

The Faith that Saves

Text: Romans 4:17-25

Introduction:

1. Roman's Outline: Justification (1-5); Sanctification (6-8); Dispensation/Mission (9-11); Consecration (12-16)
2. This lesson: Abraham's faith is put under the microscope and looked at in detail. Application is again made to the justification by faith.
3. There is a certain type of faith that doesn't bring salvation:
 - John 2:23-25 *"Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many **believed** in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not **commit** himself unto them, because he knew all men, And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man."* Note: The word 'commit' used by Christ comes from the same root word as 'believed'
 - James 2:19 *"Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble."*

We observe three key things about Abraham's Faith...

I. The Character of his Faith (Vs. 17-21)

A. The Sight of his faith (Vs. 17-18a)

1. Faith focuses upon God (17)
 - a. The God who brings life out of death. If God can raise someone from the dead, then why should Abraham consider his or Sarah's inability to bear children?
 - b. The God who owns the future. Note the use of the past tense – **"I have made thee a father"** **The God we serve can speak of the future in the past tense!** When God speaks of the future it is not a forecast but a fact; not a prediction but a prophecy; not a possibility but a certainty.
2. Faith anticipates the future (18a)
 - a. 'against' = beyond. Abraham's situation was beyond hope. His situation was beyond human hopes, but in spite of that he rested it upon hope in God. (Wuest) "He believed God's promise despite the odds!" (Sorenson)
 - b. Psalm 42:5 *"Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance."*

B. The Source of his faith (Vs. 18b)

1. Romans 10:17 *"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."*

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2. Connection between the strength of our faith and relationship to the Word of God.
 - a. Importance of personal study and devotion
 - b. Importance of collective worship and preaching

C. The Strength of his faith (Vs. 19-20)

1. He ignored the impossibilities (Vs. 19)
 - a. 'considered' = to fix one's eyes or mind upon
 - b. "now dead" = as far as procreative functions were concerned, Abraham's body had died! Same for Sarah's womb.
2. He didn't doubt God's promise (Vs. 20)
 - a. 'staggered' = to vacillate between two opinions, to doubt
 - b. Note: Abraham's faith wasn't perfect. At times he grappled to understand what God was saying but at the end of it all, he trusted in what God had spoken.
3. He glorified God (Vs. 20) He didn't take credit to himself.

D. The Soundness of his faith (Vs. 21)

1. "fully persuaded" = fully assured, strongly convinced
2. "he was able" = his faith rested in God's Omnipotence
3. Illustration: Peter's faith in contrast to the spurious disciples (John 6:66-69)
4. Question: Are you almost persuaded? (Acts 26:28 – King Agrippa)

II. The Consequence of his Faith (Vs. 22)

A. Summation (22a)

1. 'therefore' It was the kind of faith described in the previous verses that brought the blessing of righteousness to Abraham
2. John 8:56 – Abraham rejoiced to see Christ's day

B. Imputation (22b)

1. to credit to one's account. God's righteousness received through the medium of faith.
2. Illustration: Abel (Hebrews 11:1-4)

III. The Challenge of his Faith (Vs. 23-25)

A. Application of the principle (Vs. 23-24)

1. "not written for his sake alone" = the same Divine principle applies to all. To be saved now, we must come on exactly the same basis as Abraham – by faith!
2. "shall be imputed" = absolute, guaranteed promise!
3. 'believe' = involves the head, heart and will

B. Description of the Lord (Vs. 25)

1. Delivered (25a)
 - a. 'delivered' = a judicial term used of a criminal being committed to his punishment. Refers to the judicial act of God the Father in

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delivering God the Son to the justice that required the payment of the penalty of human sin. (Wuest) Acts 2:23 *“Him, being **delivered** by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God...”* Christ is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8)

- b. Romans 5:6 *“For when we were yet without strength...”*
 - c. Romans 8:32 *“He that spared not his own Son, but **delivered him up for us all**, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?”*
 - d. Isaiah 53:1-12 *“Who hath believed our report?...”*
 - e. 1 Corinthians 15:3 *“...Christ died for our sins...”*
 - f. 2 Corinthians 5:21 *“For he hath made him to be sin for us...”*
2. Resurrected (25b)
- a. You may say, how can I know that I can be justified? Because He is alive!
 - b. He was raised that he might enter the holiest of all and present his own blood before the throne of God.
 - c. Hebrews 9:12 *“Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, **having obtained eternal redemption for us.**”*
 - d. Hebrews 9:24 *“For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, **now to appear in the presence of God for us:**”*

Conclusion: Philippians 3:3-9 – Paul’s experience of God’s imputed righteousness. **What happened to men like Abraham and Paul can happen to you if you will come by faith!**