

## **ABRAHAM'S FAITH** (Romans 4:9-25)

### **INTRODUCTION**

We are justified by faith. This is the message of Romans 3 and 4. Justification by faith has always been the way God has saved people and it always will. Paul is making this point in Romans 4:1-25. He uses the example of Abraham to show that God accounts persons righteous because of their faith.

We see that Paul brackets this entire chapter with the statements in verse 3 and verse 22. "**Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.**" Abraham becomes the great example of what it means to have justifying faith. In fact he is called the "**the father of all those who believe.**" (verse 11).

What is faith? Here is an acrostic that may help us remember. How do you spell faith? F – A – I – T – H

#### **“Forsaking all, I trust Him”**

As EE defines saving faith it is “Transferring your trust to Jesus Christ alone for eternal life.”

The Reformation had as one of its Solas – Sola Fide or by faith alone. Faith is critical for salvation. Faith is critical for justification. In this passage this morning it gives us the chief model for justifying faith and that model is Abraham.

What kind of faith did Abraham have that God would count it for righteousness? What kind of faith justifies?

Let's look at this chapter to see what kind of faith that Abraham had.

### **ABRAHAM'S FAITH BELIEVED IN THE RIGHT OBJECT**

First Abraham's faith is not just a general belief in God but faith in specific promises of God. His faith believed in the right object.

The word "promise" is prominent in this chapter. It is used several times.

**13 - "For the promise..." 14 - "and the promise..." 16 - "that the promise..." 20 - "at the promise..." 21 - "what He had promised..."**

Abraham's faith was based on specific promises from God. He believed that God would fulfill them. This is crucial to justifying faith. Justifying faith is trusting in specific promises of God.

*What makes the difference in our faith is not the amount of our faith but the object of our faith. This is a truism in many areas of life. I can believe in something, but if that something can't deliver, then my faith is in vain. When I go up a ladder to the roof of my house my faith is in that ladder. But if that ladder can't hold my weight or has something wrong with it, I am coming down. No matter how much faith I have in the ladder, if it is weak or broken, I'm going to be in trouble. The same is with justifying faith. It is not the amount of faith that makes the difference, but the object of faith.*

Justifying faith is not just a belief that God exists. Remember, James warns us that “the demons believe” and they tremble. (James 2:19). The demons are not justified! The demons are not saved, but that believe that God exists and that God is One. Justifying faith is more than just a bare belief in God.

The specific attributes of God Abraham's faith believed in can be summed up as it is in verse 17, “(as it is written, "I have made you a father of many nations") in the presence of Him whom he believed; God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did;”

Abraham believed that God could and would give life to the dead and that He called those things which do not exist as though they did.

God had promised Abraham that his descendants would be more numerous than the stars of heaven. (Genesis 15:4-6) And Abraham believed Him although Abraham didn't have any descendants at that time.

God had promised that He would make Abraham the ‘father of many nations.’ Abraham believed God although many nations from Abraham did not exist at that time.

God had promised Abraham that he would inherit the land he was walking on. Abraham believed God although he never owned any of the land all the days of his life, except for a small plot he bought to bury Sarah on.

Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Abraham had as the object of his faith God and his specific promises of giving life to the dead and calling those things which do not exist as though they did.

Does this describe your faith? Do you believe God's promises of eternal life and all the benefit of being a child of God? Do you have a faith grounded in God's promises. Or do you just have a general faith in God? Justifying faith has as its object the specific promises of God.

## **ABRAHAM'S FAITH WAS AN ACTIVE FAITH**

Next we see that Abraham's faith was an active faith.

When God first spoke to Abraham he was in the city of Ur of the Chaldees.

**(Gen 12:1-2 NKJV) Now the LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you. {2} I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing.**

Abraham obeyed God and followed Him to a new country. Abraham did not just talk about believing God, his faith caused him to follow God in terms of his promises. Abraham did not just study about God's promises he followed God.

*A man in New York City died at the age of 63 without ever having had a job. He spent his entire adult life in college. During those years he acquired so many academic degrees that they "looked like the alphabet" behind his name.*

*Why did this man spend his entire life in college? When he was a child, a wealthy relative died who had named him as a beneficiary in his will. It stated that he was to be given enough money for his own support every year as long as he stayed in school, and it was to be discontinued when he had completed his education.*

*The man met the terms of the will, but by remaining in school indefinitely. He turned a technicality into a steady income for life-- something his benefactor never intended. Unfortunately, he spent thousands of hours listening to professors and reading books but never "doing." He acquired more and more knowledge but didn't put it into practice.*

When we only listen to the promises of God, study the promises of God, hear sermons on the promises of God but never act on our faith and on the promises of God, we are doing the same thing. We are just trying to keep from living in the real world where God's intends us to live and we wall ourselves up studying or talking about faith. Justifying faith is an active faith.

## ABRAHAM'S FAITH WAS A TESTED FAITH

Next Abraham's faith was a tested faith. To have justifying faith doesn't mean that our faith is not tested. God tested Abraham's faith by waiting for 25 years before he gave him his son Isaac and then when Isaac was a young teen God asked Abraham to sacrifice Isaac. This was a test of Abraham's faith. Was it genuine or not.

At times Abraham seem to fail the test. When he went down to Egypt he had Sarah his wife tell a half-truth to save his life. He had her to say that she was his sister, not his wife. This was having a weakness of faith.

Abraham then offered an alternative to God when he thought it would be impossible for he and Sarah to have children. He wanted to take his servant Eliezer as his heir.

When God waited on fulfilling his promise to Abraham to give him a child, he tried to help God out by having a child by Hagar Sarah's maidservant. What a mess this has made ever since. Ishmael, the father of the Arabs, was the result.

But God finally did give Abraham and Sarah a child and when later God asked Abraham to offer Isaac as a sacrifice Abraham pass the test in flying colors.

**(Gen 22:16-18 NKJV) "By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son; {17} "blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. {18} "In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."**

Your faith will be tested at times throughout your life. At times you will wonder if God is ever going to fulfill his promises to you. At times you may seem to be asked to offer up to God something very precious to you.

*A Frenchman named Charney incurred the displeasure of Napoleon and was put into a dungeon. He seemed to be forsaken by his friends and forgotten by everyone in the outside world. In loneliness and despair he took a stone and scratched on the wall on his cell, "Nobody cares."*

*One day a green shoot came through the cracks in the stones on the floor of the dungeon and began to reach up toward the light in the tiny window at the top of the cell. The prisoner kept part of the water*

*brought to him each day by the jailer and poured it on the blade of green. It grew until at last it became a plant with a beautiful blue flower. As the petals opened in full blossom, the solitary captive crossed out the worlds previously written on the wall and above them scratched, "God cares."*

*Eventually Charney was released and he carried his flower home and carefully tended it the rest of his life. It had taught him to believe in God.*

Each morning you wake up, there is ample evidence that God keeps His promises. Use these evidences to help you continue to trust in the promises of God for which you may not be seeing much evidence. Abraham faithfully trusted God even though he was reaching 100. He continued in his faith.

Faith that is authentic and real is faith that trusts the promises of God and trusts Him to fulfill them, even when we cannot see how He can do it.

## **ABRAHAM'S FAITH BROUGHT GLORY TO GOD**

Next Abraham's faith ended up giving glory to God.

**(Rom 4:20-22 NKJV) He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, {21} and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. {22} And therefore "it was accounted to him for righteousness."**

Abraham was fully convinced that God would fulfill his promise. The phrase "did not waver" in other translations, "did not stagger." Abraham could have been knock over many times after he heard and believed God's promise about an heir.

When God promised Abraham that Sarah would give birth to a son, Abraham had to ignore his natural circumstances, have faith in God's promise, and believe that God was powerful enough to do what He said he would do. He could have looked at his age and staggered. He could have looked at God's time-table before He began to fulfill the promise – 25 years he waited for Isaac to be born. Abraham could have staggered at the ridicule he may have suffered from his friend when he told them what God had promised. On and on.

Justifying faith doesn't stagger at the promise of God but is fully persuaded that what God has promised He will perform it and this brings glory to God.

## CONCLUSION:

How is your faith this morning? Is it faith that justifies? Is it the faith that God sees and accounts it for righteousness?

Paul reminds us in verses 23-25 that this Biblical account of Abraham's faith was not written for him but for us who believe in Jesus.

**(Rom 4:23-25 NKJV) Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, {24} but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, {25} who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.**

We are justifying by believing in God who raised Jesus from the dead. We are justified by believing that Jesus' death was for our sins, offenses. We are justified by believe that God raised Jesus for our justification, that He may declare us righteous, who are ungodly, but whom He imputes Christ's righteousness to us.

If we have justifying faith, then that faith will be active in living for Jesus.  
If we have justifying faith, then that faith will be tested by adverse circumstances.  
If we have justifying faith, then that faith will bring God glory.

Amen? Amen!