

Romans 4:13-25

“An extraordinary God waiting to do the impossible for the unworthy”

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I. Intro

Paul has paraded before us Abraham and David as witnesses that God grants by unmerited favor, self-worth, and value apart from works. What makes Abraham all the more remarkable as an example of a man of faith is what he didn't have:

- *A Bible to read, he only had God's word hidden in his heart*
- *Other believers cheering him own in his trust, he was alone*
- *A record of folks who blazed the trail before him; he was blazing the trail for us*

Yet with that said Abraham was more a person of faith without all the things we now have than we are. Faith reasons from God and His word instead of from self and circumstances; it is God's ability that is the foundation to faith's stability.

II. Vs. 13-16 No Hassel, faith

Vs. 13-15 In these verses Paul make two points:

1. Vs. 13-14 That all of God's dealings with Abraham happened (*according to Galatians 3:17-18*) 430 years before the law was given. Based on this Paul tells us that faith is not about trying to live up to a standard. Faith does not expect God to accept and love us because we have tried our best.
2. Vs. 15 Paul's second point is that, works as a basis of self-worth requires us to do something that we can't. You may say, “*Pastor, I'll give you a million dollars if right now you fly around the room!*” It isn't a problem of the reward it is a problem of the request as you would be asking me to do something that is impossible for me to do. The law asks

us in our own natural abilities to LOVE God and my fellow man all the time perfectly. If I can't love people who love me how am I going to be able to always love those who don't love me? Therefore, the law is worthless for obtaining the promise.

Vs. 16 We are not saved by faith, we are saved by God's grace, and grace is appropriated by faith. Grace cannot be obtained through works, whether they be past, present, or promised. If works was the basis of our salvation, then our salvation would depend on our performance, and no one can keep the law good enough to be saved by it and as such would never be certain they are saved at any given moment. With our Salvation:

- **The Father thought it**
- **The Son bought it**
- **The Spirit taught it**
- **The Bible brought it**
- **Satan fought it**
- **By God's grace we got it**

The word "all" in the Greek means "ALL" which includes you and me! I can't stand all the promises made by some companies that come with restrictions. I booked a flight with flight miles from "*The No Hassel*" card. After I booked it I realized that it came with all these restrictions and hassles. The poor fellow on the other end of the phone had to read the list of "*Hassles*" from the no Hassel list of restrictions.

III. Vs. 16-20a Two things to remember about faith

Vs. 17 Notice the tense of this verse as Paul quotes God as telling Abraham, "*I have made you a father of many nations.*" Not "*will make*" but "*have made*" **yet in reality it hadn't happened yet.** God speaks of His promises towards us as if they had already happened even though we haven't seen them yet and He does this so that we will know the certainty of the things He has

promised. “*God calls those things which do not exist as though they did!*” Think through the implications of this truth as God declares us as already glorified which frees us up to see ourselves in His glorious work and not in our failure. Paul in Philip. 1:6 says, “*being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ*”. Based upon verses 19-21 we see that **Abraham did four things with his faith:**

1. Vs. 19 **He didn't look at his limitations:** At 86 years of age Abraham received the promise and 14 years later at 100 he still believed that God could do what He said He was going to do and give them a child. *Reproductively* his body was dead, *physiologically* Sarah was barren her whole life, but Abraham chose to not look at his situation instead he trusted God to be faithful to keep His word. **There may be a gap between the promise of God and the performance of God; it's there to prepare you for the presence of God!** Don't allow the limitations to blind you to the One who is limitless.
2. Vs. 20 **He didn't lower his expectations:** Abraham's original name Abram meant “*Exalted Father*” and we can only imagine the taunts that he and Sarah had to endure being without child for 100 years. But at 100 years of age God changed his name to Abraham “*Father of many nations*” and Abraham still believed even though he hadn't held one child in his arms.
3. Vs. 20b **He gave God adulation:** He gave God glory before he received the promise not just after. Oh, what confidence in God when we give Him the glory before we have received the promise. **Doubt will have no place to lodge when you fill the rooms of your heart with praise before you receive what God has promised you!**
4. Vs. 21 **He handed God the situation:** Abraham knew that if God promised him that it was up to God to fulfill what He had promised. He didn't try to figure out what, how or

when God was going to do what He had promised. And even when Abraham staggered in his trust as Sarah said, “*Honey, I’m 76 and barren we are going to have to help God out!*” Even though they had “*flawed faith*” God had “*flawless faithfulness*” and kept His promise even though Abraham and Sarah couldn’t keep their eyes on Him.

Paul gives us **three things about our faith**:

1. **Object**: Vs. 17b Paul says that the object of our faith must be the God of Abraham. **The truth is the quality of your faith is only as good as the object is has placed its trust in!**

The amount of faith or trust I have in something is not the determining factor that is why Jesus said that all we needed is to have faith the size of a mustard seed to move mountains. *We shouldn’t emphasize the amount of our faith rather we should emphasize the object of our faith Jesus Christ.* The question isn’t how little or large our faith is, the question is how little or large our God is! There were two things that helped Abraham in this with regards to trusting God:

- a. **It is God who gives life**: Abraham realized that the object of his faith was in God who makes dead things live. He alone can make those things that once lived and function but are now broke start to work as they were designed to do. We all have some areas in your life that just doesn’t function, it’s broke and you are hopeless that it ever will be the way it once was? Put your trust in the One that makes broke and ruined things work as they were designed.
- b. **It is God who calls those things which do not exist as though they did**: You may say, “*Pastor this area of my life has never worked, it’s not **DIS-FUNCTIONAL** it’s **NON-FUNCTIONAL**.*” No worries my friend, God calls those things which do not exist as though they did as we read in the 1st chapter of Genesis “*Let there be!*”

2. **Obstacles**: Next Paul speaks of the **obstacles of faith, and he mentions two polar opposites**:
- a. Vs. 18-19 **Hopeless Circumstances**: The hopeless circumstances Abraham had to battle were both His body and his wife's Sarah's body. At a 100 Abraham's body was sexually dead so there was no seed to fertilize Sarah's egg which was also dead, things couldn't get any worse from a human perspective. But God told Abraham that through this union there would come a SEED (Jesus) in whom all the world would be blessed. Abraham at 100 and Sarah at 90 without ever having a child but God was so certain in His promise to them that He said, *"I'm not only going to bless you I'm going to use your blessing to bless the world!"* Abraham didn't deny the human facts, but he didn't limit God who promised and instead of saying *"No way"* he said, *"I believe You!"*
- b. Vs. 20 **Staggering Possibilities**: Paul says that Abraham had to battle the *"It's too good to be true"* syndrome, which I think sometimes is harder than hopeless circumstances. Can you imagine Abraham coming in after his morning devotions to sit down for breakfast with Sarah, *"How was your time with the Lord this morning? She asked. Well babe it was amazing God spoke to me the most amazing promise; in fact, it's what we have waited for our whole lives! What are you mumbling about? We are going to have a baby, baby!"* Sarah laughed in unbelief. **Too good to be true!** Ah but in time when she began to put on a few pounds, began to feel that promised life to move inside her she began to believe that what God said He would do He had done.
3. **Objectives**: Vs. 20b-25 Saint's **the hardest thing God asks us to do is trust Him, keep trusting Him and live like you trust Him.** Paul speaks of four objectives of our faith!

- a. Vs. 20b **Faith grows**: Like Sarah you may have only a little seed of faith but as God begins to show us that He is going to do what He said He was our faith grows.
- b. Vs. 20c **Faith glorifies God**: Our trust in God's word grows so too will be attitude of gratitude. Faith always ends up in praise because we are never the object of our trust God is.
- c. Vs. 21 **Faith grounds us in His word**: Faith grasps God promises and continues to grow, and we become more grounded in our trust in His word instead of trying to do things to help God out.
- d. Vs. 23-25 **Faith gives**: That's the amazing thing about faith you just can't shut it up in a box as we are told the promises made to Abraham and Sarah sprung out and became our gift as well. God's declaring Abraham of worth and value apart from works is the same basis in which God declares us of worth and value.

We ought to be pretty exciting people to be around don't you think? Whenever there is a situation that is hopeless *or too good to be true* we ought to be right in there telling folks about our God who does the impossible.