Faith Overcomes Where the Law Fails

Romans 4:13-17

In the Book of Romans, the Apostle Paul continues to address the issue that the Jews had with the Law!
The Jews put more emphasis on the keeping of the Law than they did the reason God gave it to them. It became a works first religion, rather than a personal relationship with God Himself. They didn't realize that salvation doesn't come because of how they upheld the Law, it only comes by faith.

The Jews needed to learn the truth, that the Law is a system of works, while faith is a system that works! In other words, ***'Faith Overcomes Where the Law Fails'***.

THE JEWS NEEDED TO LOOK AT THE ROOT PROBLEM WITH THE LAW (13-15)

[13] For the promise that he would be the heir of the world *was* not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. [14] For if those who are of the law *are* heirs, faith is made void and the promise made of no effect, [15] because the law brings about wrath; for where there is no law *there is* no transgression.

God's promise to Abraham was not based on his goodness, nor on his keeping a series of rules.
It was a promise that Abraham would be the father of a multitude; his offspring would be given the land; and that all the nations of the world would be blessed through him. The foundation of this promise was about salvation, and it pointed to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. This promise really had nothing to do with the Law. Not only did the Jews miss that Abraham received salvation 14 years before circumcision even started, but it happened about 500 years before the Law was even given on Mount Sinai. So, God's promise and the Law are two separate events and must not be confused.

God did not base His promise on the work Abraham had done; if He did Abraham would have failed.
Instead, God's promise was based entirely on God's goodness. So, what does that say about the Law?

1) It points out that the Law is a *crippling Faith* *(14a)*
According to Paul, faith and the Law are mutually exclusive. That means if the promises of God are given on a merit basis, then faith will have no place in our lives! Think about it, if you could get to Heaven by keeping the Law, you would have no need for faith. However, if faith alone saves, then it doesn't matter whether you keep the Law or not!

2) *Faith in the Law would cancel God's Promises* *(14b)*
What would be the point of believing if you could receive salvation because you kept the Law? You wouldn't need God's promises; you wouldn't even need God because you could get to Heaven on your own. Yet this would never work no matter how hard you tried because you could never keep the Law perfectly.

3) *The Law was only intended to Convict Sinners* *(15)*
It is the basis of our condemnation before God. **James 2:10** tells us why the demands of the Law are impossible for us to meet! "For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one *point,* he is guilty of all." Ever since the giving of the Law, we all have been in deep trouble, because we cannot keep the Law the way God requires. God knew we would have a problem, so He provided us with an escape, if we are willing to go to Jesus in repentance and ask for His forgiveness. Now, in doing that we end up placing our faith and trust in God. Anything else leaves us hopeless. Imagine, when we break even the smallest of God's Commandments, we are automatically guilty of breaking all of them. It sure is a good thing that Jesus' salvation only requires faith in Him.

THAT'S WHY PAUL WANTS THE JEWS TO LOOK AT THE POWER OF FAITH (16-17)

[16] Therefore *it is* of faith that *it might be* according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all [17] (as it is written, *"I have made you a father of many nations"*) in the presence of Him whom he believed--God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did;

This is the other side of the coin.
In these 2 verses Paul reveals that salvation by faith is far superior to the Law, because faith does what the Law could never do; it discloses our need for God's Grace *(16a)*. Only through faith in Christ, can we realize our human inability to keep the Law, and therefore, salvation must come by the grace of God. If not, salvation would never happen. Since we all have sinned, our salvation is undeserved, leaving us completely dependent on God's grace. God's unmerited love towards sinners, completely rules out any idea of working or doing anything to obtain salvation. **Ephesians 2:8-9 -** [8] For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, [9] not of works, lest anyone should boast.

God's grace can also be seen as His Assurance of Salvation *(16b)*
Therefore, if salvation could be produced by keeping the Law, no one could be sure that they are really saved! Yet we can be sure of salvation - through faith in Jesus Christ. **1 John 5:13 -** These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may *continue to* believe in the name of the Son of God.

Paul explains that it is the grace of God that makes God's promise of salvation "a sure thing"!
Romans 6:23 - For the wages of sin *is* death, but the gift of God *is* eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. **Romans 10:13 -** For *"whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved."*

This means that God's grace is what provides everyone the opportunity to come to Him through faith in Jesus, and they will be saved eternally! In so doing God fulfills His promise to make Abraham the father of many nations (*not just the Jews*).

God's plan has always been to make salvation available to every person in the world.
There is nothing anyone has to do prior to receiving salvation and there are no additional requirements. The last part of **Revelation 22:17** puts it this way – "Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely." Regardless of who people are, where they come from, or whatever their circumstances are; salvation is for all people. When Jesus died on the cross, He died for the sins of the world, and anyone who places their faith in Him, will be saved!

Not only does God desire to Save; He has the Power to Save everyone.
Faith works because it rests in the power of God! Look at what Paul says at the end of verse **17**. God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did;

When Abraham placed his faith in God, he was made alive in God, and he received things from God that were impossible from a human standpoint. On the other hand the Law cannot change the sinner, and it cannot make him alive; all it can do is point out our weakness and remind us of the impending judgment to come.

Conclusion

The moment our faith is placed in Jesus for salvation, we are declared righteous by God, and we are accepted by God.
We are also given the very life of Christ, **Galatians 2:20 -** I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

Then through the Holy Spirit, God begins the work of changing us from the inside out!
This means that our salvation changes our hearts, which produces our outward change with little effort on our part. Everyone needs to learn this so they can make the best choice for their current and future lives. Finally, keep in mind that faith overcomes where the Law fails, because it is ***Superior!***