

The Nature of Faith

Romans 4:18-25 **In hope he believed against hope**, that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, "So shall your offspring be." 19 **He did not weaken in faith** when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. 20 **No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, 21 fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised.** 22 That is **why** his faith was "**counted to him as righteousness.**" 23 But the words "**it was counted to him**" were not written for **his sake** alone, 24 but for **ours** also. It **will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, 25 who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.**

❖ Intro: Very Brief....

- **These words are written for our benefit**
- 23 But the words "**it was counted to him**" were not written for **his sake** alone, 24 but for **ours** also.

❖ Outline

- **The Story of Abraham:**
- **Abraham: The Historical Illustration of Faith**
- **1) He Believed**
- **2) His Faith did not Weaken**
- **3) He did not Waver**
- **4) His Faith Glorified God**
- **5) His Faith Was Counted to Him as Righteousness**
- **6) We Must Mimic the Faith of Abraham**

❖ The Story of Abraham:

- **Haran is where God calls Abram out of the land of his family and Father....**
 - Genesis 12:1-4 Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. ² And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." ⁴ So Abram went, as the Lord had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.
- **Abraham is given a child around the age of 100**
- **His Faith is seen perfectly when God tells Abraham to offer up his only son as a sacrifice**
 - Genesis 22:1-2 After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." ² He said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you."

❖ Abraham: The Historical Illustration of Faith

- **In the same way that we would use an analogy to explain an idea or thing**
 - God uses People in history to illustrate to humanity how He Works
 - God uses people like Abraham to explain and to foreshadow many marvelous things
- **In the Story of Abraham:**
 - **God Illustrates to mankind how they can be right with God**
 - **He shows them His creative power and His resurrection power**
 - By bringing Isaac from a dead womb and dead seed
 - **He shows His promises are by Grace**
 - By calling Abraham and swearing by his own name

- He was good to Abraham separate from Abraham's works
- **He foreshadows His plan of salvation**
 - By commanding Abraham to sacrifice his only son
 - Only to stop him... and then provide a ram to be sacrificed
 - Which is another foreshadow of what would happen to the Son of God
- **In the Story of Abraham**
 - God wants us to see how it was that Abraham was made right with God
 - Abraham is your example here today of how to be saved...
- ❖ **1) He Believed**
 - **In hope he believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, "So shall your offspring be."**
 - He believed what God told him
- ❖ **2) His Faith did not Weaken**
 - **19 He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb.**
 - **Even though it seemed impossible...**
 - He did not look at his old body or his wife's old body and doubt God would do it
 - His faith was in God to do the impossible
- ❖ **3) He did not Waver**
 - **20 No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God**
 - **No unbelief made him waver...**
 - Waver here means... to pause or hold back in uncertainty
 - There is the meaning of let me evaluate this really carefully
 - **Unbelief is such a serious sin toward God...**
 - Unbelief is very offensive toward God
 - When men do not believe God... who is infinitely trustworthy God is dishonored
- ❖ **4) His Faith Glorified God**
 - **but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, 21 fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised**
 - **He Gave Glory to God...**
 - **What does it mean to give glory to God...?**
 - In short: It is to live in such a way that makes God look good
 - By living in such a way as to display God as glorious...
 - You can not add to God's glory
 - ◆ but you can reflect it and you can proclaim it and you can illustrate it
 - **We Throw this phrase out there willy nilly don't we...**
 - Oh... I just want to glorify God with my life
 - Let's honor God... I want to bring glory to God...
 - For many of us it is nothing more than a hollow vain repetitious babble
 - **Prime Examples:**
 - **Oh, let me honor God with my mouth**
 - Yet we spill out curses and gossip while holding our tongue when we should witness
 - **Oh, let me glorify God with my body**
 - Yet we use our eyes for lusting and coveting

- We use our hands to take or harm or binge
- **Oh, let me glorify God with my finances**
 - Yet we hold on to our money... we say God understands...
 - We keep it for ourselves... the small amount of 10% is too much
 - But... oh how I love to glorify God!
- **Oh, let me glorify God with my time**
 - Yet we either work too much, or work too little, or play too much
 - We don't give our time to the Lord as we ought
 - ◆ God is honored when we work, rest, play, spend time with family or serving church...
 - ◆ But we like to do with our time as we please
- **Oh, let me glorify God with my thoughts**
 - Yet our thoughts are on everything but God
 - His Word rarely crosses through the canals of our brains
- **Oh, let me glorify God by suffering or waiting and hoping**
 - Yet, we cower at persecution... we throw pity parties
 - We do not endure
 - We won't wait for the promises of God... we want it now
- **Jesus Says:**
 - **Matthew 15:8 This people honor me with their lips, but their heart is far from me**
- **He (Abraham) Gave Glory to God**
 - Notice what is being said here about how Abraham glorified God
 - As He gave glory to God.... He grew strong in his faith...
 - He is giving glory to God... His faith is growing strong
 - How is He giving glory to God? Notice the phrase immediately following:
 - **fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised**
- **Abraham was fully convinced that God would do what He promised**
 - Fully Convinced...
- **When you are fully convinced by God**
 - This brings glory to God
 - This is what faith is... being convinced by God
 - Faith is believing... but here is the intensity of the believing...
 - Being fully convinced
- **Illustration:**
 - I taught my kiddos to swim...
 - **I would tell them... jump to daddy... when they stood there scared**
 - They showed they were not convinced I would catch them..
 - **I would say... let go of the side and swim to me....**
 - I will get you... I will not let you go under... I won't let you drown
 - When they would hesitate it showed their lack of trust in me...
 - **I would say... keep swimming... as I backed away from them...**
 - I knew they were doing good... but they didn't...
 - And they only saw the possible dangers around them...
 - They sometimes didn't see their loving father
 - ◆ Standing there ready to grab them if they were ever in any real danger
 - ◆ I would let them struggle and fight and kick so they would grow...
 - ◆ But I was always right there ready to grab their hands...
 - **When they would jump to me without hesitation.... They honored me**
 - When they let go and swam, they honored me

- When they kept kicking unafraid of the dangers, they honored me...
 - **When we let go of our hesitations and trust God... this honors God...**
 - This glorifies God...
 - **This is the substance of Abraham's Faith...**
 - He was fully convinced that God would do as He promised
 - And this glorified God
 - **God has done something similar with us O People...**
 - God has promised us eternal life through His son Jesus Christ
 - God has said... Repent and Believe...
 - God has said... Follow me...
 - God has said... leave this world behind and follow me...
 - God has said leave the pleasures of sin behind and follow me
 - God has said be my disciple...
 - Jesus has called you to live for Him
 - **Will you Follow like Abraham?**
 - Are you fully convinced in the promises of God?
 - Are you willing to devote your life fully to the Lord Jesus Christ?
 - **Don't just talk about glorifying God.... Glorifying Him by following Him...**
 - Abraham's faith brought glory to God....
 - There is another thing we see in the text that Abraham's faith did
- ❖ **5) His Faith Was Counted to Him as Righteousness**
- **22 That is why his faith was "counted to him as righteousness." 23 But the words "it was counted to him" were not written for his sake alone, 24 but for ours also.**
 - **Faith credits the person of faith with righteousness in the eyes of God**
 - This is what Paul is trying to prove...
 - It was not Abraham's works... rather, it was simply His faith....
 - We have discussed this at great length at the beginning of chapter 4...
 - But let me recap it...
 - **Your Account credited as Righteous...**
 - Books against you... your account filled with sin...
 - Jesus offers Himself up for man...
 - And those who trust... those who believe...
 - They are justified... legally declared righteous in the eyes of almighty God...
 - What an unbelievable truth ... what an amazing blessing...
 - Justified is to be counted as righteous...
 - **Look at the text...**
 - That is why his faith was "counted to him as righteous"
 - That is why... What is why?
 - Look back at verse 21... do you see it?
 - **21 fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised.**
 - Abraham was counted as righteous because He was fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised...
 - Now... this message here in Romans 4 is written especially to you today...
 - **This is written not just in regards to Abraham...**
 - But also for our sake...
 - Paul says... this is written for your sake...
 - For your benefit...

- **God is saying... Listen men and women of Hope Church...**
 - I am offering you eternal life through my Son Jesus Christ...
 - But, you must forsake your life and follow me
 - You must leave your life of sin and give your life to me...
 - And I will raise it... I will raise your life after death
 - I will, starting today, fill you with me spirit and give you eternal life...
- **These words are written for your sake...**
 - You can here these words and heed them... or you can disregard them...
 - But, they are written for you...
- **What about those of you who sit here and say... Well, I already believe God**
 - This does not apply to me...
 - I would say look again
- **Paul is writing to a church full of people that already have faith...**
 - This is an opportunity for you to renew your faith
 - This is a time for you to examine your faith
 - Take these words and let them remind you of the gospel that was preached to you previously
- **These Words are written for your benefit...**
 - There is a reminder of what God has done for you...
 - So, you can exult in God... and you can tell others...
 - Look to the last few verses and our last point today...

❖ 6) We Must Mimic the Faith of Abraham

- **24 but for ours also. It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, 25 who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.**
- **There are a number of things going on in this particular verse:**
 - **First: We see that we too can be counted as righteous...**
 - If we can see three things...
 - Even though we may not see them clearly or perfectly
 - We must believe them
 - 1) We see the **object** of our belief
 - 2) We see the **actions** of the object of our belief
 - 3) We see **what** the object of our belief **accomplished** by His actions
 - Can you see that in the text... look closely...
 - Let me just run through the text quickly and then explain it...
- **First: We can be like Abraham in being credited as righteous...**
 - **What must we do to be counted as righteous:**
 - **Vs24: It will be counted to us who believe in him**
 - Us who believe
 - What is our belief in?
- **1) We see the object of our belief**
 - **in him who raised from the dead Jesus**
 - M
- **2) We see the actions of the object of our belief**
 - **raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, 25 who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.**
 - Delivered
 - Raised
- **3) We see what the object of our belief accomplished by His actions**

- raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, 25 who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.
- Trespasses Covered
- Justification Accomplished

- **Remember First: We can be like Abraham in being credited as righteous...**
 - **What must we do to be counted as righteous:**
 - Vs24: It will be counted to us who believe in him
- **1) We see the object of our belief**
 - in him who raised from the dead Jesus
 - **God is the object of our belief...**
 - We believe in God who raised from the dead Jesus...
 - We believe in His power... we believe in His plan...
 - We trust the God of the Bible...
 - He is saying... jump to me... and I will catch you...
 - **The God who made Adam and Eve**
 - Allowed them to sin... then removed them from paradise
 - The God who chose a nation of people to show the world what He is like
 - The God who then sent His one and only Son to be sacrificed
 - ◆ for this sins of the Adams and Eves of this earth...
 - So... we see and believe in the object of our belief... then...
- **2) We see the actions of the object of our belief**
 - raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, 25 who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.
 - **What did God do?**
 - **He Delivered Jesus up to be crucified**
 - Romans 3:25 whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith.
 - ◆ God the father delivered God the Son... He put Him forward to die
 - Isaiah 53:10 Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him; he has put him to grief;
 - ◆ This was no accident... this was planned from the beginning...
 - ◆ The scriptures teach this was planned before God even created man...
 - ◆ It was the will of God...
 - ◆ Jesus even prayed: Father let this cup pass... but He wanted to follow the Fathers will
 - **That was not the end of it...**
 - ◆ He was delivered up to be beaten and crucified...
 - ◆ The plan did not end there...
 - **He Raised Jesus up from the dead**
 - Acts 2:24 God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.
 - Death could not hold the Son of God...
 - It was impossible... Jesus had paid for sins...
 - Death could not hold Him because He had no sin, although all sin was laid on Him...
 - In death, He satisfied the wrath of God toward men who would believe...
- **3) We see what the object of our belief accomplished by His actions**
 - raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, 25 who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.
 - **Trespasses Covered**

- Jesus died because we sinned... His death was because of our sins...
- Let us not think our sins are harmless... they are not...
- Our sins nailed Jesus to the cross...
- **Trespasses Covers...**
 - He was delivered for our trespasses... for our sins...
 - But, this means... that Jesus being delivered also means we are covered...
 - Remember Paul quoting David in Romans 4
 - ◆ **Romans 4:7-8** ⁷“Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; ⁸blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin.”
 - ◆ Forgiven, covered and not counted...
 - ◆ Praise God...
 - Also... we see...
- **Justification Accomplished**
 - **“raised for our justification”**
 - **Justification means we are legally declared righteous**
 - ◆ But how is it that we are declared righteous...
 - ◆ Well... we know it is because of our faith in Jesus Christ Right?
 - ◆ Jesus is who we trust in for our justification...
 - **But, there must be some sort of substance to the object of our faith...**
 - ◆ There must be something about Him that makes it possible for God to declare us innocent
 - **When God considers those who have faith in Jesus...**
 - ◆ He considers the work of His Son...
 - ◆ If Jesus had not been raised... we would not have been found innocent...
 - **Jesus was raised for our justification...**
 - ◆ His resurrection solidifies our being declared righteous...
 - ◆ His resurrection puts the final stamp of accomplished on His Work...
 - ◆ His resurrection says... I have done it... I had the power to do it...
 - **Because Jesus was raised and did not remain dead...**
 - ◆ We can have our sins forgiven, covered, not counted...
 - **The resurrection shows that Jesus sacrifice was acceptable to God...**
 - ◆ It satisfied His wrath against us sinners who believe...

❖ Invitation

- Are you Ready to Mimic the Faith of Abraham?
- Not all faith is the same... some is stronger and some is weaker...
 - And we grow in it as we grow in God...
- But... you must believe... even as a child