



CELL GUIDE

TOPIC	The Provision of Grace	SPEAKER	SP Chua Seng Lee
THEME	The Righteousness of God	DATE	3 & 4 October 2026

MESSAGE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Many Christians measure their closeness to God by their spiritual performance. When we read the Bible, pray, serve others and do good, we may feel closer to God. Conversely, when we sin or neglect our spiritual disciplines, we may feel that God is distant and displeased with us. This mindset can lead to performance-based Christianity, where we try to earn God's favour through good works. However, all human effort is futile before God - no amount of human effort can earn us righteousness before God. In Rom 3:21 - 4:25, Paul explains God's provision of grace, showing that we are justified and made righteous through faith in Jesus Christ, not by our own works or efforts.

THE PROVISION OF GRACE

1) The Provision of Grace (Romans 3:21-31)

Rom 3:21 begins with the words "But now", marking a turning point from humanity's sin and God's judgement to the good news of His provision of righteousness through Jesus Christ. Both Jews and Gentiles have sinned and fallen short of God's glory (Rom 3:23). Yet, all can be justified freely by God's grace through the redemption found in Christ Jesus (Rom 3:24). Grace is God's unmerited favour, often described as "God's riches at Christ's expense". It is demonstrated through His unconditional love, the free gift of salvation and His power to help us overcome sin. Although salvation is freely given to us, it came at a great cost to Jesus. He suffered rejection, died for our sins and rose again on the third day to redeem us. God's provision of grace does not nullify the law; rather, it establishes the law by revealing that righteousness comes through faith in Jesus Christ, and not through our ability to keep the law.

2) The Illustrations of Grace (Romans 4:1-12)

Paul uses the examples of Abraham and David to demonstrate that righteousness through faith was evident in the Old Testament.

a) Abraham: Credited as righteous (Rom 4:1-5)

Abraham was credited as righteous because he believed God, not because he was perfect or had earned God's favour through behaviour or good works. The word "credited" is an accounting term.

Unlike a system of spiritual scorecards - adding points for good deeds and subtracting points for sins - our relationship with God is noted based on accumulating spiritual achievements. We are justified by faith through His grace, which is a gift, rather than a reward for works.

b) David: righteousness by faith (Rom 4:6-8)

David understood the blessing of receiving righteousness apart from works. After he sinned and was confronted with his wrong doing, he repented and experienced God's forgiveness (Psa 51). In Psa 32:1-2, David describes the joy of having his sins forgiven and no longer counted against him. David's example shows that righteousness is not earned through good works or penance. Instead, God's forgiveness and grace is received when we turn to Him in repentance and faith.

c) Circumcision: A seal, not the cause of justification (Rom 4:10-12)

Paul explains that Abraham was credited as righteous before he was circumcised. Abraham believed God in Gen 15, while circumcision was introduced later in Gen 17. Therefore, circumcision was a seal of the righteousness Abraham had already received through faith, not the cause of his justification. Similarly, baptism is an outward sign of faith and believer's identification with Christ, it does not earn God's favour.

3) The Application from Grace (Romans 4:1-25)

Having explained God's provision of grace through Abraham and David, Paul shows how believers are to respond to God's grace - by faith in God.

a) Faith is necessary (Rom 4:1-12)

Abraham believed God, and his faith was credited to him as righteousness. Faith is essential for us to experience God's grace and trust His promises. Rather than relying on our own efforts or achievements, we are called to trust in God. Without faith, we will continue to live under sin, it is impossible to please Him.

b) Faith is simple (Rom 4:13-17)

Faith is believing and trusting God and His promises. God is El Roi, the God who sees us (Gen 16:13). He knows our circumstances and remains faithful to His word and He will fulfil His promises.

c) Faith is tenacious (Rom 4:18-25)

Abraham demonstrated persevering faith by trusting God's promise of a son even when he and Sarah were well beyond the natural age to have children. He hoped against hope and believed that God was able to fulfil what He had promised, despite the seemingly impossible circumstances. The journey of faith may involve seasons of silence, disappointment and the testing of faith. At times, we may desire God's promised outcome without wanting to go through the process. Yet, we are called to persevere, continue praying and trust God even when we cannot see the results.

CONCLUSION

The provision of grace reveals God's love for us through Jesus Christ. Righteousness is received through faith, not earned through good works or spiritual achievements. We cannot compensate for our sins by accumulating good deeds, nor earn God's favour through our own efforts. Instead, we are invited to trust in God's grace and persevere in faith. When we truly encounter God's grace through faith, He transforms our hearts, to live from the grace we have received.

QUESTIONS

1. When do you most easily slip into “I need to do more to be good enough/more spiritual”? How does Romans 3:23–24 speak into that?

2. David experienced the joy of having his sins forgiven (Romans 4:6-8; Psalm 32:1-2). What can we learn from David about responding to failures and receiving God’s forgiveness?

3. Is there an area of your life where you are struggling to trust His promises? What is one practical step you can take this week to live more fully in God’s grace?