

Faith Described and Applied ***Romans 4:18-25***

INTRO:

Paul told us how righteousness by faith and apart from works was found in the Old Testament. He showed us that righteousness by faith in Abraham and David. Now Paul wants to teach us something about believing God. He describes Abraham's faith and then applies it to us.

I. Abraham's Faith Overcame Circumstances (v. 18, 19)

II. How This Applies to Us (v. 23-25)

I. Abraham's Faith Overcame Circumstances (v. 18, 19)

Romans 4:18-19 *“Who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, ‘So shall your descendants be.’ And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah’s womb.”*

A. Abraham's faith had to be faith in the person of God alone and be rooted in His Word alone because the circumstances were totally against God's promise coming true. Paul underlined this by describing Abraham's faith in such an amazing way in **verse 18**. ***“[Abraham] contrary to hope, in hope believed.”***

1. The phrase, ***“contrary to hope”*** looks ahead in this text to the difficulty Abraham faced.

2. Abraham and Sarah were married a long time and they had no children, let alone a male heir. Further complicating matters, the Scripture delicately puts it, ***“it had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women.”*** Child birth was physically impossible for Sarah. As we consider hope in the human sense with Abraham and Sarah was it possible to have a child? A doctor would have said to them. "It is beyond hope, you better adopt!" In spite of the fact that all the odds and circumstances were against him, Abraham still believed God.

3. Do we believe like Abraham did? Do we believe even when the circumstances seem to tell us there is no hope that God will do what He said? I know I have given up hope a lot sooner in the game than Abraham did. Let us remember Abraham and NOT let the circumstances of life shake our faith.

B. It does not say just that Abraham believed ***“contrary to hope,”*** but also ***“in hope.”***

1. These two words speak of the calculation of faith. Abraham considered the omnipotence of God who gives life to the dead and who calls things that are not as if they are, and he chose to believe God rather than the circumstances.

2. This is like the situation in **John 6** by the Sea of Galilee, when Jesus was surrounded by the crowd who came to Him. He challenged Philip's thinking in vs.5-6 ***“Then Jesus lifted up His eyes, and seeing a great multitude coming toward Him, He said to Philip, ‘Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?’ But this He said to test him, for He Himself knew what He would do.”***

What a marvelous statement, ***“for He Himself knew what He would do.”*** So here is the test, where are we going to get the resources, Philip, to meet this incredible need? Philip pulled his Sony solar calculator out of his tunic and begins to make computations. Here is his conclusions based on their physical resources against such a need.

v.7 ***“Philip answered Him, ‘Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them that every one of them may have a little.’”***

We have no hope of ever meeting this need, Lord. It is an impossibility. It was beyond hope.

3. Then Andrew comes on the scene with a little boy who is willing to share his lunch, and the Savior takes the little given and multiplies it to do the impossible. It was not beyond hope for the Savior. There was every reason to have hope that He would do what was required!

4. Abraham believed in spite of the overwhelming circumstances because he had hope, a certainty. He knew what God said he would do, He both could and would do! As the Writer of Hebrews said,

Hebrews 11:1 *“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”*

Abraham believed in the substance of God's promise and God did exactly what He promised He would do.

C. What was the result of Abraham's faith?

vs.20-22 ***“He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. And therefore *“It was accounted to him for righteousness.”****

While Abraham did not waver at the promise, Paul did not claim Abraham did not entertain fleeting doubts. We see those doubts in the record in **Genesis**. What Paul meant was that Abraham refused to dwell on these passing doubts but kept reminding himself of the promise God made and anchored his faith on that promise.

II. How This Applied to Us (v. 23-25)

Romans 4:23-25 *“Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up*

Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.”

A. While we are saved in the same way that Abraham is, by faith, the content of our faith is different than his.

B. The object of our faith again is God, but it is God the Father Who sent His Son the Lord Jesus Christ into the world to die on the cross for sin, and Who raised Him from the dead. We too have to believe something that is impossible with man but only possible with God.

C. He was delivered up in order to atone for our offenses. And He arose to guarantee our justification. His resurrection shows that the sacrifice was accepted by God.

Hebrews 9:25-26 “Not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another—He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.”

Let's think about our faith?

Faith has to have an object. The Object is God Himself.

Fait must know God well enough to trust Him even when we do not know what He is doing.

Many times, faith must be anchored in the Lord despite the circumstances around us.

Faith believes God is able to help us.

Faith believes He is willing to help.

But if God has a different plan, faith lets God be God.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy and shall break
In blessings on your head.
Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust Him for His grace;
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face.

Hymn #347 ***Be Still My Soul***