

How Big is Your Faith?
Rom 4:16-25

I had a battle with a cancer scare a couple of months ago. I got it in my head that a mole I was having removed was cancerous and I completely obsessed about it for a week. What if it is Melanoma? What if I didn't catch it early enough? What if I lose my hair? When they took my blood pressure at the doctor's office it was sky high! He gave me the good news that all was okay and then I told him how worried I was. He said, "but you're a man of God, you should have faith, not fear. You should be at peace with whatever happens."

Was my faith too small? Is that what Paul was talking about in this section? Let's spend some time this morning understanding what it means to have faith in God's promises and how it can make our life so much better when we trust in his promises.

PRAYER

I. The Faith of Abraham

A. God's Promise

1. Back in Gen 15:1-6 God promised to make Abraham's offspring as numerous as the stars in the sky.
2. God made a covenant with Abram.
3. A promise that he would not break.

B. Abraham's faith

1. Gen 15:6 tells us that Abraham BELIEVED the Promise.
2. Romans tells us he believed, Hebrews tells us he believed.
3. Abraham's faith is famous, but it wasn't perfect. So why would God honor him so much?
 - a) In the beginning he believed, but had doubts, that's why he agreed with Sarah to have a baby through Hagar.
 - b) However, that isn't what God intended and needed Abraham to realize that there was no way to have this promised fulfilled except through God alone.
 - c) So he waited until there was no physical possibility and then repeated his promise in Gen 17
 - d) This time, Abraham believed in God's promise with no doubt of God's capabilities.
 - e) God allowed Abraham's faith to grow to the point that real faith in God's promise became evident.
 - f) Abraham's righteousness was found in GOD'S capabilities, not Abraham's!

II. The Faith of You and Me

A. God's promise

1. The whole point of the Bible is God's promise to redeem man from spiritual death.
2. It was a promise not just to the early fathers, not just the Jews, but to everyone who would have complete faith in God.

3. It was a promise to all those who believe that God raised Jesus from the dead and could overcome our death as well.

4. Paul points that out very clearly in vs 24-25: Romans 4:24–25 (NLT) — 24 for our benefit, too, assuring us that God will also count us as righteous if we believe in him, the one who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. 25 He was handed over to die because of our sins, and he was raised to life to make us right with God.

5. God's promise to Abraham was perpetual life in providing offspring.

6. God's promise to us is eternal life in providing justification of our sins!

B. Our faith

1. When we had our 50th reunion several years back, we had a great attendance and a wonderful time. However, I didn't have much faith that it would go well. In fact I even had a dream that only a handful of people showed up. As the excitement grew for our big day, mine wavered

because I didn't think it would go well. I missed out on the excitement because I didn't have faith that this was going to be a special weekend.

2. Some of us do this with our faith in God

a) He has made a promise that he will justify our sins and deliver us from spiritual death.

b) Yet, we struggle with doubt. We think we have to find some way to "help" God with his promise.

c) We can't enjoy the true benefits of faith until we realize the impossibility of earning righteousness on our own capabilities as we talked about in detail last week.

3. Imagine what could happen if we took God at his word.

4. If we would live our life believing we are really saved.

5. To go through life knowing we have a promised life to come that is so much better.

6. To know that even in moments of weakness God's promise still applies to us.

7. That frees us to live a life of incredible dimension.

a) It simplifies life by not having to live in doubt thinking I haven't done enough.

b) It frees us to serve God with all our heart just as Abraham did because we KNOW the promise given us will be fulfilled.

C. It's a total change in our concept of hope.

1. We usually predicate our thoughts of hope on hopelessness

a) I hope my car will start is based on the fact that I think it has a very good chance of NOT starting!

b) I hope I get the job is based on a feeling that I probably won't get the job.

2. Our use of hope is built on perceived failure rather than assurance.

3. Abraham's hope was totally different.

4. Romans 4:18–22 (ESV) — 18 In hope he believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, "So

shall your offspring be.” 19 He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah’s womb. 20 No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, 21 fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. 22 That is why his faith was “counted to him as righteousness.”

5. It wasn’t the hope in the face of failure that Abraham believed in, the was the hope, the life lived as though God had already fulfilled his promise that Abraham built his faith upon.

6. Vs 18 points out that in the natural course of things, there was no hope of Abraham and Sarah having a child together.

7. Earlier in his faith walk, he let the circumstances of life guide his faith and it didn’t turn out very well with Hagar and Ishmael.

8. But now, Abraham wasn’t focused on that aspect. His faith was focused on God’s promise.

9. The circumstances that seemed to be an argument against God keeping his promises, only STRENGTHENED Abraham’s faith.

10. His faith was strengthened even more so, when he saw it beginning to be fulfilled in Isaac.

11. I was talking with Dave Buzbee about his cancer a while ago. I was bummed for him and telling him so when he made the most unusual comment. He said, “You know, my faith in God is much stronger now. I

know where my relationship stands with him no matter what happens with this cancer.”

12. Think about that, he understood that our relationship with God has nothing to do with what goes on around us, but what goes on IN us.

13. That’s how we need to live.

14. To have a big enough faith that we live our lives like God has already fulfilled his promise to us.

D. Conclusion

1. Going back to my conversation with the doctor. I told him that I didn’t fear death. I didn’t look forward to the process of dying!

2. Big enough faith is knowing the circumstance of life may not always be pleasant, but our hope rests in the promise of God.

3. It’s living contented knowing God has the end results covered.

4. It’s living in a trust of God for the life to come.

5. God has credited to US righteousness.

6. Will your faith be big enough to believe God has already done everything needed to justify you?

7. Don’t live a life burdened down by doubt, but a life lifted up by faith.