

Day 17 ~ THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD

"Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness."

"He believed God, who quickeneth the dead."

Romans 4:3, 7

Let us now, after listening to the words of our Lord Jesus about our fellowship with Him in the cross, turn to St. Paul, and see how through the Holy Spirit he gives the deeper insight into what our death in Christ means.

You know how the first section of Romans is devoted to the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ. After speaking (1:18-32) of the awful sin of the heathen, and then (2:1-29) of the sin of the Jew, he points out how Jew and Gentile are *"guilty before God," "All have sinned and come short."* And then he sets forth that free grace which gave the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (3:21-31). In chapter 4 he points to Abraham as having, when he believed, understood that God justified him freely by His grace, and not for anything that he had done.

Abraham had not only believed this, but something more. *"He believed in God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth the things that are not as though they were."* The two expressions are most significant, as indicating the two essential needs there are in the redemption of man in Christ Jesus. There is the need of justification by faith, to restore man to the favor of God. But there is more needed. He must also be quickened to a new life. Just as justification is by faith alone, so is regeneration also. Christ died on account of our sins; He was raised again on account of our justification.

In the first section (down to verse 5:11), Paul deals exclusively with the great thought of our justification. But in the second section (5:12 to 8:39), he expounds that wonderful union with Christ, through faith, by which we died with Him, by which we live in Him, and by which, through the Holy Spirit, we are made free, not only from the punishment, but also from the power of sin, and are enabled to live the life of righteousness, of obedience, and of sanctification. ♥