

Abraham Believed God

By Henry Mahan

Bible Text: Romans 4:3

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My text today is found in Romans four. I will be reading several verses from the fourth chapter of Romans if it is convenient for you to open your Bible and follow in the reading, Romans 4:3. The subject is, "Abraham Believed God. Abraham Believed God."

It says in verse three of Romans four, "For what saith the Scriptures? Well, the Scriptures say Abraham believed God and it was counted, imputed, reckoned unto him for righteousness." The Scriptures...what does the Scripture say about Abraham? It says he believed God. He believed God. It didn't say he believed in God. It didn't say he believed there was a God. He said he believed God. He believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness.

Now it would be so wise...I know that the majority of people won't do it. I wish they would. But it would be so wise for people who are really interested, really interested in things pertaining to God. Are you interested in things pertaining to God? Well, if you are and if you are interested in eternal life it would be wise for you to study, diligently study the life and faith of Abraham. Do you know why? Well, there are several reasons. First of all, throughout the New Testament Abraham is held up as a picture, a pattern of true faith. That's right. Anyone who knows anything about the Bible will agree with what I am saying. Abraham over and over and over and over again is held up in the New Testament as the pattern of those who believe, the type of those who believe.

In fact, the whole fourth chapter of Romans, this entire chapter that we have before us deals with his faith, with his faith, with Abraham's faith. Now it would be wise to study the faith, the life and faith of a man who is the pattern, whom God called the pattern, whom God called the Father of the faithful. That's right. All who believe in Christ, secondly, are called children of Abraham. Yes, we are sons of God, but here in the Scriptures we are called children of Abraham.

Galatians 3:7 says this. "They which are of faith are the children of Abraham." He says that two or three times, two or three times. We are children of Abraham. He is the father of the faithful.

Wouldn't it be wise to study the life and faith of a man whom God calls, whom God calls under divine inspiration, leads his men to right. He is the father of the faithful. And then, thirdly, watch this. You know, the Bible talks about the love of David. David's heart beat

with the heart of God. In fact, God called David, "A man after my own heart," twice in the Scriptures.

Well, do you know what he called Abraham? In Isaiah 41:8 he says, "Abraham is my friend." Think about that. God almighty in Isaiah 41:8 says, "Abraham is my friend, the friend of God."

I tell you, if I am going to read anybody's biography I am certainly challenged to read the biography of this man, the life and faith of this man. Doesn't that give you a desire to find out something about this man who is a pattern of believers, who is the father of believers, who is the friend of God almighty?

Well, what is said about this man? Well, in Romans four right here before us there are four statements, four statements which describe his faith, the faith of Abraham. There are four statements. This helped me a great deal. I hope it is helpful to you.

In Romans four verse 20 it says concerning Abraham, "He staggered not at the promises of God." You know, when a heavy blow comes against a man he staggers or if you were to say to a man, "You owe the government four million dollars," that is staggering, just staggering.

But the great promises of God, the indescribable, unspeakable promises, the wonderful promises of God, when they were made to Abraham didn't shock him, didn't stagger him. It didn't surprise him. You know why? He believed God. Nothing too hard for God. That was Abraham's faith, nothing, nothing, nothing too hard for God.

God says, "I will give you a land. I will give you a city. I will give you an eternal abode." Here is a sojourner, a pilgrim wandering in the wilderness, didn't own a foot of land and God says, "I am going to give you a kingdom." That didn't stagger him.

God says...took him out one time and said, "Look up at the stars, Abraham, count them."

"Why I can't count the stars."

"Well, that's how many seed you will have."

He didn't even have a son. Ninety years old and he didn't even have a son. And God took him out one night and told him to look at the stars and count them or the sands of the seashore and he said, "That's how many seed you will have."

That didn't stagger him.

He believed God. God told him, he said, "I'll give you a son, Abraham."

Abraham was nearly 100 and his wife was 90, past the age of bearing children. That didn't stagger him. He said, "I'll come, Abraham. And Sarah will conceive and bear a son."

That didn't rock him.

He said, "I will provide for you."

You see, Abraham believed God and he was not staggered by these great promises. What about you? Do God's promises stagger you? I am not talking about healing your broken arm. I am talking about the promises of a city. I am talking about the promises of resurrection. I am talking about the promises of holiness. I am talking about the promises of eternal life. I am talking about the promises of forgiven sin. I am talking about an everlasting kingdom and glory throughout eternity with the Lord Jesus Christ, an eternal city. Abraham didn't look for a place to live down here on the earth, he lived in a tent. That satisfied him altogether. He looked for a city whose builder and maker is God.

Does that stagger you, that God could by the blood of his Son put away all your sins by the obedience of his Son give you a perfect holiness, by the resurrection of his Son raise your vile body and make it like unto his glorious body and give you everlasting life? Does that stagger you?

It didn't Abraham. He believed God.

The second thing about his faith was in verse 20 also of Romans four. It says, "But he was strong in faith, strong in faith." This means that his faith was not just on paper. That's where you find most people's so called faith on paper. They subscribe to a creed, to a denominational dogma, to a theological theory. It is head faith. But not Abraham. He so believed God he acted on his faith. He acted. His works and his actions, James says, proved he believed God. He was justified by works.

What does that mean? I thought he was justified by faith.

His soul is justified by faith. His faith is justified by works. His soul is justified before God by the obedience and life and death of the Son of God, but his faith is justified before men by his works.

God said, "Get out of your father's house and go to a land I'll show you. And he left not knowing where he was going.

How do I know Abraham believed God? He acted on the Word of God.

God told him. He said, "I will give you a son." And he believed God.

God said, "I will provide for you in the desert."

So Abraham turned down a fortune. The kinds of Sodom offered him a fortune and he wouldn't take a shoe latchet form them. He said, "I have lifted my hand to God and I believe God." And God provided. God made him wealthy.

He gave Lot the best land. He didn't hesitate because he believed God. And he had a son called Ishmael. You know the story. I don't have to go into that. But God told him to send Ishmael away. And he sent him away. He put him...he put a bottle of water on his shoulders and sent him out into the desert. Do you know why? God told him. He said, "Ishmael will also be a great nation. I will take care of Ishmael." And Abraham believed God and he acted on it. He sent him away.

And then Isaac was born and God told Abraham to take Isaac up on the mountain and sacrifice him. He believed God.

Now let me tell you something. I have heard these divine healers tell people, diabetics and cancer patients and so forth, "If you believe God, you don't have to take your medicine. You don't have to take your insulin. You don't have to take this, that or the other thing."

You wait a minute. Every act of faith when Abraham believed God was based on the Word of God, on the Word of God. And you can't find in the Word of God where it says, "Don't take your medicine." You can't find in the Word of God where it says, "Don't take a blood transfusion or don't take your child to the doctor."

If you get a direct word from God then you obey the Word of God. But don't you obey your imagination and don't you obey some preacher that is trying to pad his pockets and build another building and gain some more fame and then give a rip what happens to you. Do you hear what I am saying?

Abraham believed God. And he got his Word from God and he got his orders from God and he got his direction from the Word of God, not from some lame brain preacher. And there are so many of them now 95% of them and I am weary of it. And I am old enough to say these things.

He believed God. He believed God. He acted on the Word of God. Abraham acted on the Word of God. His faith wasn't in theory. It wasn't in...on paper. It wasn't just in his head. He believed God. And when God told him to do something he did it. And that proved he believed God. Do you see what I am saying?

And then, thirdly, here is a third mark of Abraham's faith, verse 20. He gave glory to God. He gave the glory to God. Abraham never praised himself. Abraham never left his name on a monument. He never praised himself. He never took any glory to himself. He gave all the glory to God. A man can receive nothing except it be given him from above. Abraham knew that. He gave the glory to God. He believed God. He wasn't staggered at the promises of God, but they were God's promises, not his. He acted on the Word of God, but it was the Word of God. It wasn't his Word. He had nothing to brag

about. He found grace in the eyes of the Lord. Everything he had God gave him. Everything he knew God taught him. We don't praise ourselves.

Who maketh you to differ? Have you got strength? Well, don't glory in your strength. Glory in God who gave it to you. Have you got wisdom? Some people are smarter than others. All men aren't created exactly equal. Some folks are smarter than others. There's Einsteins and geniuses everywhere. Or if you are smart, give God the glory. He made you smart. Are you wealthy? Give God the glory. The Lord maketh poor and the Lord maketh rich. The Lord lifteth up and the Lord bringeth down. Give glory to God.

I tell you how Abraham's faith is summed up. He started up that mountain with Isaac to sacrifice Isaac. You remember the story? You remember it. And Isaac said, "Well, Father, here is the wood and here is the fire. Where is the lamb?"

Now here is Abraham's theology. Here is his faith. He just looked at that boy and he didn't go into any great details, any great explanation. He just said, "My son, God will provide." That's it. God will provide. God will provide. He gave the glory to God. He gave the glory to God.

And then, fourthly, watch this about Abraham's faith. Now I hope we are applying this to ourselves. The promises of God didn't stagger him. Nothing is too hard for God. Nothing is too hard for God. He was strong in faith. He acted. When God...when he got a word from God he acted. He did what God told him to do and he gave God the glory.

And then, fourthly, he was fully persuaded. I love that word. But he was fully persuaded. His brow wasn't furrowed by doubt. He didn't have any reserve over here to fall back on in case God didn't come through. He was fully persuaded, fully persuaded that what God promised, God was able to perform. Abraham was so confident, so certain, so positive that what God almighty said, God almighty was able to perform, what God said.

Here is four questions. I heard a preacher not very long ago, a young man from Iowa preached at our church and he asked four questions. He said, "Did God say it?" Now that is an important question. Did God say it? Man shall not live by bread alone but by the Word of God. Did God say it? Let's find out what God said, not what the pope said or what some preacher said. What did God say? What does he say in his Word? Did God say it?

Secondly: Can God do it? Can he do it? Can he redeem? Can he save? Can he forgive? Can he raise these vile bodies? Can he make us whole? Can he give us life? Can he?

The third question. Will he? Will God do it? Is God willing? Is God able? Is God willing?

Now the fourth question. Do you believe him? Abraham did. He was fully persuaded. In fact, one preacher I know used to say he put all his eggs in one basket, all of them, all his hope in one person, his Lord.

And the Scriptures declare—now you listen to this—the Scriptures declare that by this faith, by this kind of faith Abraham was justified, justified before God. Abraham was a sinner just like you and just like me. He was a man. He wasn't some extraordinary person, you know, some...some holy thing. Abraham was a man. He was a man. He lied one time to a king. Sarah was a beautiful woman. He was going through the country. His faith had some lapses. He didn't have perfect faith. There is no such thing as perfect faith on this earth. But he believed God.

But he had his times of trouble, his struggles and times of difficulty. Abraham one time a king wanted Sarah. She was a beautiful woman. Abraham said, "Well, she is my sister." He lied to him. He did that twice. And on another occasion when...when God promised that Isaac would be born, well, Sarah came and said, "Well, it looks like we are not going to have a son. The years passed." You see, God will try us. He will try our faith and he will try it a lot of times with time.

You see, we are always in a hurry. We want everything yesterday. That's what's wrong. We want everything now, now, now, right now. But God says wait on the Lord, wait on the Lord. How wise a person is to learn to wait on God. These mistakes I have ever made have always been made in a hurry. The decision that wrecked and ruined me I made in a hurry. If we could just learn to wait on God.

And as Sarah came to him and said, "This looks like the years are going by. It's going to be too late, now." And so Abraham went into the handmaid and had a baby that God had so send away.

See I am not lifting this man up as a perfect man. He is perfect in Christ. But he believed God.

The Scriptures declare that by this faith in God, this faith, he believed God. He was justified and declared righteous, holy before God. He was called the friend of God, the friend of God. He believed God. God, I believe.

Now this is important. Look, if you still have your Bible open to Romans four look down at verse 22. It says, "Abraham believed God and this faith was imputed to him, counted to him for holiness." It just is a matter between him and God.

There's too many between you and God, friend. You don't need to go down and shake that preacher's hand or go to counselor or a soul winner or an inquiry room. How about doing business with God? That's where the mercy is. That's where the fountain of grace is. That is where the forgiveness is. And Abraham dealt with God. And he believed God.

Now this wasn't written. It was counted to him for holiness, for righteousness. God accepted him on the basis of his faith. That was the only way he could come. He didn't have any works. He didn't have any goodness. He didn't have any morality that God

could accept. But God can accept you on the basis of faith because that faith is in his Son.

Now he said, "This was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him for righteousness, but for us also, for you and me to whom this righteousness shall be imputed. The same righteousness Abraham had, the same relationship with God. I can be a friend of God if I can believe like Abraham believed. Why not? Why not?"

This was written for us also to whom righteousness shall be imputed if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead. Do you believe? The faith of Abraham is the same kind of faith that you and I have. It is the faith of all of God's people. That is why we are called children of Abraham because it is the same faith.

"But, preacher, can you give us what you believe to be the secret of Abraham's faith?"

There has to be...now here is a man that believed God. He believed God. Most people don't or they believe in God or they believe there is a God. The devil believes there is a God. In fact, he is quite sure of it. But there has to be a reason for such assurance. There has to be a reason for such confidence, such great faith. On what basis did Abraham believe God?

Well, yeah, I can answer that. I can tell you. Our Lord tells us in John 8:56. Listen. "Your Father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, my day, the day of the Redeemer. He saw it and he was glad."

Oh, Abraham, the sinner believed God the holy one could accept him because he saw the Savior. He saw the Redeemer. Abraham believed that the holy God could forgive his sins and make him righteous and take him to glory because a Redeemer, a Substitute, a Savior whose day he saw fulfilled all that God required for him. That's it. That's it right there. Abraham saw all the promises of God toward him and his seed fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ.

That's right.

Listen to Galatians 3:16, listen. "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. Listen. He did not say unto seeds as of many, but seed as of one and that to thy seed which is Christ."

The promise was made to Abraham in Christ, through Christ. The promises were made to Abraham of life, of joy, of a city, of hope, of glory, not on the basis of what Abraham did, but what his seed, his Savior did for him.

Our Lord said, "Abraham rejoiced to see my day."

"When did he see the day of Christ, preacher?"

When he stood there and watched Sarah give birth to that boy, that miracle child Isaac, Sarah was 90 some odd years old and gave birth to that child. That is a miracle child. That is a miracle of God. And Abraham right then saw the miracle birth, the virgin birth of Christ Jesus.

And then when he took Isaac up on the mountain and put him on the altar to sacrifice him as God had commanded him and the Lord told him to look over there and in the thicket there was a ram caught. And he took Isaac off the alter and put the ram in Isaac's place. He saw Christ our substitute.

And then when he cut the throat of that ram and the blood ran out over the altar before God, the cleansing blood he saw Christ on the cross.

He saw my day. He rejoiced to see my day. He saw it and was glad. That's...I am not telling you that you are going to have any confidence and assurance and certainty of your relationship with God by anything you find in yourself or in your church or in your duties or in your religion or in your doings. But if you can see, if you can see... He that seeth the Son and believeth on him hath everlasting life.

And Christ said, "Abraham saw, saw my day. He saw Immanuel incarnate. He saw the righteous Redeemer. He saw the bloody sacrifice. He saw the risen justifier.

Can you see him? If you can see his day, if you can see by faith...I am not talking about these eyes. Don't ask God for a vision. Wasting your time. He has spoken to us by his Son.

See, was the faith of all Old Testament believers based. It was based on Christ.

Job said, "I know my Redeemer liveth. Moses said God will raise up that prophet like unto me.

David said, "The Lord said unto my Lord sit thou on my right hand.

Isaiah wrote, "Unto us a child is born, a Son is given. His name is called wonderful."

And Jeremiah said, "He is the Lord, our righteousness."

That was Abraham's faith. He saw Christ. "He saw my day."

And I will tell you. I can rest not on my...I don't know what is going to happen tomorrow, not on my strength, not on my works. The are filthy rags. But I can look and see him, the perfect Savior and I can say, "God, be merciful to me, be propitiatory in Christ toward this sinner."

All right, now if you want these messages, this one, "Abraham Believed God" and the one I brought last week. I preached last work on "Faith worketh by Love." These are two

messages on faith I would like for you to have. "Faith worketh by Love" and "Abraham believed God." Both messages on one tape. We will send them to you for what...less than what it costs us to produce them, two dollars. Here is the address. Until next week. God bless you everyone.