

***“Increase Our Faith”***  
***Romans 4:18-22***

**Introduction:**

1. Let's Turn Back In Our Bibles This Morning:
  - To Romans 4 - Where We Have Been:
    - Exploring Together:
      - What It Means To Be:
        - “Justified By Faith” – And:
          - By Faith Alone!
  - But - What Is Faith?
    - In Our Good News Clubs:
      - When We Were Able To Have Them!
        - We Taught The Children A Simple Song About Faith!
    - It Begins With These Words:
      - “Faith Is Just Believing What God Says He Will Do!”
2. Well - In Romans 4:
  - The Apostle Paul Has Been:
    - Directing Our Attention:
      - To The Faith Of Abraham:
        - Who Simply Believed - That:
          - “What God Said He Would Do!”
    - And This Is The Kind Of Faith:
      - That God Uses:
        - To “Justify The Ungodly” - And:
          - To Bring Us Into A Right Relationship With Him!
    - And So - In 4:18-22:
      - Paul Describes Abraham's Faith In This Way:
        - “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. / 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: / He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; / And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. / And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness!”
3. Abraham Was A Man Of Faith!
  - And This Morning:
    - I Want Us To Consider:
      - Four Dimensions Of Abraham's Faith:
        - That God Used To Justify Him!
    - And - As We See:
      - The Faith Of Abraham:
        - May We Cry Out To The Lord:
          - Even As His Disciples Did In Luke 17:5:
            - “Lord, Increase **Our** Faith!”
          - May **Our** Faith Become More & More Like The Abraham's Faith!

\* The First Dimension To Abraham's Faith Was That:

1. ***It Was A Substantial Faith!***
  - Even As We Read In:
    - 4:18 - “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!”
      - **IE:** Have You Ever Faced Something So Difficult, So Seemingly Impossible & Insurmountable, That You Felt Entirely Hopeless?
        - Some Who Have Faced A Disease Like Cancer Have Felt This Way, When They First Heard The Diagnosis From Their Doctor's Mouth!
          - Is There Any Help For Me? Is There Any Hope? Nothing Less Than A Miracle Is Needed!
    - In A Similar Way:

- We Find In This Verse:
    - That Abraham's Faith Was:
  - "Against Hope!"
    - God Had Promised Abraham:
      - In Genesis 12:2 - That - "[He] Would Make Of [Him] A Great Nation!"
      - But - Without Any Children Of His Own:
        - This Seemed Impossible & Insurmountable To Him!
        - Nothing Less Than Miracle Was Needed!
    - The Circumstances Abraham Faced:
      - Were Entirely:
        - "Against Hope!"
        - But - What Are We Told About Abraham?
          - He Still "Believed!"
    - And His Faith Was - According To This Verse:
  - "In Hope!"
    - The Word "In" Here *Could*:
      - And Probably *Should* Be Translated:
        - "Upon!"
      - Because Here:
        - It's Not Talking About Abraham's Own Subjective "Hopefulness" - But About:
          - The Objective Hope:
            - That Was Given To Him By God!
    - The Hope & The Promise:
      - 4:18b - "That He Might Become The Father Of Many Nations!"
      - The Hope Of Abraham:
        - That Invigorated His Faith:
          - Was A God-Given Hope!
      - It Was A "Hope Against Hope!"
        - And - This Is The Kind Of Hope:
          - That **Only God** Can Offer!
  - And So - Abraham's Faith:
    - Was A Substantial Faith:
      - Because It Found Its Substance:
        - In The Word Of God's Own Promise:
          - To Him!
      - Even As It Says In 4:18c - "According to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be!"
    - God's Word To Abraham:
      - Was A Personal Word:
        - That Called Abraham Into A Close & Personal Relationship With Him!
        - Even To The Point That Abraham, Above Anyone Else In The Bible, He Was Called:
          - "The Friend Of God!"
    - God's Word To Abraham:
      - Was A Powerful Word:
        - Because It Was - By Itself - The Evidence Of The Miracle That Abraham Needed!
        - The Miracle That God Himself Would Provide! And:
    - God's Word To Abraham:
      - Was A Permanent Word!
      - It Was Binding Upon God!
- And This Is Why Abraham's Faith:
  - Was A Substantial Faith!
    - It Rested On The Hope & The Promise:
      - Given To Him By The Lord!
  - And - This Is What:
    - Christian Faith Is As Well!
      - When You Turn To & Trust In:
        - Jesus Christ To Be Your Savior From Sin!
- Like Abraham:

- You Believe:
  - “Against Hope!”
    - That Is - There Really Is **No Reason** For You To Be Saved!
    - Nor - Is There **Any Other Way** For You To Be Saved! So:
- Like Abraham:
  - You Believe:
    - “In / Upon Hope!”
      - The Hope That God Himself Gives When He Says To You - “Believe On The Lord Jesus Christ, And Thou Shalt Be Saved!” (Acts 16:31)
- The Lord Jesus Christ:
  - His Birth / Life / Death / Resurrection:
    - Is The Miracle You & I Needed:
      - And Is The Very Object & Substance Of Our Faith!
- Make Sure That Your Faith:
  - Like Abraham’s - Is:
    - A Substantial Faith!
      - Focused On The Word Of God’s Promise To You - That:
        - “He That Believeth On The Son Hath Everlasting Life!” (John 3:36)
  - May The Lord:
    - Increase Our Faith:
      - Upon The Divine Hope Offered In Christ!

\* A Second Dimension To Abraham’s Faith Was That:

## 2. ***It Was A Simple Faith!***

- Even As We Read In:
  - 4:19 - “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!”
    - **IE:** One Of The Refreshing Things About Children, Is That They Are “Dreamers!” That Is - There Is Very Little Doubt In Their Young Minds That They Can Become Anything They Want To Be!
      - But - Most Of The Time - What Happens To Those Dreams When Those Children Start Growing Up?
        - **Reality** Often Interferes With Those Dreams, Don’t They?
        - A Boy Who Dreamed About Becoming A Professional Basketball Player With The NBA Will Probably Have To Face **Reality** When He Reaches 5 Feet 6 Inches In Height!
  - But - When It Comes To Faith:
    - And - A Faith That Rests:
      - In The Promises Of God:
        - It Is Often:
- A Contrarian Faith!
  - This Means - That It Is Often Contrary:
    - To The Reality:
      - That Steals Away Our Dreams!
  - Abraham’s Faith:
    - Was A Contrarian Faith!
      - Even Though He Was About 100 Years Old - What Do The Scriptures Say?
        - 4:19a - “And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead!”
  - Now - This Does Not Mean:
    - That He Didn’t “Feel” His Age!
      - Because - He Probably Did:
        - Even As We All Do!
    - He May Have Been Weak:
      - In His Body - And:
        - Even In His Mind!
    - But - As The Reality Of His Age:
      - Set In More & More:
        - God Enabled Him To Look Beyond The Hopelessness Of Reality & Upon The

## Hope Of God's Promise!

- True Faith Is Always Contrarian!
- Like The Faith Of Noah:
  - When He Was Building The Ark!
    - The Human Reality Was:
      - There's Not Going To Be A Flood!
    - But Noah Believed In:
      - The Wonder Of God's Word!
- Or - Like The Faith Of Peter:
  - When He Went Out To Jesus, Walking On The Water!
    - The Human Reality Was:
      - Peter - You Are Going To Sink!
    - But - At First - Peter Believed:
      - In The Wonder Of Jesus' Word - When Jesus Said:
        - "Come!"
    - But - When Peter Started To Sink:
      - What Happened?
        - The Human Realities Of Danger & Fear!
      - True Faith Is A Contrarian Faith!
- But - Even More - Faith:
  - That Rests In The Promises Of God Is:
- A Childlike Faith!
  - Even At 100 Years Of Age:
    - Abraham Still Dreamed:
      - Of Having A Child - According To:
        - The Promise Of God!
  - Reality Had Already Closed In:
    - To The Point That There Was Absolutely:
      - No Human Way:
        - For God's Promise To Be Fulfilled!
  - After All - He Was - At This Point:
    - On The Opposite Side Of The Age Spectrum!
      - Young People:
        - Can Dream Of Having Families!
          - But - Not Old People!
  - But - Still:
    - Abraham Kept Dreaming & Believing:
      - That - "What God Said - He Would Do!"
        - His Neighbors Probably Thought He Was Naive - Or Even:
          - A Bit Senile!
    - But - Abraham's Faith:
      - Remained Innocent & Childlike!
- Abraham's Faith:
  - Was A Simple Faith:
    - Because - It Rested:
      - In The Wonder Of God's Promise!
  - And This Is Still:
    - The Kind Of Faith:
      - We Need In The Lord:
        - And His Word!
  - Have We Lost:
    - The Child-Like Wonder & Trust:
      - And Even Dreams:
        - Based On The Promises Of God?
    - All-Too-Often:
      - We Become So "Sophisticated" In Our Theology:
        - That We Lose The Simplicity Of Faith!
    - When - In Truth:

- Theology Ought To Be:
  - The Fuel Of Our Faith!
  - That Which Drives:
    - Our Dreams!
- Remember What Jesus Said:
  - In Matthew 19:14 - "Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven!"
  - We Need This Kind Of Faith!
    - A Contrarian & A Childlike Faith That Never Loses The Wonder:
      - Of God's Power & God's Promises!
- After All - It Is God:
  - Who Is "Great" – And – "Who Only Doeth Wondrous Things!" (Psalm 72:18)
  - O Lord - "Increase Our Faith!"

\* A Third Dimension To Abraham's Faith Was That:

**3. *It Was A Strong Faith!***

- Even As We Read In:
  - 4:20a - "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith!"
    - **IE:** I Remember There Were Times In College - When The Storms Were Ferocious! I Would Be Walking Along With My Umbrella Up - And A Gust Of Wind Would Come & Blow The Umbrella Inside Out! Sometimes - It Would Even Shake Me Off Balance! Ever Experienced That Kind Of Storm?
      - You Start To Wonder - Should I Even Be Out In This Storm?
        - Well - Abraham Was No Stranger To Storms In His Life Either!
          - Whether Natural Storms Or Even Spiritual Storms!
  - One Spiritual Storm That He Faced:
    - Is One That We All Face From Time To Time:
      - And That Is The Storm:
        - Of Unbelief!
    - Unbelief Is That Which Starts To Argue:
      - Against God's Word & God's Promises!
        - Unbelief Is That Which:
          - Will Cause You To "Depart From The Living God!" (Hebrews 3:12)
  - Well - Even After God Gave Abraham His Promises:
    - It Seems Like Abraham:
      - Was Facing The Spiritual Storm:
        - Of Unbelief - As The Devil Started Planting Seeds Of Doubt:
          - Into His Heart & Mind!
      - Like The Devil Asked:
        - Adam & Eve - There In The Garden Of Eden:
          - "Yea, Hath God Said?"
      - This Is Why - After God Confirmed His Promise To Abraham - In Genesis 17:17-18 - We Read:
        - "Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear? / And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee!"
  - Even Today:
    - This Is The Goal Of The Devil!
      - To Cause Us To Question & To Doubt:
        - The Word & The Wonder:
          - Of God's Promises!
      - From The Beginning Words Of The Bible:
        - Even To The End!
          - "Hath God Said?"
      - But True Faith:
        - As Seen In The Life Of Abraham:
          - Is:
  - Not Rattled:
    - When Those Unbelieving Thoughts:

- Rear Their Ugly Heads!
  - Abraham Did Not Dwell On Those Doubts!
- When Unbelief Argues:
  - Against The Word & The Promises Of God:
    - Faith & Belief Argues:
      - For Them!
- And So - Instead Of Being Rattled:
  - And Shaken Off Course - His Faith:
- Was Restful:
  - In The Promises Of God!
    - He - “Was Strong In Faith!” (4:20)
      - This Can Also Be Translated In A Passive Way - That Is:
        - Abraham “Was Strengthened By Faith!”
  - This Means - It Wasn’t His Faith:
    - That Gave Him Strength:
      - But - It Was God:
        - Who Strengthened Him:
          - Through The Instrument Of Faith!
  - Even As The Prophet Daniel:
    - In Daniel 10:19 - When The Lord Said To Him - “O man greatly beloved, fear not: peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong. And when he had spoken unto me, I was strengthened, and said, Let my lord speak; for thou hast strengthened me!”
  - When Abraham Was Confronted By The Storm Of Unbelief & The Seeds Of Doubt:
    - As The Devil “Desired To Have Him!” - It Was God:
      - Who Strengthened Him & Enabled Him:
        - To Overcome Those Doubts & Fears!
- Abraham’s Faith:
  - Was A Strong Faith:
    - Because It Was Strengthened By:
      - The Witness Of God’s Promise!
  - Even After Abraham Laughed:
    - God Repeated His Promise To Him:
      - In Genesis 17:19 - “And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him!”
  - God Is So Patient With Us:
    - When We Are Weak In Faith!
      - He Keeps Confirming His Promises To Us:
        - Over & Over Again:
          - Through The Witness Of His Word!
  - And - When We Listen:
    - To His Word —
      - **Through** His Word:
        - He Gives Us Strength:
          - To Weather The Storms Of Unbelief!
- So - In Times Of Doubt:
  - Where Do You Turn? Where Will You Go?
    - Return To The Witness Of God’s Word!
      - Because - Through It:
        - He Will Increase Your Faith:
          - Even As He Did For Abraham!

\* Because Then - We Find A Fourth Dimension To Abraham’s Faith - How:

#### 4. ***It Was A Sincere Faith!***

- Even As We Find In:
  - 4:20b-21 - “Giving glory to God; / And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform!”
    - **IE**: I Love Living Out In The Country - And Seeing The Fields Around Us Come To Life! Each

Spring, We Try To Remember What The Farmer Planted The Previous Year - Whether Corn Or Beans Or Wheat! We Tend To Like The Corn More Than The Beans! But - We Only Know What He Planted - As The Seeds Turn Into Plants - And They Start To Grow!

- So It Is With True Faith! The Faith That God Uses To Justify Sinners Will Become A Fruitful Faith!

- And - We Can See The Fruit Of Abraham's Faith In These Verses As Well!

- There Was First:

- The Fruit Of Praise!

- As God Strengthened Abraham In His Faith:

- At The End Of 4:20 - It Says That:

- Abraham Was "Giving Glory To God!"

- This Means That He Was Giving God The Praise & The Honor:

- That He Was Due!

- One Way That We See This:

- In The Life Of Abraham:

- Was That - In Genesis 17:23:

- After God Confirmed His Promise To Him Once Again:

- Abraham Obeyed The Lord By Performing The Sign Of Circumcision On Ishmael And All Of The Other Men In His Household!

- Obedience Always Honors & Glorifies God!

- And - Obedience Is:

- A Fruit Of Genuine, Saving Faith!

- But Even More:

- Abraham Knew That:

- All He Was!

- All He Would Be!

- All He Had:

- Even The Strength Of His Faith:

- Was From God!

- And So - To The Lord:

- He Would Offer:

- The Praise & Glory & Credit:

- He Was Due!

- But - We Also Find:

- The Fruit Of Persuasion:

- In 4:21 - "And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform!"

- This Means That Abraham's Faith:

- **Increased** To A Complete Confidence:

- The Lord! **It Grew!**

- Abraham Was Fully Persuaded & Convinced About:

- The Power Of The Lord:

- Who Was "Able!"

- He Was Still The God:

- "Who Only Doeth Wondrous Things!"

- He Was Also Fully Persuaded & Convinced About:

- The Performance Of The Lord!

- Because - God Is A Faithful God!

- Faithful To His Promises!

- Faithful To His People!

- In 1 Thessalonians 5:24 - We Are Told:

- "Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it!"

- Abraham's Faith:

- Was A Sincere Faith:

- Because It Became Fruitful Through:

- The Work Of God's Promise:

- To Him!

- And - A Fruitful Faith:

- Is The Evidence:

- That God Is At Work:  
- In Your Life!

**Conclusion:**

1. Don't You See Your Need Today:
  - For The Lord To:
    - Increase Your Faith?
  - O Lord - Increase Our Faith!
    - And Strengthen It:
      - So That It Will Grow:
        - And Bear Fruit:
          - For You & For Your Glory!
2. Because - As We See:
  - In 4:22 - This Was The Kind Of Faith:
    - God Used To Justify Abraham!
      - "And therefore it – [His Faith] – was imputed to him for righteousness!"
  - Abraham's Faith:
    - Was The Right Kind Of Faith:
      - Because It Rested On:
        - The Promises Of God!
    - It Rested On:
      - The Word & The Wonder:
        - As Well As The:
          - Witness & The Work:
            - Of God's Gracious Promises to Him!
3. But - Not Only Did God Use This Kind Of Faith:
  - To Justify Abraham - As We Will See:
    - Next Sunday - It Is Also The Kind Of Faith:
      - That God Will Use To Justify You!
        - 4:23a - "Now it was not written for his sake alone!"
  - But - The Truth Is:
    - We Need This Kind Of Faith!
      - A Faith That Is:
        - Simple & Strong & Sincere!
    - But - It Will Only Be This Kind Of Faith:
      - When It Is Substantial!
        - When It Rests In:
          - The Word Of God's Promise!
4. So - Even Though Your Faith Today:
  - May Be Weak & It May Be Small:
    - Yet - When The Object Of Your Faith:
      - And - The Very Substance Of Your Faith:
        - Is The Word & Work Of The Lord Jesus Christ:
          - Then - As William Ogden Once Wrote:
            - "Trust In His Promises, Faithful And Sure! Lean Upon The Savior,  
And Thy Soul Is Secure!"
  - And Then - You Can Pray:
    - And Cry To The Lord:
      - "Increase My Faith!"

\* What / Who Is The Focus Of Your Faith?

\* Have You Lost The Wonder Of Child-Like Faith In The Lord?

\* Is There Fruit To Your Faith?

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