

Lessons from Romans **Book 7**

Truth in Sequence

Certainty in Uncertain Times



**...If God is for us,
who can be against us?**

Romans 8:31

Alaska Christian Ministry to Seafarers

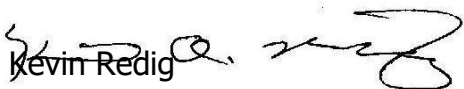
Foreword

This is the last of the three booklets I was blessed to work on during my writing sabbatical in May of 2023. I found that a walk along the beach into a brisk onshore wind and my teaching notes, were all that were needed to motivate me to start writing!

I hope that in time these words will find their way into both booklet and small tract form that can be used to encourage others. In either case, it was a great blessing for me to take these truths and put them into written form. I trust you will be blessed as well.



In His grace,


Kevin Redig

All Scripture quotes have been taken from either the NIV (1984 edition) or the NKJV (1982 edition).

Vistoso Community Church
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Introduction

I don't care where you look, uncertainty abounds! How is our political situation going to play out, how about the economic challenges of inflation and immense debt, and what about the trends in our culture? All of these issues, and so many others, have uncertain outcomes with plenty of potential for disaster! How about on the world stage: Is the Ukraine conflict going to spread, who will contain China, and what about the very environment we all depend upon? The future is uncertain with many claiming catastrophe is fast approaching! I am not sure the breadth and depth of the uncertainties we face have ever been greater than they are right now! Of course, such a level of uncertainty has predictable consequences. It naturally tends to promote fear, anxiety, depression, and discouragement among the people—everyone from retirees to young people.

Given the state of our nation and world, here is the purpose of this little booklet: I want to share with you from God's Word a number of things of which you can be absolutely certain! It doesn't matter which way the world twists and turns, those who have trusted in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and have received God's gift of eternal life, have a number of blessings that are absolutely, unequivocally certain! As a Christian, I think other Christians need to know these things in order to live the abundant life that God has in mind for us. I think that those who are looking for certainty, should give these things a hearing and then decide if there is anything even remotely like what God has provided to be had from the world. If not, perhaps it would be wise to give Christianity a closer look. So, if you would like some certainty in this uncertain world, read on!

Of This We Can Be Certain!

(Romans 8:26-39)

In Romans 8:16-18, we learned some marvelous and convicting truths: We are expected to become mature sons in the image of Christ; we have an unimaginable standing as a joint-heir with Christ; and suffering is certain to come in time, although it will be eclipsed by glory in eternity. There is so much to consider, to think through carefully, and to apply in time as we keep our focus on eternity. There is a great deal of waiting patiently associated with the Christian Life, isn't there? We can see it as our text in Romans continues:

The creation waits in eager expectation ... Not only that, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved ... if we hope for what we do not have, we wait for it patiently.

Romans 8:19-25

While we are waiting for our glorious future, there is something that you and I need to know! It is something to which we need to return over and over again, another safe harbor. You see, God is not yet done encouraging us in this great eighth chapter of the Book of Romans.

There is still much that is meant to give us confidence and certainty in a world of anxiousness and uncertainty!



From the perspective of man, uncertainty abounds! Not only in the political, economic, and societal realms, but in the spiritual realm as well. Is there life after death? Are there such places as heaven and hell? Will I make it into heaven?

A Change of Focus

But right now I want to make a seismic shift. I do not want to talk about that which is uncertain any longer! Instead, I want to shift to that which is absolutely, eternally certain and that means we are going to have to shift from man's perspective to God's. Let's start with our eternal destiny. Is there anything we can know with absolute certainty?

Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him. John 3:36

I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life. I John 5:13

"In My Father's house are many room ... I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with Me that you also may be where I am." John 14:2-3

We can know, upon the authority of the eternal Word of God, that if we believe in Jesus as the divine Son of God who died in our place as payment for our sin, we have eternal life. God wants us to know we have life—without the least bit of uncertainty. He wants all who have believed to know with certainty that He is coming for them to take them to the place He has prepared in His Father's house. This is meant to be the confidence—and by that I mean certainty—of every born-again child of God.

Once again we are certain of our eternal destiny which opens up a wonderful host of certainties for the child of God. For example, we can be absolutely certain that in God's sight, we are justified by the righteousness with which He clothes us.

... even the righteousness of God through faith in Christ, to all and on all who believe. Romans 3:22

The list of certainties is as marvelous as it is lengthy, we are with certainty:

- Out forever from under the wrath of God. (Romans 5:9)
- Never again to be under condemnation. (Romans 8:1)
- Alive, raised up, and seated with Christ in the heavenlies. (Ephesians 2:4-6)
- Under grace and not under the law. (Romans 6:14)
- Dead to the power of the flesh. (Romans 6:6)
- Now alive with the very life of Christ which He is willing to share with us. (Romans 6:5,11)
- Indwelt with the Holy Spirit. (I Corinthians 6:19)
- Joint heirs with Christ with a heavenly inheritance. (Romans 8:17, I Peter 1:4)

Do you realize I could keep going and going? Why do you think we call the salvation provided by our heavenly Father, His *so-great salvation*? Because it covers absolutely everything. And, of that we can be certain!

From Man's Perspective

Now, much as I hate to do it, let's come back to man's side of things for a minute. Given all that is wrapped up in God's plan of salvation, the Christian life should be a breeze! But it isn't, is it? In fact, there many times it does seem very difficult to confidently proclaim that we

are going to be exactly the kind of Christian that we desire to be, one who would receive the Lord's commendation. To be sure, the shortcoming is not on God's side of things. There is no shortage of grace on His part. The uncertainty lies with us! We may desire with all our hearts to please the Lord and walk in obedience but, as we look back at our own lives, we can no doubt see some failures. Those failures should have taught us that confidence in ourself is misguided.

In fact, the Bible is full of the failures of God's people. How can we avoid being one of them? The more I learn about the high calling of God for those who have put their faith in Christ, the more I sometimes face the future with a certain degree of trepidation. The truths of Romans 6-8 have provided a wonderful glimpse of how I might be dead to sin and alive unto God in Christ, but my past failures in the Christian Life sometimes leave me doubtful of being able to achieve this marvelous picture.

Our Proper Focus

Now, I am not really trying to discourage you! Instead, I want us to get our eyes off of ourselves and onto what God has already provided, what He is doing for us now, and what He will continue to do for us in the future. To begin with, God has provided everything we need:

His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness. Through these He has given us His very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

II Peter 1:3-4

The truths and promises in His Word, many of which we have studied in the Book of Romans, allow us to participate in the divine nature while avoiding the corruption of

the world around us. Furthermore, the Christian Life is not up to us to accomplish in our own strength, rather it is a work of God. And, it is a work to which He is firmly committed!

... being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

Philippians 1:6

Best of all, we can know exactly what the finished product that God has in mind for each of us is going to look like!

For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brothers.

Romans 8:29

Here we are in the midst of trying to live the Christian Life and God has provided everything! Nonetheless, we far too often continue to make a spiritual mess of things. Past failures can cause us to doubt our ability to ever make spiritual progress. Sometimes we even wonder how God feels about one who continues to struggle as we do, despite God's perfect provision. Some even go so far as to teach that the uncertainty regarding our ability to make spiritual progress translates to uncertainty about our eternal destiny!



ROMANS 8:39 WEB

*nor height, nor depth, nor
any other created thing,
will be able to separate us
from the love of God, which
is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*



All of this is so misguided given the already declared certainties so plentiful in the Bible!

God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life ... I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know you have eternal life!

I John 5:12-13

Our Eternal Securities

We are to know and be certain that:

- We have eternal life. (I John 5:13)
- We have crossed over from death to life. (John 5:24)
- No one can snatch us from the hand of Jesus or the hand of our heavenly Father. (John 10:28-29)
- We have been sealed with the Holy Spirit, a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance. (Ephesians 1:13-14)

Thus, upon the authority of Scripture, we can set aside bad theology that seeks to use the uncertain nature of our walk as a reason to sow doubt about our eternal destiny or to foster excessive occupation with self. Instead, let's consider the kinds of things that will help us to stay the course, persevere in the faith, and even pick up the pieces when necessary. Rather than be discouraged by our failures, we are to be fully caught up in the process of being conformed to the likeness of our Savior, without wondering where we stand with God!

Consider this simple prayer:

Lord, I believe, help my unbelief! Keep my eyes off myself and off my perceived failures or successes. As I fix my eyes on Jesus, show me what I can know for certain that I might stand firm in the faith until you call me Home!

Consider Starting Here

To that end, here is something that, as a child of God, we can know for absolutely, positively certain:

The Trinity, each member, is working for us and through us—for our best and God's glory!

Mark it down! If this is true, then you and I can focus upon the *everything* that God has provided for life and godliness and not the up-and-down nature of our daily walk. And, it is true.

The Trinity

Let's work through this carefully. First, let me show you that all three members of the Trinity are in view in these closing verses of Romans Chapter 8:

1. **Father:** If God is for us ... He who did not spare His own Son ... (Romans 8:31-32)
2. **Son:** Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? (Romans 8:35)
3. **Holy Spirit:** In the same way, the Spirit helps us ... (Romans 8:26)



When it comes to that which is certain, it shouldn't surprise us to find all three members of the Trinity, for all three are one in essence and united in purpose!

The Audience

Notice the thread of justification that runs through this portion of the text:

... those He called, He also justified; those He justified, He also glorified. Romans 8:30

It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Romans 8:33-34

By this point in our study of Romans, we should be absolutely clear on how a lost person can be justified before a holy God. There is just one way—faith in Christ!

... even the righteousness of God through faith in Christ, to all and on all who believe ... being justified freely by His grace ... Romans 3:22, 24

I have pointed out the thread of justification that runs throughout this passage so that there would be no confusion regarding the audience. We are not investigating that which is certain only for those who have reached a particular level of spiritual maturity. All those things are certain for all those who have been justified by faith alone in Christ alone! That would be those who have trusted in Christ and as a result are now clothed with His righteousness, regardless of spiritual maturity. In fact, this is one of the means of promoting growth—learning to stand firm upon those things that God has told us we can be absolutely certain!

The Role of the Holy Spirit

Let's look first at what the Holy Spirit is doing for those justified by faith. Of course, the Scriptures reveal the amazing breadth of the Spirit's ministry—encouraging,

convicting, sealing, indwelling, gifting, enabling, teaching, and much more. But let's focus on what we find in this eighth chapter of Romans.

... He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who lives in you ... In the same way the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express ... the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will.

Romans 8:11, 26-27

Of this, you and I can be certain, the Holy Spirit dwells within us and He helps us in our weaknesses by interceding on our behalf with the Father. Picture this, if the situation in which you find yourself is so intense you do not even know how to pray, someone is still praying on your behalf! You can know for certain that the Holy Spirit is interceding for you. You can rest in the fact that He is doing so and that He is doing so in keeping with God's will. Of course, when the Spirit prays, the Father always listens for their communion is perfect and unbroken. In times of crisis, we can hold fast to this wonderful truth for comfort!



The Role of the Father

Next, let's consider what the Father is doing:

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose ... those God foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of His Son ... those He justified, He also glorified ... If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all—how will He not also ... graciously give us all things? ... It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns?

Romans 8:28-34

Can you see the absolute necessity of getting our eyes off of ourselves and our feeble efforts, and instead steadfastly trusting God to do what He says He will? He can work all things for good, transform us to be like His Son with our glorification the final outcome, and, in grace, provide all things! Are these the kinds of things we have the ability to accomplish? Of course not! Then why are we so caught up in trying? Instead, we need to learn to trust and to be confident that God is at work and willing to do all that He has said that He will do.

Do you doubt the Lord? He already did the most by providing His Son. Now He has declared He will receive no word of condemnation against those clothed with the righteousness of His Son. Who would have thought this possible if it weren't so clearly declared in God's Word? We must grasp these truths and hold fast to them!



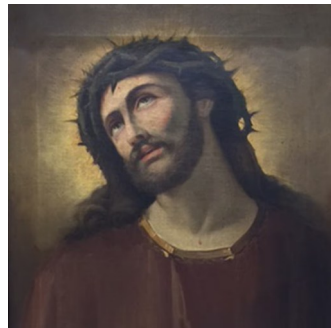
The Role of the Son

Lastly, let's consider what the Son is doing:

... how will He (the Father) not also, along with Him (the Son) graciously give us all things? ... Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us ... who shall separate us from the love of Christ? ... trouble ... hardship ... persecution. No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life ... nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 8:32-39

Now we see that it is the Father and Son together who graciously provide everything we need. Not only does the Holy Spirit intercede on our behalf, but so too does our Savior! And, He does so from the place of greatest honor at the Father's right hand. Will not the Father delight to hear and answer? It doesn't matter the trials and suffering we face, in Jesus Christ we are conquerors—more than conquerors!

Will you pause with me right now to give thanks to the Lord Jesus for loving you with an undying, unquenchable, unchanging love? We don't deserve it, but, oh, how we need to know and believe in its absolute certainty! And, while you are at it, know for certain that the love of Jesus for IS the love of the Father.



In Summary

At the risk of repeating myself, what God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are doing for us and through us is so absolutely fantastic that we must be reminded over and over again lest we forget. Allow me to summarize what we have learned:

As those who have believed in the person and work of Jesus Christ, you and I can be absolutely certain, every day for the rest of our lives, that the Holy Spirit is interceding with the Father on our behalf; that the Father and Son together will graciously provide all things; and that our Savior both intercedes from the right hand of the Father and loves us with a love from which nothing can separate us!

If the above is actually true, and, upon the authority of God's word it is, why would we doubt? If we actually kept these promises in the forefront of our thinking (that's the only part that is in doubt), could we ever again truly have a bad day?

As a word of caution: God is perfectly able to suit the above to our personal circumstances. If we have become tangled in sin, what do we need the most? While the Spirit intercedes and the Son still loves, the Father is perfectly able to lovingly provide the discipline that will cause us to come to our senses that we might confess our sin and be restored to fellowship. For,

... the Lord disciplines those He loves, and He punishes everyone He accepts as a son ... God disciplines us for our good that we may participate in His holiness.

Hebrews 12:6,10

Overcoming Uncertainties

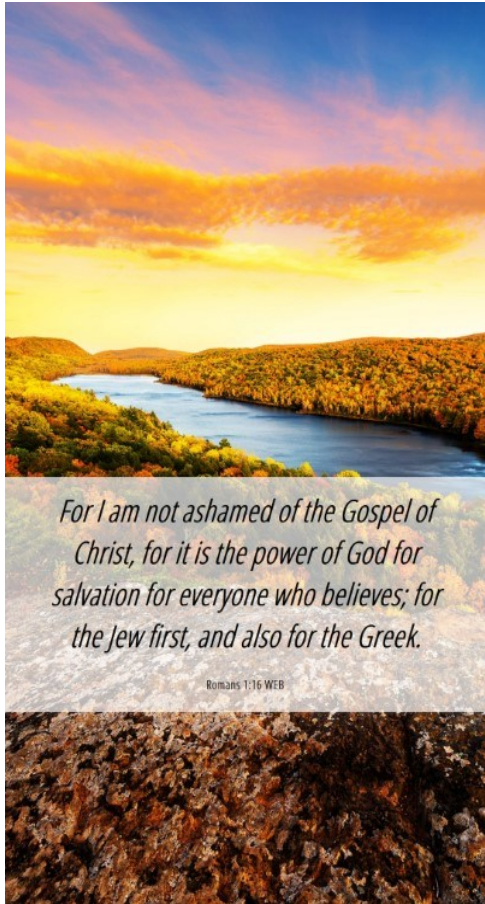
Now that we have a list of things of which we can be certain, we should be able to clear our minds of certain doubts and fears!

Correcting the Errors

Consider these errors which have ensnared many an unwary Christian.

On Parole. There are those who espouse a theology which in essence treats the believer as if he or she is on parole! In this system, being redeemed is like being released from prison and having to wear an ankle monitor! As long as you don't violate the terms of your parole, or stray too far, you can stay out of jail. But if you stray too far, back to jail you go!

Now, those who espouse this theology don't state it this bluntly, but this is what they are teaching when they put believers under any system of works in order to prove or maintain their



For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God for salvation for everyone who believes; for the Jew first, and also for the Greek.

Romans 1:16 WEB

salvation. Not only should we find this offensive, but, at this point, we should immediately recognize that it is in complete disharmony with what the Bible teaches on justification, our standing as children of God, and the certainty of those things God is desirous of doing for us and through us!

Failure on our part may limit what God can do at the moment until our fellowship is restored through confession of sin. But God says nothing about sending us back to the dominion of darkness from which we were redeemed.

Required Payments. There are others who teach that the Christian Life is like buying an insurance policy! The policy remains in place as long as the believer makes regular premium payments. However, should an individual stop paying the premiums (doing what a *good* Christian should do as defined by whoever is spreading this false teaching), then the policy lapses and that individual is no longer covered.

Others will modify this approach slightly and teach that the *payments* are proof of having a policy. If the believer stops making those payments, it is simply proof that he or she was never covered to begin with! Again, they may not state it this bluntly, but whenever you hear teaching that the Christian Life depends upon what you do, and/or what you do is proof that you are saved, look elsewhere for the truth as fast as you can!

The *premium* by which our eternal destiny was secured was paid in full right up front! That is what the phrase "It is finished" means! Shouldn't we be focusing upon what the Father, Son, and Spirit are doing in and through us so that we might fully cooperate with them? Where in the list of certainties in Romans 8:26-39 do you see us making *premium payments*? Absolutely nowhere!

Understanding Security

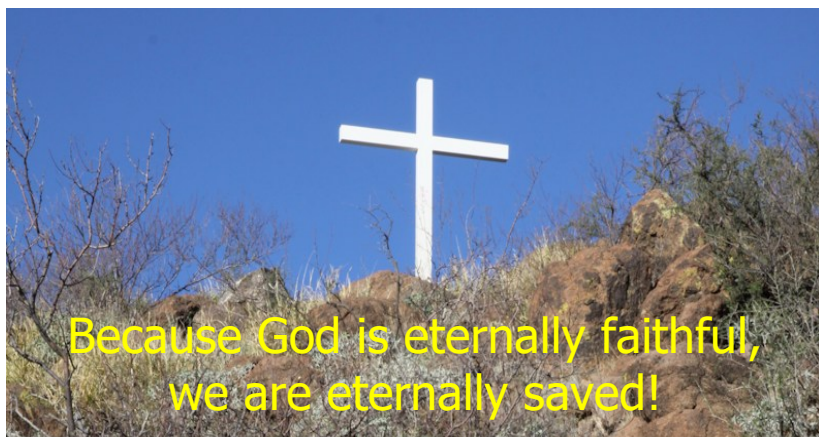
There is one more issue I would like to settle based upon the certainties we have learned in Romans 8:26-39. Let me ask it this way:

Once we are justified before our holy God by faith, is our eternal destiny a completely settled matter? Is it secure for all time, or can it be lost?

The above question addresses the subject of eternal security, which can be defined as follows:

Eternal security refers to the concept that a person who has changed his or her eternal destiny from one in the Lake of Fire to one in God's heaven is clothed with His righteousness and is in receipt of eternal life! All of this is the result of faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Such saved individuals have something they can never lose! They are "secure" in what God has, in grace, provided!

Many vigorously reject these promises, while others are not sure. However, the only thing that really matters is: *what sayeth the Word of God?* I have been asked about



this topic many times. It is not difficult to address since the Word of God has so much to say about it. For the purposes of this study, let's consider what Romans 8:25-39 has to say.

Why Doubt? First, after having trusted in Christ for eternal life, why might we doubt it is really what God has said it is—life that lasts for eternity? There are many reasons: We begin to doubt because we have committed some kind of *whopper sin* or have a lesser pattern of sin we just can't seem to overcome. Sometimes it is because we sense the pull of the flesh and this makes us wonder if we were ever really saved.

Then there are those who have turned away from the Lord for a lengthy period of time, like the Prodigal Son, and are wondering where they stand with their heavenly Father. They have tried the world, found it wanting, and would like to come back, but are not sure if they can.

In all of the above cases, do you know what is God's answer to us from Romans 8:26-39? He says, I am not going to directly address your perceived shortcomings or their consequences; instead, look at what I am doing for you in order to bless you. Look to Me (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) if you want to know where you stand!

We respond, "But, but, but... ." God says in response, "Don't live with yourself in the center of your world, focused solely on your level of faithfulness, failures, and so on. Instead, look to Me and what I have done, what I am doing, and the glorious future I have provided for you."

In short, God wants us to answer this question: "*Which looms larger in your thinking—your failures or the finished work of the cross and all that comes along with it?*" There is only one answer that is going to be acceptable to God when the question is phrased that way.

The Big Picture. Second, let's look at the big picture: What part did you play in your justification? By this point in our study in Romans our answer should be, *"I responded by faith and that's it!"*

Here is a list of follow-up questions. What part did you play in:

- Placing yourself in union with Christ's death in order to break sin's power?
- Placing yourself in union with His resurrection in order to provide you with new life
- The outpouring of His Spirit upon you in order to enable your new life in Christ?

For all three, the answer is the same: these are appropriated into our lives by "reckoning" them to be true!

It would appear that both our justification and our sanctification are works of God, which we learn to bring into our lives by faith in what He alone can provide.

Finally, what part are we going to play in our future glorification, conforming us to the image and likeness of our Savior and the provision of a resurrection body like that of our Lord's?

Certainly we can do nothing more than to trust God to carry out all that He has said He will do.

So, where is the focus in all of these answers? When we doubt our eternal security, we are always trying to make it about us—either what we have failed to do or some sin we have committed. But, in the eighth chapter of Romans, what is God making it all about? It is quite clear it is about what He is doing in and through us, and His faithfulness to do what He has promised!

Mark it down! When we doubt the nature of our eternal standing, we are doubting His faithfulness and making it all about us. In effect, we are saying that what He has done is not sufficient to save—in my case! That's either self-centeredness, self-pity, or bad teaching! We know better! We should repent of our doubts *in dust and ashes*, for we must see what the Christian Life is like:

First, unimaginable blessing, with the intent that devotion would follow to God's glory. Then, immense and ongoing blessing as—separated from self by His cross and enabled by His Spirit—we take up His life! What is at stake is whether we live the Christian Life in a spiritual wilderness of our own making, or experience the abundant life in time as a precursor of a glorified life in eternity!



Jesus said,

“I give them eternal life,
And they shall never perish;
No one will snatch them out of my hand.

John 10:28

A Final Word

Let me conclude by asking a few more questions. Are you certain that:

- The Holy Spirit is working for and in you?
- The Father is bringing you along—graciously providing all?
- The Son is watching over you with a love from which nothing can separate you?

You most certainly should be answering yes to each of these questions upon the authority of God's Word, unless you are not yet righteous in God's sight.

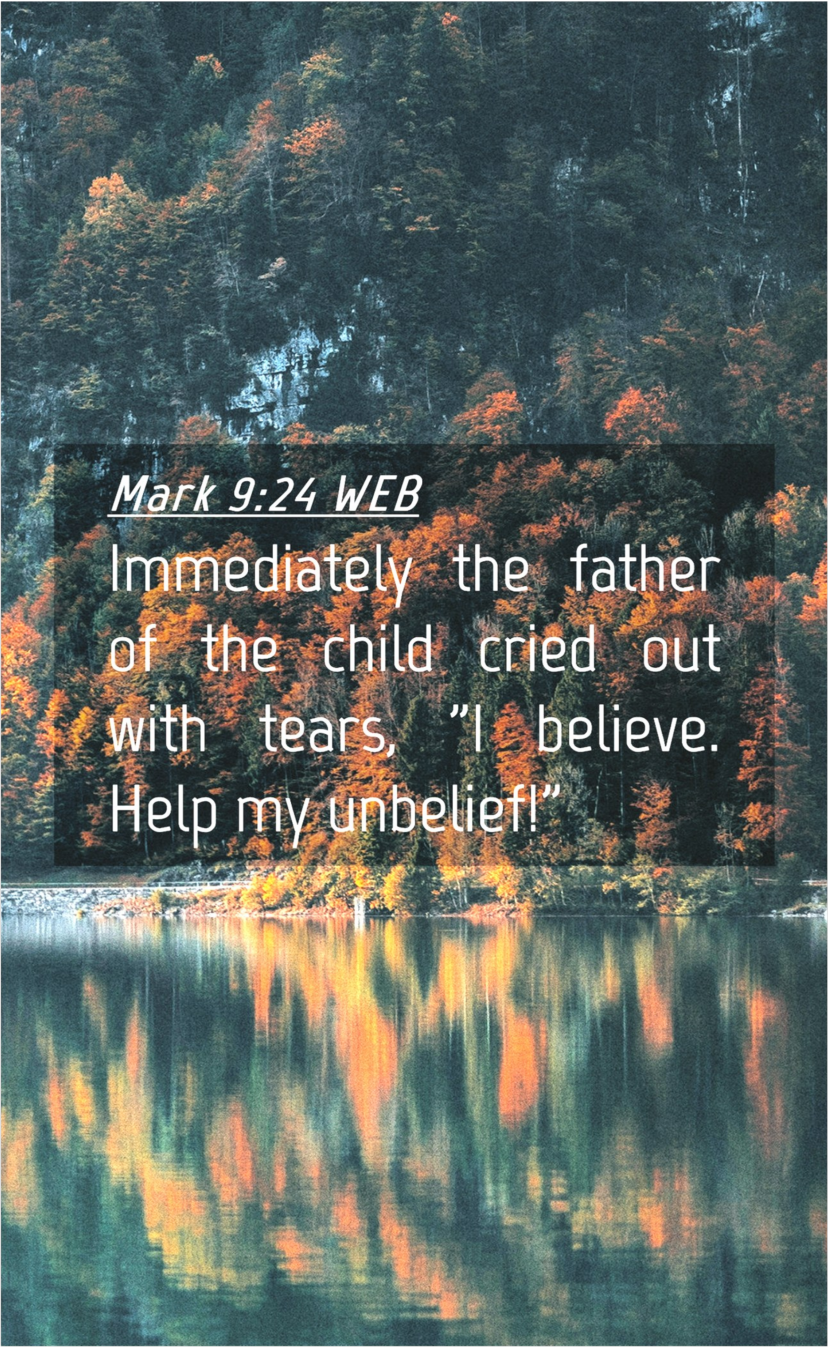
You would not be righteous in God's sight only because you do not yet have the very righteousness of God which comes, *"by faith in Christ, to all and on all who believe."*

Faith in the person and work of Christ leads to being clothed with His righteousness, receiving His life, and with it the promise of the kinds of things that lead to certainty in this life and the life to come! What could the world possibly offer in contrast to that? I urge you, put your faith in Christ unto eternal life!

For those who have believed, but have not yet received the blessing of the truths of Romans 8:26-39, stand firm with me upon the authority of God's Word and what it plainly says. We can know for certain:

- The Spirit is interceding for us—right now!
- The Father and Son's abundant grace is without limit in providing what we need!
- The Son is watching over, interceding with the Father and loves us with an unbreakable ever-lasting love!

Oh, Lord, I believe—help my unbelief!



Mark 9:24 WEB

Immediately the father
of the child cried out
with tears, "I believe.
Help my unbelief!"



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