

## The Principles of Faith

Romans 4:13-25

5/ 29/ 05

### Intro

In the early chapters of the book of Romans, Paul established the need for grace. He proved that there will be no one who will be able to stand before God as righteous. He showed that no one will have an excuse as to why we did not honor God as God. He showed that there is no one who is righteous, not even one.

Paul then presents the crux of our existence, how is a man justified before God? How can a man be accepted by God? -- because if we are not accepted, then we will be rejected.

He then provides the answer to man's dilemma – faith.

Paul then presents Abraham as an example of faith. There is so much to learn from Abraham, whom Paul calls the father of us all – of those who believe.

### **These are the principles of faith that Paul wants us to learn from the life of Abraham.**

#### **I. What Faith is Not**

##### A. It is not fulfilling the law

- If we are trying to be accepted by God because of what we do or don't do, this is not faith.
- Instead, this is trying to find life by earning it.

- Even trying really, really hard is not credited to us as righteousness, because everyone will fall short.
- Paul also says that the promise of God did not come through the Law.

**Genesis 12:3, “And I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.”**

- This promise came over 400 years before the Law was even given.

##### B. Faith is not a wage

- If we are justified before God based up on our actions, then we will have something to boast about.
- To the one who works, his wages are not considered a gift, but what he is due. It is what he has earned.
- The real problem is that we just can't do it. We simply cannot accomplish what we are required to do to be acceptable before God.

**Illus – If I said that I would give \$1,000 to anyone who could jump from the floor to the ceiling. No one could do it. It's a legitimate offer, but you can't do it.**

**If you want to be acceptable before God you have to live by His standard.**

**1 Peter 1:15-16, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, “You shall be Holy, for I am Holy.”**

- What God requires is really very simple...

**Matthew 22:37-40, And He said to him, You shall love the Lord you God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.”**

C. Faith is not to be dead

- It’s interesting that it was faith that was reckoned to Abraham as righteousness, but that it was his faith that caused him to do what God wanted him to do.

**Illus – When God had asked Abraham to sacrifice his only begotten son on Mount Moriah, he obeyed... because of his faith.**

**Genesis 22:18, “In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.”**

**Hebrews 11:17, 19, “By faith, Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son; ... He considered that God is able to raise people even from the dead, from which he also received him back as a type.”**

**Illus – in the book of James, it says that even the demons believe in God – and tremble. They have faith, but it does not cause them to do anything about it.**

## II. **What Faith Does**

A. Faith obtains the promise

- God gave the promise to Abraham that through Him all the nations of the earth would be blessed.
- Abraham believed God and received the promise.
- God has made a promise to us as well, which is based on the same promise to Abraham...

**Romans 8:16-17, “The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.”**

**Galatians 3:22, 29, “But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.... And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise.”**

B. Faith opens the door of grace

- Because the promises of God are given by faith and not by law, it provides an opportunity for us to experience grace.
- **Grace is the pouring out of God’s blessings upon those who do not deserve it.**

**Romans 5:2, “through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.”**

- I love the phrase, “grace, in which we stand.” If it were not for grace, we could not stand at all.

**Illus – without grace we have emptiness, meaninglessness, loneliness, and worthlessness.**

**Because of grace, we have acceptance, love, peace, and joy.**

### III. What Faith Is

#### A. God is the object of our faith

- The object of our faith is the most important thing about it.
- You can put your faith in almost anything.

**Illus – You can put your faith in a chair. We do this when we sit down. Why? Because chairs have proved themselves over and over, although they can disappoint us (like when I was in Sunday school and pulled the chair back from a girl.)**

- We can put our faith in evolution.
- We can place our hope in our own self-righteousness.

**Illus – But Abraham put his faith in God. When God promised to make him the father of many nations, he believed what God said.**

- He believed in God who gives makes dead things alive.

- He believed in God who calls into existence that which does not exist.

- Even a little faith in God can be very powerful.

**Luke 17:5-6, The apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith!” And the Lord said, “If you had faith like a mustard seed, you would say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and be planted in the sea’; and it would obey you.”**

- Rather than talk about *our faith* it is better to talk about *the God in whom our faith is fixed!*

#### B. There will be obstacles to faith

- From Abraham we learn that there are often obstacles to faith. Verse 18 – against all hope he believed.

**Hebrews 11:1-3, “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the men of old gained approval. By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.”**

- The obstacle for Abraham was the hopelessness of his and Sarah’s age.
- Yet he did not waiver in unbelief. Verse 20. But grew strong in the faith.

**Key – they grew strong in their faith. They both laughed when they first heard what God said, but then believed.**

**Hebrews 11:11, “By faith even Sarah herself received ability to conceive, even beyond the proper time of life, since she considered Him faithful who had promised.”**

C. Faith is life and peace

- Verse 5:1 Having been justified, we also have peace
- Faith was imputed to Abraham as righteousness, and it is imputed to us as righteousness also.
- When we believe in God’s provision for our salvation – that Jesus was raised from the dead in our behalf – righteousness is given to us.
- The God who raised Christ will give life to us as well. That is our faith.
- We then also receive what Abraham received – acceptance by God, that we would even be a friend of God.

**James 2:23, and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness,” and he was called the friend of God.”**

**John 15:15, No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you.”**

Conclusion
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**Faith is the key that lays hold of all that God promised in Christ Jesus. Abraham grew in faith; we are also called to grow strong in our faith.**