

Title: Faith Is
Text: Romans 4: 17-25
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After declaring that believers establish the law through faith in God and his promise, the Holy Spirit gives us a glimpse of Abraham's faith.

Our subject is: Faith Is

Using verses 17-25, I want to show you seven things faith is.

FAITH IS BELIEVING GOD

Romans 4: 16...Abraham;...is the father of us all, 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...

The God that true faith believes is the God who is the Father of all his people. When our text speaks of Abraham as the father of all believers—the margin says “like him whom he believed.” God is the Everlasting Father of all who end up believing on Christ. It means God is the reason we end up believing on Christ. Every true believer's faith began with God our Father electing us unto salvation.

Ephesians 1: 3: Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: 4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: 5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

True faith believes the God who quickens the dead—to quicken is to give life, to make alive, to create anew. Every true believer began in this world dead in trespasses and in sins. We are born unable and unwilling to do anything to save ourselves with hearts enmity against God. But the true and living God is able to quicken the dead sinner. The true God can breathe life into dry bones by “*the exceeding greatness of his power.*” It took the same exceeding great power to quicken you and I, as it did to raise Christ from the grave.

Ephesians 1: 19: And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, 20: Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places...

True faith believes God who by his calls makes things to exist that are not. Our text says, “*God...calleth those things which be not as though they were.*” It does not mean that God pretends things are one way even though they are not. When you are all-powerful, all-knowing and eternal you do not have to pretend. Scripture never says it is “as though” we were crucified in Christ but “*I AM crucified in Christ.*” God never says it is “as though” our old man of sin is destroyed before God's law, it IS destroyed when Christ died. Scripture never says it is “as though” we are righteous before God, before God we ARE made the righteousness of God in him. God does not say it is “as though” we are seated with Christ at God's right hand, before God we already ARE.

This is for our comfort. Our comfort is that when God purposes a thing, before him, it is done, even when it is not yet done in time. “*The works were finished from the foundation of the world.*” As creatures of time,

everything has a beginning and an end. With God everything is eternally now! When eternal God foreknew and predestinated his people, *“them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.”* It was all done before him in Christ, though we were not yet called in time.

Be sure to understand. It does not mean that God does not fulfill his purpose in time or that it is unnecessary for God to do so. It means when he has called us, before God it is done and there is no remote possibility he will not do it in time.

God told Abraham, *“I HAVE MADE thee a father of many nations,)...“before [God] whom he believed.”* When God called Abraham a father of many nations, before God he WAS MADE a father of many nations. All Abraham’s seed were in him right then just as all God’s elect were in Christ and blessed with all spiritual blessings when God called us in Christ in divine election. There was no possibility that God would not quicken Sara’s womb and produce a child from nothing and there was no possibility that God would not send Christ and redeem us and make us experience all those spiritual blessing. When God purposed to save a people in Christ, he was our Father even though the world was not even made yet, much less a single child created. Likewise when Christ raised from the dead, all his people were quickened and raised and sat down at God’s right hand in him.

Ephesians 2:1: And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

That speaks of our experience of God’s quickening. But Paul also says when Christ was raised we were raised right then in him.

Eph 2: 5: Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) 6: And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: 7: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

Likewise, when God chose us in Christ and made Christ our Everlasting Father, in eternity it was done then *“that in the ages to come he might shew us the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.”* See if we can wrap our feeble little mind around this eternal statement:

Ecclesiastes 1: 9: The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun. 10: Is there any thing whereof it may be said, See, this is new? it hath been already of old time, which was before us.

In time, Christ was slain on a cross for his people, but he was *“the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”* In the end, we will be perfectly holy but God says before him in Christ *“as he is, so are we in this world.”* (1 Jn 4: 17)

Sinner, the take away is that this is reason to believe God. True faith believes God who quickens and calls things that are not—that he might bring to nothing things that are. When we truly believe, *“We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.”* Seeing how great God is and how few believe on God, it shows the depth of our depravity.

FAITH IS BELIEVING GOD’S WORD

Romans 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.

People will ask us, “What is your proof for believing God?” Our answer is “we have the word of God.” The Bible is God’s word. The big bang is a theory of man who is full of lies. This is the word of God who cannot lie.

Arthur Pink said, “Imagine forty persons of different nationalities, possessing various degrees of musical culture, visiting the organ of some great cathedral and at long intervals of time, and without any collusion whatever, striking sixty-six different notes, which when combined yielded the theme of the grandest oratorio ever heard; would it not show that behind these forty different men there was one presiding mind, one great Tone-Master?”

When a believer reads the Bible and beholds all these different men over great periods of time, some educated, some uneducated, none of which knew each other, yet all 66 books are the exact same message of Christ’s victorious salvation of God’s elect then we know and believe that behind all these writers is God the Holy Spirit giving the message. Faith believes God’s word.

FAITH IS NOT CONSIDERING CARNAL INABILITIES

Romans 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:...

God promised to use Abraham to produce a child in Sara’s womb—and God waited until he was 100. Natural reason, natural sense, were against him. Nothing natural could give him hope. It was all against hope. But it says of Abraham, “*But being not weak in faith.*” Weakness of faith comes from looking at carnal impossibilities. But Abraham considered not his own body, nor the deadness of Sarah’s womb. Therefore, against hope, he had hope because he believed God.

When God promises a blessing for his people, he does it in such a way to make us know that God alone did it. He makes all ways impossible for us to bring it to pass. God said Joseph would reign over his brothers. But Joseph was first enslaved and imprisoned then God raised him to greatness in Egypt. God declared he would deliver Israel using Moses. But Moses is first thrown in the river to die then God uses Pharaoh’s daughter to save him, Pharaoh’s riches to raise him and his own mother to nurse him. Then God used Moses to deliver his people and destroy Pharaoh. God promised redemption for his people in Christ. But Christ is first despised and rejected of men, crucified on a cursed tree and buried in a tomb. Then he arises declaring he has justified his people from all our sins and made us righteous in him and God is well-pleased for his righteousness sake.

Faith does not believe only when evidence is brought forth to the natural eye. Faith is itself “*the substance of things hoped*” and “*the evidence of things not seen*” because faith believes God.

FAITH IS GIVING GOD ALL THE GLORY

Romans 4: 20: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;

This is a description of Abraham in Christ before God. In Christ before God there was no unbelief in Abraham. But looking at Abraham himself we see that the strength of faith is of God. God called Abraham out of idolatry and gave him faith otherwise Abraham would have remained there. Abraham produced a child in unbelief thinking it was God’s way of fulfilling his promise but God turned him and strengthened his faith by repeating his promise, otherwise he would have remained in unbelief. True faith is strong by God. Therefore, when we believe God—with weak or strong faith—we give God all the glory, we praise and honor God.

Do you realize, brethren, whatever we believe in, we glorify. If we believe man will stop God from working his promised salvation then we glorify man. But if we believe God then we glorify God.

When my children trust my promise, they honor me. And I honor them for honoring me because we hear Christ repeatedly give honor to faith. The reason Christ honored faith is because faith honors him. That is why God says do not be as the rest of mankind but sanctify the LORD above all by believing on him.

Isaiah 8: 12: Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. 13: Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. 14: And he shall be for a sanctuary;

FAITH IS BEING FULLY PERSUADED THAT GOD IS ABLE

Romans 4: 21: And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.

Are you persuaded? The apostle Paul said,

Romans 8: 38: I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,...shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus.

2 Timothy 1: 12:...I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

Hebrews 11: 13: These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

What is faith persuaded of? That God is able to bring to pass all that he has promised us. When Sarah laughed—the messenger said,

Genesis 18: 14: Is any thing too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.

He did! Believers know God is able because at the time appointed, Christ came and created life in us.

Abraham even offered up Isaac on an altar because he believed God. He offered that very son through whom God said he would make him a father of many nations. Abraham drew back the knife to slay Isaac and God saw his heart, and before God Isaac died. Why did Abraham do that?

Hebrews 11: 19: Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.

Christ summed it up: *“With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.”* (Mt 19:26) It is impossible for sinners to choose God, but God chooses whom he will. It is impossible for sinners to give themselves life and faith in Christ, but God gives life and faith irresistibly. It is impossible for sinners to justify ourselves or work out a righteousness but God sent his Son who did so by laying down his life in place of his people under the justice of God. It is impossible for sinners to persevere in faith to the end but God is able to preserve us like he did Abraham. It is impossible for sinners to raise ourselves from the dead

in spirit then give ourselves a new, sinless, glorified body but God is able. Faith is being persuaded that God is able to do everything God promised.

FAITH IS BEING MADE THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD

Romans 4: 22: And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.

Abraham believed God therefore God imputed the righteousness of Christ to him. Righteousness was imputed to Abraham because in Christ his Surety, before God, Abraham was already made righteous. God only imputes what a man has been made and Christ as Surety then by his blood made all his people the righteousness of God in the court of God's holy and just law. Faith is the river through which God imputes that righteousness to the court of our conscience. Our text gives us this promise,

Romans 4: 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.

There is a seventh thing that faith is. Do you know what the seventh thing faith is? Faith is to be with Christ for all eternity! Believe on Christ today and the righteousness of Christ shall be imputed to you and you shall abide in Christ for all eternity!

Amen!