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Romans 4 verses 18 through 22.

These are god's words. Who. Contrary to hope. In hope believed. So that he might become 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. 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. So far the reading of god's inspired and And errant word.

Because of the format. And these midweek meetings in the desire to spend much time in prayer, we're actually finishing portion that we would have wanted to hear preached altogether. At beginning in verse 16, therefore it is a faith. That it might be according to grace so that the promise might be sure.

To all the seed. Not only to those who are of the law but also to those who are of the faith of abraham, Who is the father of us? All As it is written. I have made you a father. Of many nations. And what the apostles doing? This point in chapter 4 is, he's continuing to answer a question that we had Right at the beginning of chapter 4 which was what is it?

That abraham our father found And of course he had qualified it at that point by saying, what is it that he had found according to the flesh? And the fact of the matter is that the flesh is weak. What he found? He found instead, as we've heard throughout the chapter by faith.

He found god. He found as we heard last week. The god of promise, the one. Who had made him? The promise and made now that promise sure by way of circumcision circumcisions not emptying the promise but affirming the promise. He found that god as a god of promise and the god of power.

He? In the presence of whom he him whom he believed, god who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did. There in verse 17. And so the apostle by the holy spirit is authoritatively interpreting for us Genesis. 17, giving us information.

From the holy spirit, that As abraham was hearing. And this is genesis 17. When he hears this because even in our passage this evening or our portion of the passage this evening, abraham's a hundred, and sarah is 99. And so we know that it's genesis 17, that it's talking about And when abraham hears, the promise, and When he falls on his faith before face before god, and when he laughs there in Genesis 17, it's not the laughter of unbelief.

You'll remember, perhaps that. Uh, sarah in the tent. Laughs to herself and unbelief. But this is laughter at the Uh, the goodness. Of that which was certain because god has made abraham to remember. That he is, the god. Who gives life to the dead? It's not challenging for God to bring a child from abraham and sarah, when he's the same god, who formed dirt into the body of Adam and breathed life into it.

And this is the god who calls to things that are not as they were you. Remember? He said, light be It's not challenging for god to give 100 year old man and a 99 year old. Sorry, a 90 year old woman. I think i said 99 earlier. A hundred-year-old man and a 90 year old woman.

A baby. It's not. It's not challenging for him because light doesn't exist until he talks to it. But he commands things to do things and they come into existence. In order to fulfill the command. And so he's the god of promise and he's the god of power. And what we see here in, The verses that are before us this evening versus 18 through 22 is that God is the god of Provision.

God, as the god of provision. And we find that god is the one who provided faith. And we see that in verse 18, And god is the one who provided strength. And see that in verses 19 through 21. And that god is the one who provided righteousness and the strength in verses.

19 through 21 is especially strength of faith. That god not only gives us faith the one time, but as the apostle will say, in chapter 12 of this letter, he measures faith out to us, That god has in the riches that are in christ jesus. A store of all the faith that believers will need.

And when we cry out, lord, i believe, help my unbelief. We cry out to him. Who helps our unbelief He gives us more grace, he gives us. More faith. So in the first place, God provided faith. You see that in the way this is worded who contrary to hope.

In hope believed. In other words, this wasn't a natural hope. This wasn't something that one would ordinarily be able to do or in this specific case, this wasn't something that abraham would have been able to do in himself. And yet, god gave him faith. It was a faith. That is Contrast it as we just said to Sarah's unbelief at the time.

And yet. God. Gave him hope that had no other explanation. And it was in this way that he became the father of many nations according to what was spoken. So shall your descendants be? In other words, god had decided to make Abraham the father of many nations and how is he the father of many nations?

Not as we've been hearing in this chapter by blood, but by believing When god says, Uh, i have made you the father of many nations in verse 17. He's fulfilling. So, shall your descendants be in verse 18, and he is the father of us. All who believe as we heard.

Last time, therefore, we see that it was the promise of god that he would make abraham the father of many nations that led first to Abraham, believing. And then to all those of whom abraham is the father Believing. You see the relationship of those two things in verse 18.

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? Now, what does that say saying? That god promised that abraham would have this multitude of descendants, like the stars and the sky. And that abraham produced the faith by, which he became the father, abraham isn't fulfilling the promise of god.

God has broken fulfilling the promise of god. And so we see that faith is a gift. And to faith was a gift for father, abraham, then faith as a gift for all of his Offspring. Covenantal, offspring. By faith. Those who Not only are either uncircumcised like abraham was or circumcised like abraham became.

But those who believe, Whether uncircumcised or circumcised? So, abraham is their father. Through believing now, he was given a sign that would be applied to his blood children. And

it's very interesting if, if we were to go and spend some time in Genesis 17, and It's going to say it's not too long ago, but i guess it's A few years now since.

We heard it preached together and worship in this place. He immediately thinks of Ishmael. And he prays, oh, that ishamil might live before you. Well, Romans 4 tells us that Abraham had believed the promise of that Isaac. So he wasn't saying lord i you know, i don't know about this offspring of sarah thing.

He was believing and and clinging too the promise of god, he was hoping in the christ who had come from sari. But when he asks that Ishmael would live before him live, before god, he's recognizing something. He's recognizing something that we see here that it is not enough to be children.

Who have the sign or to have children, who have the sign? They need to have the faith. And so, even as abraham on the day that Ishmael was circumcised prayed for his son, oh, that he might live before you. So also, we who have children who received the sign We know that that is not enough for them, that we will not enter heaven together, simply because they came from our body.

But we look to god to give them to believe in the lord. Jesus christ. The way he has made us to believe in the lord jesus christ. And obedience. We apply the sign. To the children, whom the lord adds to our household. And in faith, we pray for our children.

Oh that they might live before you. That they would be, then our children twice. Not just children from our bodies or children in our household. But our children of faith. That it would be as it was for lowest and unis that the faith that had been in them was afterward in Timothy And so they got to be mother and grandmother to Timothy twice over.

Once through biology. And the second time through belief, And how wonderful for them to enter heaven together. God is the one who provides faith. And so as your children, hear the preaching and as your parents plead with you and teach you how old day long and especially when when your parents lead you in family worship and open the scriptures to you and point you to christ and pray for you and pray with you.

You too should pray. Oh, that i might live before you give me faith too. I have heard from your word. I have read and heard a preached. That you lord, gave faith to abraham. Give me faith to lord. That i might be a child of abraham by faith and that i might be a child child of these parents that you have given me.

By faith and we may enter heaven together. And it ought to go without saying, but sadly, it cannot Because there are so many parents who tried to provide so much for their children. And yet they do not provide the gospel, the reading and hearing of the word and especially the hearing of the word preached with earnestness and zeal and pleading with their children and pleading with god.

Who is the only one who can give the faith to their children? Knowing that they're being their children, knowing that they're having the sign knowing that they're having all of these means of god's grace. Will not save their children. It is god who will save their children. By giving them.

Faith. God is the one who provides faith. God is also the one who provides the strengthening of that faith. We see this in verses 19 through 21 verse 19 reads, and not being weak in faith. He did not consider his own body already dead since he was about 100 years old and the deadness of sarah's womb.

Now, we do know that abraham has been weak ever since we met him. In genesis, first of all, he starts out in er of the Chaldeans and we read in A couple of places in the old testament in joshua's farewell sermon and then the lord telling israel. To confess that their father was a syrian.

Idolater. We know that he wasn't my dollar turbo 4 and he gets called and he comes into the promised landing and he's where god has called him to be, and there's a famine and what does he do? He immediately takes off to egypt. And that once, but twice, Once in egypt and then again, With a bim elect.

He lies and he and puts his wife up to lying. About her relationship to him. And then the whole issue with With hagar and israel and so forth. He is a weak, man. In his flesh. That's the answer to the question. What did abraham find according to the flesh?

He found weakness. But what did abraham find? According to faith. We found strength. He found that god's grace is sufficient for him. Because his strength has made perfect and weakness. You see god? Strengthens our weak faith because he Is our strength. It could only be through faith. That he could be not weak.

So when he says, when it says and not being weak in faith, It's describing. Both the strengthening of the faith, but the fact that it was through faith that he was strong in the first place. Now, what is it? What is the difference here between how he operates? As god strengthens his faith and how he would have operated.

If god had not strengthened his faith. This is helpful for us to notice because it will help us with self-examination and it will help us with requests. It'll help us with self-examination because we want to know what does unbelief look like. So that i can examine whether i need to turn away from that.

And what does belief look like so that? I can know what to ask god for? And then if it comes out of me, or if i see it, in me, it did not come from me. And therefore, not only do i request it of him but i thank him for it.

And so here's what unbelief does. Unbelief, considers ourself. Not being weakened faith. He did not consider his own body already dead. Since he was about 100 years old. He see verse 20 says that's what wavering at the promise through unbelief does. It takes the promise of god. But then it dwells upon whether i seem to have the resources or the ability, or the faith, or the goodness, or whatever it is.

For that promise to come true. But that's not how God's promises work. That would be like, what we said earlier, did the promise. So shall your descendants be. Come by abraham's giving himself for producing his own faith? Of course not. It was a promise of god. And if faith was how he became the father of those descendants, Then god was the one who gave the faith.

Well, dwelling upon ourselves. And what is in us. And whether that seems up to the the task of obtaining, what we are looking for. That is wavering and unbelief. And there's something else that unbelief dwells upon notice. It says not being weaken faith. He did not consider his own body already dead since he was about 100 years old and the deadness of Sarah's womb.

And so there's the two challenges there aren't there. There's the challenge that is in himself, and then there's the challenge that is in his circumstances.

Unbelief will take the promise of god, but then it'll look at the circumstances. The people in my life. Their weakness. Or to use the phrase that you often hear from people who are speaking. Unbelievably they are so toxic. Nothing might be toxic. But that's Not a reason that god is going to not a reason that you would be unable to love your enemy on able to forgive or unable to put away all betterness and malice.

Has god not promised to conform you to the image of christ, as he not given his spirit. Exactly. For that purpose has jesus christ. Not secured that promise. By his obedience and his sacrifice. Is he not the one who brings it about by the power of his resurrection? So what that they're toxic?

In terms of, The ability to bear. Sarah's room was toxic. She was 90.

And yet not wavering in. Uh not wavering at the promise of god, through unbelief, abraham did not consider his own body. And the deadness of Sarah's womb. You see faith throws upon god. Now, what did he remember? When he dwelt upon god? Well, he remembered That god is able to do what he has promised.

He remembered that god made Adam out of dirt. He brings life out of death. Here remembered that god commanded light to exist in the first place. He calls the things that are not. As though they were. Now, this remembering itself came. From where? If the faith came from god, where did the strengthening of the faith?

Come from. Now, you and i know that our unbelief in the weakness of our faith is our fault. But we also to know that the remedy, For our unbelief and the weakness of our faith. Is not in us, is it? It's in the lord. And so there's this wonderful.

Uh, Grammatical. Uh, This wonderful phrase. Here. Did not waver at the promise of god, through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith. Now, that's passive voice. And sometimes passive voice. Hides the actor. Like, Mom. A bunch of those cookies that you made for the guests tonight got eaten. That is passive voice.

But there is this literary construction. There's the phrase. There's this literary construction. Called the divine passive. Where it makes us ask. Who did that when the only answer could possibly be God. And it actually heightens that god is the one who did it. Abraham was strengthened in faith. Who did that?

God, did it? As a god provided, not just faith in verse 18. But he provided the strengthening of faith. And how did he provide that strengthening of faith? It's good to pray. Lord, strengthen my faith. But if lord gives us more details, we can ask him more specifically, can't we I mean, otherwise we would just pray.

Lord make all things work together for your glory and the good of everyone who you called, amen. And we would be done praying and we could just pray that every single time But the lord teaches us to make our requests known. To him. To pray for all sorts of things that are.

According to the, According to his word. And according to his will, And so he gives us two ways. That were strengthened one. Uh, we already know that's in verse 21. Being fully convinced that what he had promised. He was also able to perform. So lord strengthened my faith by bringing home to my heart, how great your power is.

And then you start doing something that we've heard many times in the psalms and we'll hear again this coming lord's day morning. He recounts? The great works of god. Right. This is why asap concludes that that he will live so that he will praise god, television's works. This when we

get to psalm, 78 is going to be, especially one of the great tasks of each generation in the church is to tell the next generation of the great works of god, why?

So that they won't be unbelieving and wicked like their parents were it says in Psalm 78. Lord remind me. Remind me you're the one who called light into being just by speaking. Remind me you're the one who brought life out of death when you formed Adam and breathed into his nostrils of breath of life remind me.

That if you are judging the whole world, Yet you are more than able to save just one family like you did with noah. That i am safe. No matter what else is happening. Around me, remind me, lord. Especially of The incarnation of the lord jesus and the womb of Mary.

And the death and the resurrection of the lord jesus. And the ascension. To sit on the throne of glory of the lord. Jesus. If you. Um, I hope you all take the opportunity to think about that in tomorrow's. Hope well at home devotional. Our family considered today that that person first Timothy 3, And how all that the lord has done and causing his word to be preached in the nation's and giving faith the multitudes from the nation's.

Has demonstrated reminded us. That jesus is genuinely physically. On the throne of glory. In that place to which the scripture refers as a third heaven. That place. Where god has, especially made the display of his glory, to be known, It is from there that he poured out his holy spirit.

That is from there that he is overseeing. The preaching of his word even tonight, even in my weakness and your weakness. But as we receive and believe what his word says, It is the work of the glorified christ. So god's strengthens faith by convincing the believer of god's power.

But he also strengthens faith by making a believer to give god glory. Back up from verse 21 and see that at the end of verse 20, he did not waver at the promise of god, through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith. Given glory to god. Yes. The stronger, you are in faith.

The more you glorify, the more you. Praise and adore exalt the name of god. But it's also the exalting of the name of god. By which the lord gives us faith. We saw that, didn't we? In yesterday's devotional? Psalm 73. And last week's, especially Last Tuesday. And the Transition in psalm 73 and verse 17.

That it was by bringing ASAF to glorify the holiness of god. That asap strength was actually faith was actually strengthened. How dreadful?

A trick, a deception from the devil, and a stubbornness and foolishness of the flesh. It is That when you and i are weak in faith, we shrink from worship. We have not been doing well. We have sinned, that we know we need to repent of We do not feel close to god.

And so, we we find ourselves over busy, and there's always something else, and we become forgetful, or we go through the motion of worship, but we don't give glory to god in worship. We read the passage. Check the box. Say the words, get up and go. But it is through the giving of glory to god that he strengthens our faith.

As he stirs us up in praise and sets who he is and what he has promised and what he has done and what he will do. Before us. God, strengthens faith. In the last place, God provided righteousness. The re-quotes here, genesis 15 verse 6. He says, and therefore it was accounted to him for righteousness.

The key. The key of course, is we've learned From the rest of the chapter. Is that word accountant. The blessing was not a reward for a work of faith. The blessing. Was a gift. That came through the grace of faith, faith, that god had provided And so genesis 17 is is both the continuation and the result of genesis 15.

When it says and therefore it was accounted to him for righteousness, saying he continues to be justified only through faith. That's important. He spent much of this chapter saying that if he started out being justified through faith and then came to be justified through circumcision than that undid faith.

So when he comes to verse 22, he's coming to the conclusion. He was still Being his faith was still being accounted to him for righteousness in Genesis 17 as well. Even though that phrase is from genesis 15, He who has justified through faith alone. Will always only through faith be justified.

This is Important for you. I don't run across it that much, but maybe i just don't read as many bad guys or interact with That many who do. Uh, but there was a time. Five, 10 years ago. When in need park circles, there were people using phrases like final justification.

And suggesting that, whereas, right now, we're declared righteous for what jesus has done at the last will be declared righteous for what we have done. And what jesus has done. But that simply isn't the case. The lord to demonstrates his rightness in declaring us. Righteous only for what jesus has done.

And he will make us as as jesus deserves for us to be. God isn't lying when he accounts us righteous. But we are only ever justified through faith. The second place not only is this a continuation? Of genesis 15. It's also the result of genesis 15. Could it have been possible?

That abraham who has been counted righteous before god through faith. Would stumble and fall away in unbelief and perish. Of course, not. If god has made us righteous, He will make us glorious. That's the point of chapter 8, isn't it? As it starts out with there is therefore now no condemnation.

And is very important because you have believers who are living in a way that feels very self-condemning. Right. That's where you were at the end of roman 7. And yet they are fighting that sin. Because god has given them grace. He's given them his spirit. They are the sons of god, they call him aba and they hate the family enemy sin.

And so there, they do not live, according to the flesh, they're in battle with the deeds of the body mortal. Battle. And as by god's grace, by god's spirit. Through faith in jesus christ, they are putting to death, the deeds of the body. God will certainly bring them to live those.

Whom he justified he also glorified Because it didn't start with his justification. It started with his knowing them for knowing them it started and continued with his predestining them and continued with his calling them. And it will not end with their justification. It'll end with their glorification. That's why no condemnation.

At the beginning of Romans 8, ends with no separation from the love of god. At the end of Romans 8, Precisely because it has provided by god from start to finish. And therefore, when it says, That abraham was strengthened in faith. And therefore it was accounted to him for righteousness.

It's not just saying he continued to be justified that way. Saying that god was fulfilling a promise that was implied in that first accounting for righteousness. That god's ongoing

provision of faith. That god's ongoing provision of strength. That odd God's ongoing provision of righteousness. Is inevitable. For you who believe in the lord, jesus Christ.

If you have christ, You will have everything. It is impossible that god would not give you. What you need?

Now, if you hear that and you become presumptuous and say, well i pray to prayer once so I'm good. Then you haven't understood at all. That all of this comes from god. And it comes from god and living and active way. If you hear? I'm fine. I don't need to walk with god.

I don't need to read his word. I don't need to gather with his church. I don't need to be led by his spirit. I can go ahead and Indulge the flesh. Walk according to the flesh. Then this gospel says, you will die. Because you're saying, i don't need god.

I have a few words that i said once, No, god provides it all. And if you have christ, it is inevitable. That you will have all of the faith that you need the strengthening of faith that you need. Truly the gospel is the gospel of god. There's good news precisely because it is not the proclamation of what you can do.

But of what god has promised. And therefore not just what god can do. But what god has done in jesus christ. And will do. For all who are in jesus christ.