

Messy Faith is All We Have!

Romans 4:17 (As it is written, **I have made thee** a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, *even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.* 18 Who **against hope believed in hope**, that he might become the father of many nations; **according to that which was spoken,** So shall thy seed be. 19 And **being not weak in faith**, he **considered not his own body now dead**, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb: 20 He **staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief**; but was **strong in faith, giving glory to God**; 21 And being **fully persuaded** that, what he had promised, **he was able also to perform.** 22 And therefore **it was imputed to him for righteousness.** 23 Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; 24 **But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him** that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; 25 Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

1. He makes us, not ourselves 4:17 (As it is written, **I have made thee** a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, *even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.*
 - a. Abraham received a great promise-that he would be the father of many nations
 - b. Abraham watched the years go by and thought that God wasn't getting the job done and wanted to help God
 - i. He offered to have his servant be counted as his son
 - ii. He and Sarah decided that maybe they could help with the promise by having Hagar be the promised seed, son
 - iii. When God turned them down but reiterated His promise they both laughed
 - c. Notice that the emphasis of the verse is not on Abraham and what he could do but on God
 - i. It is God that gives life to the dead
 - ii. It is God who makes things be what they are not
 - d. Your emphasis must be on God and His Word not on you and your ability

- e. Most of who doubt their salvation do so because they put the emphasis on the wrong person
- f. It is God that makes us not we ourselves
- g. Know the character of God
 - i. He is a God that does not lie **Titus 1:2** *In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;*
 - ii. His character doesn't depend on your faith
II Timothy 2:13 *If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.*
 - iii. He will not change the game plan, no worries about Him doing what He says **Numbers 23:19** *God is not a man, that he should lie; Neither the son of man, that he should repent: Hath he said, and shall he not do it? Or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?*
 - iv. It is impossible for God to lie **Hebrews 6:18** *That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:*
 - v. No deceit, changing, twisting, turning, just exactly what He said **James 1:17** *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of*

lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

vi. God wants to be believed **Hebrews 11:6** But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

2. Salvation is by faith **22** And therefore **it was imputed to him for righteousness.** **24** But for us also, **to whom it shall be imputed,** if we **believe on him** that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; **25** Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

a. The story here about Abraham and his faith is the story of how he got saved

b. He was believing God and His Word **18** Who **against hope believed in hope,** that he might become the father of many nations; **according to that which was spoken,** So shall thy seed be.

- c. It wasn't any thing that He did but a person that He believed
- d. It will always be seeing what God said and just trusting Him
- e. We are saved the exact same way. It is believing God and what He says and what He did **24 But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; 25 Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.**
 - i. We believe
 - ii. He raised Jesus from the dead
 - iii. Jesus was delivered for our offences
 - iv. Jesus was raised for our justification
 - v. I am simply believing what God says
- f. Do not lose focus on the fact that it was imputed to him, that means counted to him
 - i. He didn't do it
 - ii. God decided to count that to him
 - iii. It was nothing that Abraham did but all that God did

g. That is why you can be sure of your salvation, it is not you doing it but God

3. Real faith is in God's promise not our person **18 Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations; according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be.**

a. When Abraham looked at his side of the equation he knew that all was hopeless

i. He was so old and so was his wife that he couldn't see how he could ever have children. **18 Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations; according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be.**

ii. Sarah was no longer in her child producing years **19 And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb:**

b. The only hope that Abraham had was that God would do for him what he couldn't do for himself so he believed

God **20** He **staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; 21** And being **fully persuaded** that, what he had promised, **he was able also to perform.**

- c. When you consider your salvation you need to know that it is beyond you. You can't be good enough to be saved
 - i. You have tried not to lie before
 - ii. You have made New Year's resolutions.
 - iii. You have said you will not miss church, miss reading your Bible
 - iv. You have said you will always honor God with your money
 - v. That you will not look at women and think things that you shouldn't
 - vi. You have said you will honor your parents, treat your spouse right, be a good parent
 - vii. But all it has given you is a deep sense of debt and guilt
 - viii. You have tried to be perfect but have continually had to reevaluate and lower what you set as the goal
 - ix. Any time you focus on yourself and what you can do it will only lead to frustration

- x. Your frustration and bitterness with your own sense of failure will drive you to the Lord or away if you aren't careful
 - d. Abraham believed God not himself, he was beyond being able to believe in himself. He had come to a point of utter failure. It was impossible for him to answer his own prayer
 - e. All he had left was God and God's promise and that is all you have
4. It is not the strength of your faith
- a. One of the great lessons here is how God saw Abraham's faith
 - i. Abraham hoped when he had no hope **18 Who against hope believed in hope,** that he might become the father of many nations; **according to that which was spoken,** So shall thy seed be.
 - ii. Abraham was not weak in his faith **19 And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead,** when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb:

iii. Abraham didn't even stagger or get shocked when God made such a great promise but had strong faith **20 He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;**

iv. Abraham was fully persuaded that God was able to keep His Word **21 And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.**

b. Now for the rest of the story

i. Abraham believed but when time went by he began to doubt

ii. Abraham goes to God with his servant to be his son but God says no

iii. Abraham waits and still nothing and so he and Sarah plot to have Hagar sleep with him and for Ishmael to be his heir. God says no

iv. Abraham keeps waiting and finally when the angel says that within the year the baby will be born Abraham and Sarah both laugh and lie about it!

c. What is the moral of the story

i. It wasn't their faith but their God

- ii. You put too much emphasis on yourself in the equation of faith.
 - 1. You think it has to do with the right words that you prayed
 - 2. Or if you believed enough
 - 3. If you meant it
 - 4. If you understood enough
- iii. The truth is that Abraham's faith wasn't all that strong when you see it from the human side but God saw it as great and perfect faith
- d. Could it be that you are too man oriented in your understanding of salvation?
 - i. Do you think of you and what you do and did when you think of salvation
 - ii. Or do you think of God and what He did when He saved you
 - iii. The hero of this story isn't Abraham and his great faith but God who promised and kept His Word
 - iv. It is God counting the little, struggling faith that Abraham had as enough
- e. Trust God, focus on Him and get your eyes off of yourself and you can have security of your salvation!

5. The lesson for living by faith **24 But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him** that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; **25 Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.**

a. First, the lesson of salvation.

i. You trust God.

ii. It is a weak faith but you believe His Word

iii. You turn from believing in yourself to believing in Him

iv. This lesson was written so you would understand how faith works

v. You see your weak faith and face your doubts but look at how God saw Abraham's faith and know that He does that with you

vi. Your salvation isn't based even on how you prayed, how much you believed, etc but is based on who you believed and His power

b. As you deal with the issues of life realize what real faith looks like

i. It means taking God at His Word

- ii. It means knowing that everything is a focus on how great and wonderful He is **Romans 4:17** (As it is written, **I have made thee** a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, *even* **God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.**
- iii. It is hoping, anticipating when there is really no earthly, physical reason that you should. You simply believe what God said and that is it **18** Who **against hope believed in hope**, that he might become the father of many nations; **according to that which was spoken**, So shall thy seed be.
- iv. You learn not to consider the circumstances that you can see and understand **19** And **being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead**, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb:
- v. You know that you will believe God and give Him glory even though it is super hard to believe. You decide that you will act against everything in you that screams to the contrary of what God's Word says **20** He **staggered**

not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;

vi. You are not fully persuaded about yourself or other persons but you are fully persuaded about God and His glory **21 And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.**

vii. This is what faith is. Believing God when there is no apparent reason to except His Word. He will be pleased with that

c. Know that this kind of faith isn't as pretty as it is here in Romans. You must remember the Genesis side of the story, both are true, one is from the way man sees it and the other is how God sees it

d. Will you begin to act on what God says?

i. Does He have control of your finances or are you afraid to do what He says?

ii. Does He have control of your circumstances or are you trying to stay in control?

iii. Will you trust Him with your future, the economy, the job, everything?

iv. Will you just believe God when there is no earthly reason to do so?

- v. Will you step out and do the ministry God has called you to do?
- vi. Don't use the excuse of weak faith. It simply does work. Trust God and move