coming . . .) Yes! I think, as I’ve been hinting at all along, in some sense, both options are correct. You need both. But understanding each properly is critical, as we’ll soon see.

Cooking Up a Stew

A. My goal in all of this, believe it or not, has not been to confuse you. I am saying let’s throw all of these possibilities into the pot and try to cook up something delicious.

1. That's the image in my mind. It's like Habakkuk is cooking up a stew for us here. (Perhaps I was hungry when I was preparing this sermon ;)
- B. Now, I get this image, because, on my read at least, when the NT authors quote this verse, it's like they dip in their ladle and pull up a bowlful, but it's always a bit different in its emphasis and accent—though it's all drawing from the same pot, from the same range of lexical meaning, and it's all seen in view of the cross of Christ and the gospel.
1. You may dip the ladle in and pull up some chicken and some bell peppers for this bowl. But then the next time you dip it in you get a bit of carrots, potatoes, onions, or whatever.
 - a. It's all delicious, and it's all in the pot, but each bowl is a little different.
- C. That's the idea I think. That's the only way I can account for how this verse is used and built upon in the NT.

Justification and Sanctification

- A. If you're familiar with Christianity, then perhaps you've heard of the doctrines of justification and sanctification. To cut straight to it, that's essentially what we're talking about here.
- B. You see, the first option I gave you as a possibility is really bringing out the doctrine of justification.
1. Here we have in Habakkuk, the prophet looking out at Babylon and he says: "I can't save myself. I need God to act! He's given me his word against all odds. And I trust him."
 2. And this idea is developed further in the NT, where now we look at our sin and recognize: I deserve God's judgment. Babylon is coming and there is nothing I can do fundamentally to save myself. God must act. And he does by sending his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, to live the righteous life I should have lived and die the sinner's death I should have died.
 - a. And now when I come like a beggar and place my faith in him, I am counted righteous, declared righteous in the courtroom of heaven, not because I am in and of myself, but because I am in Jesus. We trust him and his righteousness, in the face of our own sin, against all odds, and we are counted righteous in him.
 - i. It's as Paul says in [2 Cor. 5:20-21](#): " ²⁰We implore you . . . , be reconciled to God. ²¹For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."
 - (1) He takes your sin. You get his righteousness. The judge demands from him what he could properly demand from you. The judge awards to you what he could properly award to him. What a gospel!
- C. But the second option refers more to the doctrine of sanctification.

1. Here we have Habakkuk waiting faithfully for God to rescue. And the prophet isn't going to bail on him, or go after this or that idol for a quick fix. He's going to endure in trust and in obedience.
 2. And this idea too is developed further in the NT, where now we wait obediently for the return of Jesus. We endure in faithfulness. We grow in holiness.
 - a. As the author of Hebrews says: "[There is a] holiness without which no one will see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14).
 - i. Here is the idea that we are not just counted righteous in position before God. We do truly become more righteous in practice as well. We start to look more and more like the one who's redeemed us.
- D. At the end of the day these two come together in the gospel. They can be distinguished, but they cannot, they must not, be divided.
1. As we come to Jesus by faith, we are made more faithful.
 2. As we are united to him, we are given both his right standing before God and his strength in the Spirit for right-living.
 3. Our justification, being counted righteous in Christ, evidences itself in our sanctification, growing more in the likeness of Christ.
 4. The grace that washes, forgives, and justifies is also the grace that transforms, empowers, and sanctifies.
 5. If you have the one, you'll have the other. If you don't have the one, neither will you have the other. They both come to us in the gospel. They both come to us in Christ. And they both are requisite to getting right with God and finding life eternal in him.
- E. Looking forward, then, to the three places in the NT where [Hab. 2:4](#) is cited:
1. It seems like [Rom. 1:17](#) brings both aspects together a bit. The flavor of the stew there is a bit more balanced.
 2. [Gal. 3:11](#) has a bit more justification in the bowl.
 3. [Heb. 10:38](#) tastes like sanctification to me.
 - a. With what little time we have left let's take quick look at the Romans text this morning here and we'll circle back to the other two next time.

Romans 1:17

A Well-Balanced Gospel

- A. The book of Romans is arguably the most thorough and the most eloquent exposition of the gospel ever written. And Paul the Apostle, after his initial greetings and things, decides to open it by quoting from [Hab. 2:4](#).

- B. Look at Rom. 1:16-17: “¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.¹⁷ For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for [or ‘to’] faith, as it is written, ‘The righteous shall live by faith.’”

1. Now, what you have to understand is: this is the thesis for everything that follows.

- a. Do you remember writing essays in high school or college? Do you remember that dreaded thesis statement you had to come up with there at the beginning that would be unfolded in all that came after?

i. Well, this is Paul’s thesis statement. And he grounds it all in Hab. 2:4.

- C. Listen to the words of scholar O. Palmer Robertson at this point: “Paul displays a magnificent grasp of the prophet’s [Habakkuk’s] message when he adopts this single phrase as a basis for constructing the entire letter to the Romans. Not merely as a keynote sounded to introduce his treatise, but as a well-balanced theme that structures the entirety of his message, this verse from Habakkuk permeates the whole of the epistle.

In setting forth his theme in Romans, Paul declares that a righteousness of God has been revealed from faith to faith (Rom. 1:17). Faith serves as the origin of righteousness in justification, and as the framework for the continuation of righteousness in sanctification. The apostle then develops this twofold role of faith as originally presented in Hab. 2:4, dealing with the faith that receives the gift of justification in Rom. 1–5, and the faith that receives the gift of sanctification in Rom. 6–8. Thus Paul offers a well-balanced gospel in his development of his theme that “the justified (by faith) shall live by his steadfast trust” (NICOT).

1. It’s a well-balanced gospel, or, if you’ll permit me: it’s a well-balanced stew.

- D. Both sides of Hab. 2:4 are brought out wonderfully in this epistle:

1. So, on the one hand, Paul, speaking of Justification in Rom. 4:5, just after referencing that same story of Abraham again, can say: “to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly [in Jesus], his faith is counted as righteousness.”
2. But, on the other hand, he will wrap around later and speak of sanctification in Rom. 6: “¹ [Since the ungodly are justified by grace through faith in Christ] are we to continue in sin . . . [in other words: ‘does it not really matter, can we just remain ungodly?’]?² By no means! How can we who died to sin [with Christ] still live in it? . . .¹⁴ [S]in will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace” (vv. 1-2, 14).
- a. The grace of Jesus doesn’t just justify the ungodly, it sanctifies them, it changes them, so that they grow in godliness little by little themselves.
3. So, again, on the one hand, Paul can speak of justification in Rom. 5:9, saying: “Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.”
- a. Because we’re in Christ by grace through faith, we are justified freely and saved ultimately. We’re going to live.

4. But, on the other hand, he's going to wrap around later and speak of sanctification, saying that the gospel grace that justifies and assures of life eternal is going to transform the way you live here and now as well, [Rom. 12:1-2](#): “¹ I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.² Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind”
 - a. God's mercy saves us not just from sin's future penalty but also from sin's present power.
- E. You know Martin Luther, when he came to those opening verses in [Rom. 1](#), when he saw what Paul did with [Hab. 2:4](#), it changed everything for him. And, when he finally got it, he says: “I felt that I was altogether born again and had entered into paradise itself through open gates.”
 1. He put the key of the gospel in, and it worked. The gates opened. He got right with God.
- F. Don't you want that today?
 1. I'm not asking you to drink the cool-aid. But am I asking you to eat the stew. Repent and receive Jesus by faith. Let him justify and sanctify you by grace.