

Faith

by Don McClure

The sermon emphasizes the importance of faith in God's promises, drawing parallels between Abraham's journey and our own spiritual growth.

Duration: 48:59

Scripture: Romans 4:16

Topics: "God's Promises", "Faith"

Description

Don McClure emphasizes the significance of faith through the story of Abraham in Romans chapter 4, illustrating how Abraham's belief in God's promises, despite his past and present circumstances, serves as a model for all believers. He explains that just as Abraham had to confront his own deadness and hopelessness, so must we recognize our limitations and trust in God's power to transform our lives. McClure encourages the congregation to understand that God's promises are available to everyone who believes, and that faith is the key to experiencing the fullness of life that God offers. He concludes by reminding us that God desires to take us aside and reveal the potential He has for each of us, urging us to believe in His ability to bring hope and life from our dead situations.

Transcript

Romans chapter 4 this evening, turn with me to it in verse 16, is where we're going to pick it up and finish out this chapter. But therefore, it is of faith that it might be by grace, to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only, pardon me, not to that only which is of the law, but also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all. As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations before whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead and calleth those things which be not as though they were, 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 a hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah'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 unto him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, but for us also to whom it shall be imputed if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered for our offenses and was raised again for our justification. Well,

you know, there is something wonderful about every one of our lives, whether we know it or not, in the sense of just being a child of God and the processes that God puts every one of us through.

I think the older you get as a Christian, and when your young life so often seems so confused, you're trying to make things make sense, you're trying to fit together the parts or the struggles or the trials that you're going through, and so often it just seems, why? I don't understand this. I don't need this. It doesn't make any sense.

It isn't, I don't need it now, maybe later, and it seems so confusing at the time. But as the years go by, it's amazing how you begin looking at your life and the things that God puts you through, and you realize this order that an engineer couldn't essentially have put together any better than God does when he is engineering and forming and fashioning our life and our faith and causing us to grow. And the very experiences that we need to go through, he puts us through.

Another thing, though, that's interesting I notice about us is that rarely do I think that we oftentimes realize the parallels that there are between us and these great heroes of the faith. So often, you know, we pick up our Bible and we see these tremendous spiritual examples. We see our forefathers essentially of the faith, but we don't realize how great the parallel is in their lives and ours.

Well, we like reading about them, don't get me wrong. We like studying them, but really looking and realizing that God is not the respecter of persons, and what he put Abraham through, he puts me through. What he put Moses through, he puts me through, you through.

What he put Ruth and Hannah through, he puts us all through. They're things that as we grow, God puts us all through these things. It's part of the processes of life.

And they're not really unique. As wonderful as it is to study their lives, they are there for us to learn from because they do parallel our lives. And here as we look at Romans chapter four, I think Paul wonderfully draws out this simple and great truth.

And that is essentially that what Abraham had to experientially, externally, graphically go through in his life, we all have to do. Every child of God has to go through this personally, internally, spiritually. And here is Paul in Romans chapter four, and let me also take another moment before we get into this text here, is that I believe this chapter is the most personally, the most critical chapter of all of Romans.

That's my own personal opinion of it. I read a lot of commentators and none of them say that, but what do they know? But when they read my commentary, they'll change their mind. But the reason I think it is so critical personally is essentially here through the first three chapters, Paul has now taken every human being, every human being in every category of human, and he said, you're too bad to be true.

You're hopeless. You're sinners. You're destitute.

All of us, we're desperate. We are absolutely so far out of control. We are too dead to be anything but dead.

We are hopelessly dead. And here after three chapters, he has completely annihilated the human race. When he gets into chapter five, he is now going to be talking to these same people that he says, you're too bad to be true, you're too dead to be true, you're too hopeless to be true.

And he is from chapter five through eight, he is now going to be telling these same people the most glorious, awesome, wonderful life that is theirs, that this is for you. This power, this glory, this dynamic, this experience of life, this experience of God. And after taking three chapters to say, you have no life in you, and then he's going to take four later on and say, now here is the whole world open to you.

But the key, the hinge between the two experiences are, it's all in chapter four. And that is, he's going to take you and say, the only way that you can change your life from the first three chapters and move into the next four, that is five, six, seven, and eight. And experience those is going to be the story I got to tell you in chapter four, the story of Abraham, the story of faith in what it is all about.

And here, this is what makes it so critical, because to the very degree that we understand chapter four, and we believe chapter four, for our own personal experience of life is the same degree, we will experience chapters five through eight. That's why it is so critical, while it is so important. And here as he gives us as we complete now after this, the last two studies, if you can remember those, but looking at Abraham and the issues here, he now boils it down in these last verses of this chapter to tell us essentially, here, I want you to tell you the story of Abraham, because if you can grasp his story, there's hope for you.

But the first thing he tells us here about Abraham is that in order for Abraham to have his life changed as it was, and to become the father of all of those of the household of faith, of all the nations of the world, and to become the father of the whole family of God, he had some interesting things he had to do, which he did, but they weren't easy to do. First of all, Abraham had to deal and to come to grips with his own past. In verses 17 and 19, here he tells us about Abraham, as it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations before whom also, before him who he believed, even God who quickeneth the dead and calleth those things which be not as though they were.

In verse 19, he says, and be not weak in faith. He considered not his own body now dead when he was about a hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb. Here we have something where Abraham had to take his eyes entirely off of the deadness of his own body, of his own life.

I suppose that's one of the hardest things for anybody in the world to do, isn't it? To be able to take our eyes off of ourself and off of our past, off of everything else, the hopelessness and the fruitlessness and the emptiness of our own lives, and to be able to look at the Lord, and when he tells us something entirely different than anything we've ever experienced in our entire life, and then to be able to believe him when we have nothing in our history, nothing in our past that would even suggest for one split second that what God is talking about is remotely possible. That's what's happening to Abraham here. When you look at him, here is something there, but he had to realize God, when he came out and he began to speak to Abraham, he had no interest in his past, as empty and as fruitless as Abraham's past was, the deadness of him, of his body, or the deadness of his own life, the inability and the complete incapacity to produce any life at all.

God wasn't even interested in it, didn't even talk about it. He wasn't interested in his past, he wasn't interested in his failings, he wasn't interested in his weaknesses, anything at all. Even though Abraham hadn't been able to produce any suggestion of life at all.

And here God is going to tell him, Abraham, what's going to happen here? It's going to be all of faith. Nothing in your personal experience would ever suggest to love you, or that you have life in you, or you have any capacity at all within you. And what is going to happen here is that Abraham comes to grips

essentially with a faith in God, a faith that when God took him out and God spoke to him and God said some things, it had nothing to do with him.

He couldn't merit it, he couldn't earn it, he didn't deserve it. There was nothing in him at all that should cause it to happen, but simply there when God came and he stretched out his hand to Abraham and he said, take my hand and I'm going to bless you and I'm going to do something beyond your wildest dreams and I'm going to give you a life that you have never experienced and never known nor even dreamed possible. But it was simply because God contained a love within himself beyond reason, beyond comprehension where he simply could look and say, I love you, period.

Not because of anything I see. And here essentially there is Abraham had to just reach out his hand to God when God said I'm going to bless you and I'm going to bless your life. You didn't earn it, you don't deserve it, there's nothing in your past, you're dead.

But I am going to do something for you. And there's something there, this is common to every real child of God. Every one of us, we are no different than Abraham in that way at all.

When here you look at our own deadness, the deadness of our own soul, the deadness of our own life, the capacity to produce any real love, any real life, any real goodness, we don't have it. Nothing in ourself that can do it at all. I mean, here you stop to think of Abraham now.

It says here, you know, that he did not consider, it's an awesome thing when you look at this, verse 19, and being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body, now dead, which was about a hundred years old, neither the deadness of Sarah's womb. Now here's a couple that have been married now for probably 75 years, 75 years now. He's a hundred years old, she is 90.

And if he got married when he was 25 and she was 15, which was very within probably the realm of reason with them, and here they've got 75 years of married life. And by the way, it wasn't only Sarah who was unable to produce, here at this point at a hundred years old, his body was completely dead in its capacity to produce. And here there is something now of 75 years, think about this, 75 years of marriage and no children.

Now, you know, somewhere along the line, you kind of think, you know, I bet we're not going to have any. I mean, I don't know when that settled in. You know, I meet a lot of couples, you know, they've been married a year or two or something and they start, oh, we can't have children, it's not happening.

And I don't know how many, how many that, you know, after a year or two, they give up and they go out and adopt, you know, one or two, and then they have to start popping out their own kids, you know, or something, and you wonder what happened. And that, you know, that's not uncommon. After a couple of years, maybe, or three or four, but after 30 or 40 or 50 years, I mean, you kind of probably look at each other and say, you know, honey, I don't think this is working.

You know, at one point there, you got to kind of think there, but here you've got 75 years of an inability together to produce a child. And yet here, there is something where God lets this settle so profoundly, so deeply within them. You have no life in you.

Nada. Nothing. I mean, it's not just a year of evidence or two or five or 10 or 20.

There is something that is so settled in. We cannot produce life. Now, that's essentially what Paul has been saying to the whole rest of the world for three chapters.

In the first three chapters of Roman, he says, you're all dead. We are all dead. We have no capacity to produce any eternal life, real life, spiritual life, love life that is an agape love, that is a true joy, a true peace, that is a life from heaven at all.

And when a person, one of the most critical things, I suppose, that ever happens for a Christian is when we come to the realization that we honestly have nothing in us of any good. That left to ourselves, we're hopeless. In Romans 8, Paul says, I know that in me that is in my flesh dwelleth no good thing.

He's going to go on, he says, I know in me that is in my flesh dwelleth no good thing. Actually, the Living Bible in that particular verse, I like it's translation or paraphrase or whatever better, actually. In the Living Bible, it says, insofar as my sinful self is concerned, I am rotten through and through.

First, I like, you know, the King James when it says, you know, insofar as my sinful self, you know, I mean, I know that in me that is in my flesh dwelleth no good thing. It's almost intelligent. It's almost like, wow, that's intelligent observation.

But when he says that insofar as my sinful self is concerned, I am rotten through and through. I didn't sound intelligent. It just sounds honest.

But when a person comes to grips, I have nothing. There is absolutely no reason in heaven or earth. God should love me.

God should bless me. God should care for me. God should do anything at all.

I have no life within me. That's the point of Abraham. God waited and waited and waited so that every human excuse through all of history would have to look and say, this couple dead, deader than a doornail, no life in them, absolutely hopeless.

And Abraham had, by this time, he'd come to a full realization, no capacity for life. That's one of the most wonderful places a person will ever get. We spend our whole life not wanting to become hopeless, but one of the greatest times in life are when we almost lose all hope.

He's going to go on and talk about a real hope in a moment, but I don't think we get a real hope until we look at ourself and realize I am hopeless. Secondly, Abraham not only had to deal with his past, he had to deal with his presence, the present essentially, because in verse 17, once again, it says, as it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations before him who he believed, even God who quickeneth the dead and call it those things which be not as though they were, 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. Abraham not only had by faith to realize and understand there, God is not interested in his past.

We all know it's dead. We all know it's hopeless, but he also had to deal with his presence, his present situation, and that is that he had to put his eyes upon the Lord and have a faith that was unbelievably simple and profound and intelligent. Look at that more in a moment, but here is something.

When you look to me essentially at the context of when all of this is happening back in Genesis chapter 15, it's actually, it is where, I mean, where Paul is talking about here, very simple and wonderful lesson,

you know, where the Lord took Abraham aside and he took him out one night and he showed him the stars of the sky. And I'm sure this was one of those nights that was probably just filled with stars. I remember years ago when we lived up in Lake Arrowhead and sometimes, and we lived outdoors, very dark, no street lights or anything, and some nights you would stand out there and it was like a blanket of stars, a sheet, you know, of stars up there.

I remember one time my brother and his wife and children were up there visiting us and we were walking out to the car and he's going home that night, putting the kids in the car and one of his boys, about five years old, we're getting him in the car and all of a sudden he starts crying and he starts screaming. He says, daddy, daddy, and we're wondering what's wrong here. What happened to him? And we look up and he's pointing to the sky and he sees, and he says, look, what's happening, what's happening? And we're looking up and my brother looks at me and he says, oh man, I got to get this kid out.

You know, more often he had, they lived in Pasadena and he realized he's never seen the sky like this. But I'm sure this was one of those nights when the Lord took Abraham out and he showed him there the stars of the sky and how that so shall thy seed be innumerable, innumerable. So shall thy seed be.

And here's something you may put yourself in that situation. How would you act? How would you think if the Lord was to take you, you know, out and show you the stars of the sky when here at this point in Genesis 15, he's had 50 years of marriage and uh, you know, or something now approximately. But here he takes him out after about 50 years of marriage with no children, obviously whatsoever.

And he shows him this blanket of stars and he tells him, so shall thy seed be. And incidentally, I believe this is how we, what we think about this is extremely critical because I believe God does this for all of us. I don't believe God is no respecter of persons.

I believe God is desiring to take every one of his children out and to challenge them in a, in an, in one way or another with their faith in the potential of their life. If they will please God, I don't believe for a moment we're going to get to heaven and there's going to be a, you know, a few of these stars in heaven and these heroes in heaven that, you know, got great stock options on eternity offered to them and nobody else had them. That there's, you know, a bunch of people out there that God took aside and he says, here, I'm going to tell you stuff.

I don't tell many people, but I'm going to tell you, you know, or something. And then the rest of us common people that don't ever even get to be around those conversations. He is no respecter of persons.

I believe that they're in the life of every child of God. He has a plan and he has a sky of stars that he wants to take us out and show us. Knowing we're hopeless, knowing we're fruitless, knowing there's no life within us and then challenges and say, so is the potential of your life.

If you'll trust me. And how we, and how we react to this, because I believe we all have the same story. I believe in one way or another, we'll all get to heaven and we will look back and we'll all see of 2020 clearly when God was wanting to take us by the hand and take us out and show us what he could do, what was yet to be done, the great potential of our life.

And by the way, I'm only talking by the way here, I suppose to people a hundred or younger. If you're over a hundred, I don't know what he does with you, but I, but if you're under a hundred years old, I, you're still in the crowd. The potential of being taken out, it's far from gone for many of us, but there to have God take

us aside and want to tell you, this is what I have for you.

I believe he does this. I believe you may, he did every one of us. We will look back at from eternity's perspective and realize the promises of God that he made to us realize the things that maybe they just rolled off our back, like a water off a duck's back or something.

Maybe we just cruised on, didn't even give it a second thought. Just said, Oh, I don't think so. You, I don't know who you thought you were talking to, but I clearly am not the one Abraham easily could have said that understandably could have turned and said, not me, couldn't be me, but here God, I believe he looks at every one of us in challenges with the potential of life that he can do with us.

The ministry he would offer us, the service, the blessing, the things he would yet do in our lives and our family and our children and many around to bless us beyond our wildest dreams and how we ought to learn something from Abraham. And when you look at Abraham, how did he respond? And here, the amazing thing is, is, is he said, Abraham believed God. God told him this and he believed him astounding when you stopped to think of it, but yet at the same time, think for a moment, where in the world did the stars come from in the first place? They came from the very hand of the very God that took Abraham out and showed him to him here as Abraham went out.

Think about it with me for a moment, if you would, because they came from God, they came from his hand here, the Lord, for him to create a hundred billion galaxies is nothing for him to, you know, to, to just create it at all meant absolutely nothing for him. The universe didn't create itself. God created.

We know that it didn't. And there was a point though, where creation didn't exist. There were no sun, no moon, no stars, no universe, no galaxies, uh, nothing there until one day, uh, one moment God said, let there be light.

And just like that light was the universe, the galaxies, billions of stars, far more than Abraham even saw for a moment. I'm sure Abraham just saw the minutest number of what God had created. He'd saw nothing of it in here.

God took him out. Who created all this whole thing and he takes him out and he says, Abraham, what, whatever you see of my creation, you can have it. And Abraham believed him.

You see the wonderful thing here is it's like, who cares? You know, at this point, the issue has nothing to do with Abraham. It has nothing to do with his humanness. It has nothing to do with his failings.

It has nothing to do with his sinfulness. It has nothing to do with his limitations, with his humanness. This is an entirely new ballgame.

God comes to a dead man and he takes him out. The creator of all of life, all of creation, all of eternity, takes him out, says, take a look. What do you think? Whatever you see, you can have.

And the amazing thing is it shouldn't be amazing, is amazing to us, I suppose, but I, but here it's something there. Abraham believed God, which as I personally ponder it, I don't think that's all that amazing anyway. You see, I suppose if, say tomorrow, you know, we all go home tonight and tomorrow I go to the bank and you go to the bank and we happen to walk in and when we walk in and we see, oh, hi, how are you? And, and while we're in the bank, the Brinks armored car, you know, pulls up and out they come with bags and bags of money and we're standing there and we watch them and they go into the

vault and they're empty and all this and it piles out and there's hundreds of thousands of dollars and we happen to peek through it.

You know, the vault door is open and I lean over to you and I say to you, you see that? Yep. You can have it all. Really.

It's yours. Trust me. You know, you'd say, I don't know what you'd say.

You'd go home and tell your husband or wife or whatever, say that we need to keep that guy in the church. He's dangerous in public, you know, but the, you'd look there and you'd say, this is loony. I think he, he, he talked like he was serious.

You would have a very difficult time believing it. But imagine this. Imagine if Bill Gates, supposedly the richest man in the world, and you know, came along and befriended you just like you started spending time with you, hanging out with you.

One day he says, Hey, come on over. You come over, you know, when you're sitting there at his place, he says, Hey, come here. Let me, I got a blue bank in my house and he takes you in and here's this vault and it's just filled.

I mean, you realize that there's vaults within vaults within vaults in there, he just opens up one of the doors. He says, what do you see in there? He says, well, I see money. He says, well, whatever you see, you can have it.

You're my friend. Now, would you go home and say, that guy's crazy? Or would you not get your wheelbarrow and say, I like this crazy guy. You know, so you, you see, your faith would be directly related to the one who has taken your hand in and it ought not to be an awesome thing that the God of all eternity who now comes and befriends you and befriends me and takes us.

And he says, I've got a life. I want to give you, I'm going to open up the vaults of eternity, the vaults of glory, the vaults of power, the vaults of love, the vaults of all blessing. I'm going to begin to open them.

And if you're going to have trouble with your past and that, I don't have one with it. I love you. And I just want to take your hand and I want to bring you in.

And when somebody begins to realize that this book, this is God's vault and as he opens it up to us and he says, this is yours. And unfortunately, a lot of us as Christians, I mean, we, we believe we're believing unbelievers sort of a thing. We believe everything.

I mean, we'll die for the Bible. I believe the Bible is the word of God. It's inspired.

It's infallible. And it's, it's true and it's everything from one end to the other, you know, and then we get down to one thing. Do you think God's going to take care of you today? No.

You know, down to, he can get you through this trial of, no, I don't, you know, I don't know where he is. He split, you know, or something he's gone in word of these. We have all, we have this great doctrinal faith, but personally, when he wants to take our hand and say, I want to bring you into this, that's where the rubber meets the road.

This is where I believe God takes every one of us, wants to draw us aside, wants to have us one there to where we, it could be one day written of us in eternity, as it says that I have made thee a father of many nations. And he says before whom he believed, even God who quickeneth the dead and he called it those things, which be not as though they were. God looked at Abraham and he said, you're dead in a doornail, but that's okay.

I happen to be God. And I spoke all of this stuff into existence. So when I tell you and I show you a bunch of stars and say, I can give you kids like this, you have a problem with that.

And he says, no, I don't. And against hope, he believed in hope. In other words, against all the past and the hopelessness of the past, because of the eye of who he had set his eyes upon, upon whom he had met.

He was now prepared to say, I believe you, I believe you can do this. Though I have 75 years of evidence to the contrary, all I need is one minute in your presence and hearing you, the God of eternity, tell me something. And that's all I need.

He not only had to deal with his past, he not only had to deal with the present. He also, you know, the wonderful thing is he ended up having a faith that was very intense. That is, he believed and he had hope, whoever, pardon me, who against hope, believed in hope.

And in here again, humanly, obviously his case, it was, was hopeless. But Abraham had to take his life and put it entirely into God's hands. Say everything here says you got the wrong guy.

Everything here says you ought to start somewhere else. Everything here says something is wrong. But yet at the same time, there was something there that when he saw God and he realized if God before you, who could be against you? He realized there that if God spared not his own son, will he not give us all things? He somehow another read and knew the rest of the Bible before it was written.

The truths of the Bible, he could grasp. He could look into the presence of God and realize there is nothing too hard for you. You did create this universe and you did create me.

And though, you know, dead in myself, I can be alive and you at any moment in time that you would so quicken it, that you would so speak it to be. And the amazing thing about this, when you look at it, is it says there about him in verse 20, he staggered not at the promises of God. Abraham had other problems in his life, but there, there was something within him.

He kept that and it lasted. I'm now this happened when he was about 75. Can you imagine coming home at 75 to your wife and say, honey, you're not going to believe this, but I'm going to tell you something.

And he told her and he says, she said, you're right. I don't believe it. You know, and he says, yes, we're going to have a child.

She probably looked at him and said, well, this is a line you've never tried before. Or something. I don't know, but she, I'm sure she struggled with this, but he said, no, it's true.

When he was 76, honey, guess what? We're going to have a child. Abraham, I've been talking about it for a year. When he was 80, 85, honey, guess what? We're going to have a child.

90. I mean, he there, look there, if there was still something, I don't know when and I don't know how, but God is going to do it because he told me so. And that was something he staggered not at how it would happen.

And when Sarah struggled in her faith and said here, Hey, Gar, obviously here, I'm not the one you got to promise. I'm happy for you, but I don't have it. I don't share that conviction.

Let's try. Hey, Gar, Sarah really struggled and he there, you know, in there in his faith, whether of getting messed up there for a time, but ultimately how wonderful it is that the new Testament looks at Abraham in the past says he staggered not. By the way, incidentally, one of the things I think that is so wonderful about the new Testament is on how, how it remembers the old Testament saints, because you could put together quite an argument saying Abraham staggered a lot.

But yet the new Testament, when later on the Holy spirit would write down about Abraham because our sins are forgiven because he blots them out because he says, I'll remember them no more when later on they would write the new Testament and the Holy spirit who has all truth when he's writing, says he staggered not. And somebody else might say, wait a minute, just a minute here. Holy spirit, when you're writing there, I think I got some other information.

Well, it isn't right. I won't accept it. This is the truth.

And how wonderful to think one day God will look at you and me that way, that he will look at us with our staggerings and our struggles. But yet one day in heaven, he says, staggered, not hit the promises of God. But here Abraham had to come to grips with that.

And so also does every child of God with you. And when you look at your needs, the things that God has told you for your life that have yet to be things for your marriage, things for your children, maybe for your grandchildren, things there that, that years and years ago, the Lord spoke to you and how easy as well I, I, you know, that I don't, I don't know. I remember it, but I don't, I don't, I don't know what happened.

But to be able to say, wait a minute, God challenged me again, take me out again, speak to me again, grab my hand, challenge my faith again. I want to spend the rest of my life in hope against hope, believing in you, in the things that you can do. And Abraham had this tremendous sense of God's promises and a tremendous sense of God's power.

For it says in verse 21, it says being fully persuaded that he, which has promised was able also to perform it. And therefore it was imputed unto him for righteousness. Here Abraham was somebody, he says, listen, I didn't make the promise.

God did. Therefore God will do it period. And here Abraham, he trusted in God's promises and he trusted in his power.

Hebrews 6, 12 says it is with faith and patience that we inherit the promises of God. Sometimes God tests our faith with time, but we inherit him. When God speaks to us, this is the life I have for you.

You know, someday I think we're, when you're going to run to all these heroes in the Bible and be so impressed with them. That's how we think. I don't know if it'll really be that way because you see these things essentially, Paul goes on to tell us that these truths are for every one of us, that what Paul has laid out here, he says is precisely for all of us for in verse 23, it says, now it was not written for his sake alone

that it was imputed unto him, but for us also to whom it shall be imputed.

If we believe on him that raised up Jesus, our Lord from the dead, who was delivered for our offenses and who was raised again for our justification here. Now Paul looks and he says, the reason I'm telling you this about Abraham. About Abraham there in entrusting God, believing God against all hope that God could give him a life that was absolutely unbelievable.

The reason I'm telling you this is because this is for you. The same thing that was imputed unto him will be imputed unto us. If we believe that God also raised up Jesus from the dead and he's alive now to do in us what everything that was promised to Abraham before.

And the wonderful thing here, it's just as it says there, though, it's critical notice there in verse 24, for it says there, but, but for us also to whom it shall be imputed. If we believe here, he looks and he says, here's the deal. We've got to believe through it.

And you know, the thing through life again, when you watch the issues of life, the struggles of life and the times in life where God tests us and God puts us through things and God has trials that are all to bring us to a, to a place to where ultimately we can trust him completely. Isn't it where we can let one day lay our life entirely out to him and realize, you know, God, there's nothing you can do. That's the ultimate thing where you and I, before we lay our head down for the last time and close our eyes and our heart stops beating, that something has happened within us where we can look at God and say, Lord, you can do anything.

And I know it because we've been there and I've watched you work in my life. I've watched you work in my home. I've watched you provide.

I've watched you touch. I've watched you heal. I've watched you restore.

I've watched you in times of crisis when all hope was gone and you brought hope when every time my life was over and done and this was a disaster and this was beyond hope. There you came and there you worked in there. You did wonderful thing.

And I think when we realize here, Abraham, God is, Paul is telling us exactly what Abraham had to go through. So do you, because he is no respecter of persons. As I said a while ago, I think, you know, we think we're going to get up to heaven and we're going to start going around to all these arenas that are filled with all our stars.

You know, there's going to be a big arena where David will just be holding, you know, conferences just fill up everybody. Hey, let's go hear David today and hear David stories. Let's go hear Elijah's and let's go hear Hannah's and let's go hear Sarah's and let's go hear Abraham's and let's, you know, and just all these people we have on a pedestal and we're going to go meet them and we're just going to stand in awe of them and their wonderful, tremendous faith.

And we're going to come up and say, Abraham, man, I can't believe it. You actually know children all these years and God just came, told you he's going to bless you and you believed him. How did you do that? Abraham, look at us the exact same way you did.

The same thing that you had the entire evidence that says you're dead, you're hopeless, you're lost. God isn't interested in you. You've been passed by.

Life is over for you. It's hopeless for you. And yet Jesus Christ came to you and said, I love you and I forgive you and I can take your life and bless your socks off.

And you had to decide whether you're going to believe it or not. And you had no evidence for it. I didn't either.

We think we're going to go to Abraham and say, Abraham, I can't believe it. Then you get this child and then you go and God says, offer the child as a sacrifice. And you got one child of the whole promise.

It's all wrapped up in one child. And then God says, I want him. And you took that child and you offered him as a sacrifice.

You were going to let him die. How could you sacrifice your child? Abraham will probably say, well, at the time he was a teenager and everybody wants to sacrifice a teenager now and then. But he'll look there and say, I had to do the same thing with my child that you had to do with yours.

The same heartache that I had there when my child was there in laying up there is the same thing you had to do with your child. You thought you dedicated your child on a Sunday morning, you know, when Pastor Chuck took him and held him in your hand and everybody prayed. And that's just that was just the initial dedication.

Then it really hit home when they're teenagers and they walked out that door and they took the car keys and said, see you later, maybe, you know, and there you sat wondering where they were going to go and what they were going to do and where they're going to destroy their life. And there you had to come and give your child up to me for debt. Totally give him.

I know that feeling. And so does every parent in Abraham as he looks at this, he says that that's the same faith you had to exercise. No different.

We think we're going to go to David and when David, we're going to say, David, what was it like going against up a Goliath, this humongous guy, this unbelievable animal, this giant? What was it like for you to go and to deal with him? I think David will say same way it was with the giants you had to deal with. Same things in life that came and looked at you and said, you will not go into this land. The same times in your life that said you will go no further and I'm going to destroy you and life is hopeless.

And there you had to cry out to God just like I did. We think we're going to meet Elijah and when Elijah there, you know, when we get Elijah, what was it like to deal with 450 prophets of Baal and to look at them and tell them their God was nonexistent and he was crazy and he wasn't there and he didn't exist and you mock their God and you ridiculed them all day long. How did you do that? What was going on inside of you? You say the same things that went on inside of you when you went to work in a carnal, wicked, unbelieving world, surrounded by all of those coworkers who had no time or interest in God whatsoever.

And there you looked at them and said, your God is not real. Jehovah is real. Jesus Christ is real.

The same butterflies you felt the same struggle when you took a stand. That's how I felt. No different.

You know, we think that we're going to look at all of these people. We're going to meet, you know, Chad, rack me, Shad, and a bend to go and say, Whoa, what was it like when you didn't bow down to their God? And then they came and said, Hey, you're going in the furnace. And then, you know, when, when they

stand in, I love the answer.

It says in Daniel about him that they answered and they said to the king, Oh, Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer you in this matter. If so be our God in whom we serve, he is able to deliver us from this fiery furnace and he will deliver us out of the hand, O king. But if not, let it be known unto thee, O king.

They looked there and he says, God's able to deliver us. I can imagine Chad, rack me, Shad, and a bend and go stand in there. One of them did the speaking.

I don't know which one, maybe Shad rack. There's me Shack and a bend to go. They're standing there.

Listen, maybe we don't even have to think about this. We know exactly how we feel. Our God is able to deliver us and take care of us.

But if not, I imagine, you know, bend to go looked over and says, but if not, wait a minute, I thought we had an agreement. We were getting delivered, you know, or something. No, maybe.

Yes. Maybe. Yes.

No. You know, we'll have, we got to go find out. We don't know till we really get in there.

That's what they're saying. We know he's able. Now, if he's going to, we don't know.

And we'll say, how did you walk in there not knowing? Well, the same way when you took a stand and you wouldn't bow down in your office into the wicked ways that they lived and you knew they were going to fire you and they heated up the furnace and they said, you're, we're firing you just like they fired us. But you went through it. So did we.

Same God delivered both of us. And when we realize God looks at us and he says, these are the promises. These are the things I'll never leave you or forsake you.

I'll be with you always under the ends of the age. My power, my love, my commitment to be with you and hear God. He doesn't mind at all.

You know, when he looks at you, when we come and say, but God, God, you don't understand. I've blown it. My life is a mess.

But then I think God could say, Oh, really? Did you go down to Egypt and sell your wife off to Pharaoh or something like Abraham? No. Why don't you go read what I thought of Abraham? He blew it. His life was messed up.

He should have been written off. And I didn't, though, didn't write him off, won't write you off. Don't do that.

Because I always knew he was dead from the beginning. He just didn't know it. And it just took him a while to realize the deadness of his own life.

To finally one day he came and I could take him out and say, what do you think? And he believed me. And I blessed him. And I believe God again, as I said earlier, and we'll close with this, he looks at you.

Don't miss his promises for you. I don't think any of us are going to get to heaven, as I said earlier, and we're going to be in heaven and say, man, I wish God would have taken me out somewhere. I wish he

would have taken my hand and showed me something.

Show me some stars that said, look north, south, east or west. Or made some promise to me. I didn't hear it.

That doesn't mean he didn't make it. And he isn't there to say it. I think that when you and I can come and say, Lord, is there something yet in my life? Some journey we need to have some reason that I'm alive.

My existence is all about a defining process of me trusting you that maybe I've blown it and maybe I failed. Maybe I've forgotten it. Maybe we had it before.

I was once on that track and I blew it and I stepped out with Hagar and tried it on my own and messed everything up. And we've been off track for twenty five years as Abraham was. But God, can we get back on track? Do you want to use me still yet? Are the promises of God? Yay and amen.

Are the gifts in the calling of God without repentance? Because if they're not, if they are, as it says, they are without repentance. And God, you still want to take me out tonight and renew that promise. I want to go hear it.

And whether it's promises in many ways in your life or the most critical of all that we'll get into next week. The promises of an unbelievable life in his spirit. The most unbelievable, glorious things that Paul says, if you can believe and understand Romans 4, then just hold on because in a moment we're going to blow your socks off.

With what God has in store for you. If you'll believe. Amen.

Father, we thank you for your love. We thank you for your word. And Lord, we thank you that you look at us tonight and say, I don't really care where you've been.

All I know is, is you're dead. I haven't expected anything but death from you. And all that you've delivered is what you have the possibility to do.

Deliver death. But I'm just waiting for the time that we can go take a walk. And I can take you aside and say, here's who I am.

And here's my vault. And if you can believe the hand that's holding you, then there's nothing in the vault that you can't have. There's no good gift I'll withhold.

No blessing that I'll keep in reserve. And Father, I thank you for that. And I thank you, Lord, that you look at us and I just pray that tonight that no one would sit here and say, I don't believe it.

I just don't believe it. I don't believe there's a God like this. And I don't believe he could love me for who I am and what I've done.

Lord, I pray that you would take away that unbelief. And whether it's just like the disciples who said, Lord, I believe, but help thou my unbelief. Lord, I do believe this is the kind of a God that you are, but help me because I struggle so much with it.

I need to hear it again and again and again. And Lord, I pray that we would find ourselves waiting upon you and hearing it. And knowing there is nothing too hard for God.

And that your greatest desire is one day when you bring us all home to heaven and there we all sit around and look. And we see what you've done beyond our wildest dreams. Lord, help us now that our faith in you and your love and your power and your ability to take death and make it alive.

To take that which is hopeless and fill it with hope. Lord, that that is the God whom we serve. Help us and strengthen us in Jesus name.

Amen.

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