

Rom. 4: V. 13. In Rom. 3, Paul has been telling us how we can be declared righteous before God. When he comes to the 4th chapter, he gives the great illustration of one who was declared righteous before God. Abraham! He shows that Abraham was not justified by works; not justified by Law but justified entirely by faith in God. Now we continue this study and he shows that the promise came to Abraham not under the Law but many, many years before the Law was ever given. For the promise - what was the promise?

V. 13(read) the promise was that God was gonna give Abraham a son and through the line of that son there would be born One that would be the Messiah. And that Abraham, through the Messiah, would be the father of the nations, which indeed he is today. Every believer in the world goes back to Abraham. Abraham is our Spiritual Father. Think of the children he had! His children are in every nation! He says 'for the promise that he should be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed, through the Law,' When was the promise given in relation to the giving of the Law?

Gal. 3:17-18 - Prom. 430 yrs. before Law

The promise was given four hundred and thirty years before the Law. We read this in Gal. 3: 17 & 18. Abraham received the promise from God 430 years before the Law was given to Moses. So he's pointing this out. It was not to Abraham or to his seed, through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith. And we read of this in Gen. 18. Not by Law at all. But by faith.

V. 14 (read) if the promise had been made under the Law, it would have been of none effect simply because man cannot keep the Law. We're going to see that it had to be through the supernatural intervention of the Grace of God, whereby the promise came to pass. *SM* Now let me illustrate that: suppose you were to say to me today 'jump up out of this pulpit and start floating around here in the air and I'll give you a thousand dollars'. Well, if you said that to me, there'd be no possibility of my ever getting the thousand dollars because I can't jump up and float around. It's contrary to my nature to do so. Well, how about the Law? The

Law makes demands upon us which we cannot perform. What is the Law? It's all summarized in the Ten Commandments and what does the Ten Commandments say to us? Love God perfectly, with all your heart, mind, soul and strength. That's the first Four and the last six 'love your neighbor as yourself - that's the Law'. And if we cannot keep that, then we cannot keep the Law and no one has ever kept that. NO ONE!

So if the promise had come through the law, it would have been none effect because man could not have done it, had it depended upon his works. And what he, himself could accomplish. ~~xxx~~
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V. 15 (read) 'worketh wrath' and indeed it does because man breaks it and the transgression calls for punishment or wrath, rather than any blessing of God. And then he says 'for where no Law is, there is no transgression' and that can be easily illustrated. Where there is no breaking of the law. ^{SIN} Fifty years ago, in the U. S., no one broke the speed limit. Why? Because no state had a law limiting the speed! If a person had had an automobile fifty years ago in the state of Arkansas, he could have travelled one hundred miles an hour and ~~you~~ he would have broken no Law because there was no law in the State of Ark. saying you can't travel a hundred miles.

Now that doesn't mean that man doesn't do wrong. When we get to the 5th Chapter, Paul's gonna say that Sin reigned from Adam unto Moses, though there was no law and there are many people who are destroying themselves who don't know there is a Law. But for there to be a violation, of the Law, there must be a Law. So Paul is just pointing that out there about the Law. Where no Law is, there is no transgression! Therefore, it - what is the antecedent of 'it'? In reading teh Scrip. you must always find out what the antecedent of the pronouns are. In the KJV, they are not clear. 'It' of course, is referring to the promise. Therefore, the promise is of faith, that it might be by Grace'. (this is V. 16 (read). You see, it is by faith that it might be the Grace of God, not through Law or works but it is by faith that it might be through the unmerited favor of God.

v. 16 - it = promise

The promise to Abraham came entirely of Grace. He didn't deserve it; he couldn't earn it; it was something that God had given to him. 'to the end that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not to that only which is of the Law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham' - that the promise simply might not be confined simply to one segment of humanity - those who were under the law, the Jews - but that the promise might be to all segments of humanity and that Abraham might be the father of EVERYONE, who is the father of us all' (and it's understood - who believed.)

Gal. 3:7, 29

Abraham is your father as a Gentile, if you have believed in Jes. just as much as he is of any Jew, who has believed in Jes. This is through Grace and this is through Faith. ~~AX~~

V. 17 (read) 'as it is written' (and he's quoting from the O. T. Gen. 17: 5) 'I have made thee a father of many nations' before him whom he believed' and I would translate this 'he is our in sight of God, in whom he believed'. And look at the latter part of V. 17 (read) 'quickeneth the dead' (or resurrects the dead) and calleth those things which be not as though they were' - now this is the description of Abrahams God. Two things:

#1. He believed in a God who quickened, or raised, the dead. And he believed it before the incident in Gen. 22, is the amazing thing. He believed it before he offered Isaac. He believed it at the time God told him that he, at a hundred years of age, was going to reproduce a son and his wife, Sara, at the age of ninety. This was his God! This was his God!

He believed in a God who could raise the dead and who could call into existence that which did not even exist. And that should not have been hard for him to have done, if he knew, even about the original creation, though we don't know whether he had an understanding of what had happened in the original creation, where in the original creation, God is calling into existence that which doesn't even exist, through His word. He said 'let there be' and it was.

God created the n. ex nihilo. - Therefore he n into existence p which did not exist. God called
EXACTLY as God has said. This has a direct bearing on the predicament which he faces, which we're gonna see in just a few moments.

V. 18 (read) 'who against ALL hope, believed in hope. Though there was no hope of the promise

*into existence
Sarah's did not
which is reality exist.*

being fulfilled. Why was there no hope? We're gonna see that in V. 19. There was absolutely no hope, humanly speaking, of the promise ever being fulfilled. Now this is very relevant to our lives today. Very relevant! It's relevant to the life of a church! When there is no hope, humanly speaking, that's when God does His great work. And he says there in V. 18 'who against all hope, believed in hope, (though there was no hope) that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken. So shall thy seed be'. (Gen. 15: 5)

So against every odds in the world, he believed. Why? Not because he had a lot of faith, but because of the God he was serving. He was believing in a God who could raise the dead and could call into existence that which did not exist! He had resurrection faith; he had the only valid there is. There is no Xtn faith except resurrection faith. Abraham had it. Had it before Christ was ever raised from the dead. In *John 8:56*

V. 19 (read) 'I'm reading from the KJV and that is not clear. That does not give the meaning. 'And being not weak in faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead; since he was a hundred years old and Saras womb was also dead'. You see, he did not ignore the reality of the situation. Faith never does. Faith is always born out of great obstacles; sometimes suffering and struggling. 1 Pet. 1: 7 speaks of the trying of our faith being more precious than the trying of gold. You see many people go on presumption. And they ignore facts about themselves and about the world in which they live.

1 Pet. 1:7-

That is not Biblical faith at all. Faith faces up to the situation that we're in and lays hold upon God to do something about it. It's not a denial of reality at all. It's the facing up to reality. A person who has real faith is a realist. Abraham was a realist. He realized he was facing an impossible situation. He knew it was impossible. He knew that the promise could never come to pass in his own life or by anybody elses wisdom or might. He faced the fact that his body was as good as dead, since he was a hundred and Sara's womb was also dead! Dead. He

V. 20 (read) 'staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief' and the word 'staggered'

is the word 'diakriono' which means that he did not waver ~~between~~ between two opinions. What were the two opinions? ⁽¹⁾ The promise of God that he was going to have a son and his dead body and Sara's dead womb. He did not waver. He was not caught there as so often we are caught. We see what God promises but we see the circumstances and we say 'it cannot happen'. It CANNOT happen. 'He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God'. How do we glorify God? Believeing what he says and when we don't believe God, we dishonor Him tremendously!

Heb. 11:6 - "Without faith it is impossible to please God..."

When we don't believe God and His greatness, we dishonor Him. He said he was strong in faith giving glory to God and being fully persuaded that what He had promised, He was able also to perform. What had He promised? He had promised a son. He had promised a son which would be the seed through whom the Messiah would come and would bless the whole world and yet, it's not possible for it to happen, humanly speaking. He's a hundred years old; his reproductive abilities are gone; Saras are gone and yet he says 'I am fully persuaded that what God has promised, God is able to perform'.

Why did G. wait until Ab. 100 & Sarah 90?

Now listen, why did God let Abraham reach a hundred years old and why did he let Sara reach the age of ninety before the child was born? So that it could be entirely of Him and not of them. Why does God let you get in bad shape and let me get problems that I cannot solve? Just absolutely get up against it? You know why? To show what a great God He is. That's exactly the reason He does it. God deliberately let Abraham reach the age of a hundred and his wife ninety in order to prove that He's the God of the resurrection and the God who calls into existence that which is not. He lets us come to the end of our rope and sometimes, He a church come to the end of its rope before He really shows what a great God He is!

You and I are determined to do it ourselves and to do it in our own way and to do it according to our education, according to our own works and understanding. But that brings no honor to God! ^{SN} I talked to a lady this week who said 'I have a hopeless situation in my home'. I said 'my son'. I said 'are you a Xtn?' She said 'I am'. I knew she was anyway, a wonderful Xtn.

I said 'do you really believe it's hopeless?' and she said 'well, I was about to believe it'. I said 'had you ever thought of the God of Abraham? Are you not serving a God who raised the dead and who ~~XXXXX~~ calls into existence that which does not exist?' And she said 'well, really, I have not been thinking about that. I have been overwhelmed with the circumstance of my son!! As I see it, it's hopeless'. I said 'hopeless with you but not hopeless with the God who raises the dead and with the God who can call into existence that which does not exist'.

SW There is nothing hopeless, my friends, when we believe in a God who can do and who is like that ^{that} I ran into ~~a~~ lady twenty four hours later and I said 'how are you feeling?' She said 'I am absolutely living in a different world. What you said took hold in my heart and I am living victoriously today because I have my eyes on a God who raises the dead and who can call into existence that which does not even exist'. And you and I are living in an age that there is no answer from psychiatry and there is no answer from the experts on human nature; there is no answer to the problems of modern life except the God of Abraham, who is our God in JC, who can raise the dead and can call into existence that which ~~XXXXX~~ does not even exist.

I'm telling you that no matter who you are and where you are, that there's hope for you tonight if you can believe in a God like this and it's not the amount of faith that you have; it's the kind of God you have. You say 'well, Abraham could have that kind of faith but not me'. Just hold that in your heart. Let's go on and finish this and then I want to do over this outline with you.

V. 22 (read) 'it (that is: this kind of faith) was imputed to him for righteousness (or justification or being declared right before God). Now

V. 23(read) that righteousness was imputed to him.

SW V. 24 (read) 'but for us also' this incident is in the Bible for us! We tend to read about these Bible characters and we say 'well, now, they had a special corner on God and they were

very, very special but that isn't true. As a matter of fact, ^{faith} ~~Abrahams~~ ~~xxx~~ was not extraordinary face. It was resurrection faith! It was the very kind of faith that you and I must have, if we really have faith and that is in the Son of the resurrection! Later on, Abraham really proved that he believed in the God of the resurrection. You read the 22nd chapter of Gen., God said to Abraham 'now you take this son (the son had been born at that time) you take this son through whom I'm going to bless the world and you take him up on Mt. Moriah and you offer him as a sacrifice.'

You know what Abraham said, as he left the servant at the foot of that mountain and started up that mountain, you know what he said to the servant? He was going with Isaac up the mountain? He said 'we will come back'. 'I'm going up the mountain and I'm going to slay this boy, which he did, in his own heart, according to Heb. 11: 17, 18 & 19, he actually sacrificed him. He had no doubt that he was going to kill him. He said 'I'm gonna kill him on the mountain but my God is the God who raises the dead and He's got to raise him from the dead because this boy's got to be alive in order for the promise to be fulfilled and he believed God so completely until he said 'I'll kill him and God'll raise him from the dead and we're gonna come back down the mountain'.

Because he believed in a God who kept His word and could do anything in the world to keep His word. 'Now it was not written for his sake alone, that his righteousness was imputed to him, but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed (or credited) if we believe on Him that raised up Jes. our Lord from the dead'. (V. 23 & 24). That's faith! Is to believe that God raised Jes. from the dead but operates in our lives with the same type of power and with the same miracles. It's just not the resurrection of Jes., but it's touching our lives in impossible areas of death and hopelessness where God, through Christ, can bring life and hope where we have none! None at all! And then he says in

V. 25 (read) 'offenses (transgressions) 'justification' (or our righteousness). You say 'well I thought this all happened at the cross'. Listen, true saving justifying faith is resurrection faith. One of our problems today is that we've limited the Gospel even. The Gospel of the

resurrection has not been preached in most Evangelical churches. We've just hung Christ on a cross, but we've not raised Him from the dead with the power to change lives! We come to the 10th Chapter of Romans and Paul is stating God's plan of salvation and he says 'if you will confess with your mouth that Jes. is your Lord and believe in thine heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved'.

What is our basic problem? It's death. Before we're saved, we're dead people. We are dead in trespasses and sin. What is the answer to our problem? The resurrection. We need a Spiritual resurrection. There's no salvation, apart from a Spiritual resurrection. That's saving faith. Abraham had resurrection, saving faith two thousand years before Christ was ever raised from the dead. But it was not extraordinary faith' it was just faith in the God that's revealed in JC. We talk about the great faith of Abraham. It was not that, it was his BIG God. That's our problem. It's not the amount of faith!

Let's look at this little outline: THE OBJECT OF ABRAHAM'S FAITH

The Bible never talks about the amount of faith, basically. *note Matt 11:22* Jes. says in Mark 11:22 that if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed (and a mustard seed is microscopic almost) that you can say to the mountains 'be removed' and they will be removed into the sea. The important thing is not Faith in faith. Many people have just faith in faith. It's not the amount of our faith; it's in the God in whom we have our faith. What was the object of Abraham's faith? God, but a God who could raise the dead. And could call into existence that which did not even exist.

Well, his body is dead. Can the Lord work in that situation and produce a child? Can He call into existence a womb of Sara that doesn't even exist? Why, OF COURSE He can! *SM* I've never understood why any Jew would have any problem with the Virgin birth. If he believes in the birth of Isaac. Now, it wasn't a virgin birth, but it was certainly in the realm of the miraculous. It was in the realm of the miraculous indeed! God quickened the body of a

hundred year old man and restored the womb of a ninety year old woman, to keep His word and His promise. It applies to our lives today. It applies all the time in our lives where there are situations that are absolutely humanly hopeless and yet we have the promise of God that says 'I'll act and I will do'. All God wants us to do is to believe in Him who raises the dead and calls into being that which does not even exist!

It's the OBJECT of Abrahams faith which is the emphasis in Scrip., not the amount of faith which he had! You and I ought to have more faith than Abraham and I'll talk about that in just a few moments. Think of the

II OBSTACLES TO HIS FAITH. Did he have a lot to overcome to believe? He certainly did. Just like you and I have. You see somebody with a real living faith and you will see somebody who has ~~XXXX~~ faced tremendous trials and even persecution and suffering. Oh, there are a lot of glibheads and sometimes you see them on television, who tell you a lot of things, but they really don't have a living faith. People who have a faith have faced the problems of life and have laid hold upon God.

Abraham had three obstacles to face: #1. He had a dead body. #2. His wife had a dead womb. #3. He had a staggering promise. It was just too good to be true! Did you know that's a problem with us? You can read the Bible and you read the wonderful promises of God and listen, at least 75% of the people who call themselves Xtn, say 'oh, that cannot be! OH, that cannot be!' I stand in this pulpit and sometimes preach these promises and I'll see utter doubt written upon the face of people who've been Xtns for years. Take just Matt. 6: 33 (read) how many people believe that today? That if we do what this verse says, that our material need will be met today? How many people REALLY believe that today?

The great promises of God stagger us until we won't even lay hold upon them. Thank God for people who can trust their money to the Lord but many people cannot and when we cannot, it is a problem of God. It's not a problem of the amount of money we have, my friends. When a

person will not tithe his money and when a person will not give those resources unto God, his problem is: his God is too small! He does not believe what God has said! And that's so sad. So sad. Even the promises of God become a staggering problem with us. Abraham had them and he did not deny them. He faced up to them, and his God overcame his obstacles.

VI How about the operation of his faith? You have to go back to the Genesis narrative to see it in operation. God appears to Abraham. There's one conversation I would loved to have heard. I'd have loved to have heard the conversation that Abraham had with Sara when he came in to her that day and announced they were going to have that child. Wouldn't you have like to have heard that? I can imagine he came in to Sara and he said 'Sara, I was having devotions this morning and the Lord just said to me the most wonderful thing I've ever heard and it's just incredible, Sara!'

She said 'well, Abe, come on and tell me. My curiosity is running mighty high'. And he said 'well, you better sit down. You better sit down'. And she sat down and Abraham said 'do you know what God said to me? We're gonna have a baby'. Can you imagine what she must have said 'WHAT'? 'We're gonna have a baby? Abraham, I KNOW you stopped at the liquor store before you came home!! You've been drinking something'. 'No, the Lord told me we're gonna have a baby and I don't doubt it'. And Sara laughed. Sara laughed! The Great promises of God, they are so tremendous until people laugh at them. They don't believe them. Do you believe the great promises of God?

Well, I must say that I've read them and at times I could not believe them to save my life! But I can imagine that after this conversation that Abraham leaves the house and Sara says 'well, where are you going now' and he says 'I'm going out to buy a bassinet ^{stroller} and while I'm out there, I think I'll jog a little and get in shape because this boy is coming'. He did not doubt the promise of God because his God was SO BIG! The situation was hopeless but he believed that God was bigger than the problem. I've got something in my study, where I study and where I pray, that talks about 'it's not our problem; the problem is whether God is big

has
enough to handle the problem. You know what/happened to us in the latter part of the 20th Century? I remember a time when people could live much simpler than they can today. And there was a time that a man could set his course - a young man could set his course and say 'well, I'm gonna do this and I'm gonna do that' but you see, we live in revolutionary times and we live in a day millions of people who name the name of Christ are absolutely being crushed. Why? Because they don't have a God BIG enough for the times in which we are living.

The times in which we are living call for a BIG God. The God revealed in Jes. The God of resurrection. More than any time we've ever known. The kind of God that Abraham had. Yes, Abraham put it into practice indeed. He acted upon the faith, he didn't just say he believed, he acted upon it. And when we have true faith, we act; we don't sit. Read Hebrews 11: it says 'by faith, Noah built an ark. By faith, Enoch was translated. By faith, Abraham journeyed into a foreign country by faith. When we have faith, we act, we do. It's not something that's passive. It's the most dynamic force in life is faith. Faith! Abraham went to Ur(I think he's saying) and he acted upon his faith.

IV -
Now what was the origin of his faith. Now this is very interesting. Where did he get his faith? What was the origin of his faith? From the promise of God! Which in our language today, was simply the Word of God. Now I just want you to think with me just a few moments:
a Abraham did not have one word of Scrip. Not ONE word of the Bible had been written in Abrahams day. Not even the Book of Job. All he had was the promise of God! What do you and I have? We have all the Word of God written in language that we can read. That's His promises to His people.

6- Abraham lived about two thousand years ago, before the resurrection. You and I live two thousand years beyond the resurrection. It's documented in history! Spurgeon said 'there is more evidence that Jes. arose from the dead on historical evidence than that Geo. Washington lived! But Abraham didn't have this and Abraham was the first believer as far as we know and he was surrounded by pagans. NO one believed, except Abraham. You and I are sur-

rounded by believers. Most of us have been brought up in a Xtn home or many of us have. We've been in S. S. and a Xtn church all of our lives, SURROUNDED by people who are supposed to believe. And we hve two thousand years of the witness of the church of JC. Yet, we say that Abraham had faith and God just kinda put him on a pedestal and if he could have faith, that you and I cannot have. You and I ought to have - if possible - much more faith than Abraham. And our God ought to be BIGGER, if that's possible than Abrahams God.

How do you and I get faith today? Rom. 10: 17 tells us (read) this is EXACTLY the way we get faith. It says 'faith cometh (you don't manufacture faith) by hearing (hearing what? Hearing of the Rhema) the Rhema of Christ'. What does that mean? How do we get faith to be saved? How do we get this faith to be saved? We have got to hear the Word about Jes. and the Word about ourselves, in the inner man. The Bible gives that Word, my friends and if we will listen to that Word, we will have faith to trust Jes., as our Savior. The Word about Christ. That He is the Savior and what He did to save us. That He died on the cross. that He was buried in a grave and that He arose again. That's the reason I talk about this in the invitation is that the H. S. might take that Word about Christ and create faith in the heart of those who listen.

Rom. 10:17 - Rhema. this indicates you open your heart + desire to hear God.

Wayne, when you preach, preach the Gospel! And the Gospel is that Christ died; that He was buried in a grave and He arose again and everybody needs to hear it! That they might believe. But how about we, as Xtns? How do we have faith? To lay hold upon this great God, how do we have it? By hearing the Word; by hearing the Word of God; by staying in the Word of the Lord! That's the way faith comes. You can tell whether a person reads the Bible a lot. If a person has no faith, really - suppose you're doing something great in your church that calls for Faith - people who have no faith have not been with God, in the Bible.

People who are in the Word of God have faith. Are you having problems today? There are not many of us who are not. If you're having problems, that does not mean that you're different from anyone else. I have a lot of problems. Sometimes, heart-breaking problems. You have problems; everybody has problems and most people have more problems than they can handle!

Well, how are we gonna solve them? Gonna go to a Seminar? Gonna get one of these self-help books? I'm telling you, it'll not solve them. I mention the problem of a childless marriage. Is there one - is there a person here with that? There could be. Don't raise your hand, but I'm just asking you. ~~OK~~ A mother with a broken heart this week told me about discovering her son was a homosexual. Somebody bothered with that today? Another mother told me about her child on drugs. Many have financial problems.

Another young person told me, said 'I am living with utter frustration'. Another person says 'I seem to be caught. I just seem to be caught in a rut and I can't get out'. What on earth can we do? What can we DO, my friends? The Bible does not give us ten rules in getting out of the rut. The Bible points us to a God who can raise the dead and who can call into existence that which does not exist! God is the answer to our problems - is to hold on to God and believe the promises of God and they are wonderful in ~~in~~ this Book, to His people!

Heb - 11:27

They are wonderful and wehn we really - we REALLY, believe in the God of the Bible, we can believe in the promises of the God of the Bible and this is the thing that will change our lives my friends and nothing else will do it. NOTHING else will do it. Let us not make the foolish mistake of saying that 'Abraham could have this faith' or maybe 'my mother could have it' or 'the pastor' or 'my S.S. teacher, but I cannot not'. It's for EVERYONE of us today! Listen, we have a God who raised Jes. from the dead and that God lives in us even. And He WANTS us to trust Him and He WANTS us to believe what He says. And when we do, we have found the answer to our problems, I don't care what it is!

Now, it may not come within a week and it does not mean that we may not be put to the test, friends, but I'm saying to you that the Bible promises Gods people, deliverance and His promises are TRUE! He wants us to get our eyes upon Him and off of our problems. I talk to pastors and I'm concerned indeed and I think you could understand that pastors face many problems. We all face them, but I had a pastor to call me this week and he said 'I don't know what to do. I just don't know WHAT to do!' and you know what I do? I try to lift their

vision of God. The God they serve - not give them ten steps to ~~MAX~~ Health, Happiness and Prosperity! That doesn't help much. For one session, it's alright and a sermon on that's alright, but you don't build a life on that basis. You build a life on your concept of God; the greatness of God; the adequacy of God; He is absolutely adequate and is ours, in JC!

Wherever you are today and this morning people came and I was conscious of it. SM A woman called up yesterday; her husband, after eighteen years, just walked out on her. 'Dr. Bennett, can you give me some answers?' The woman was thinking of 'can you give me ten steps in how to solve this' and I can't do it! And the world wants that, you see. They want the pastor to give them ten steps or an easy formula - there IS not easy formula! But if that girl knows Jes., there is an answer to that problem and people are giving divorces and all kinds of heartaches! Listen, the God of the resurrection will come to your rescue. Absolutely!

He has promised He will do this. Go back where you lived this week, if you've come to one of these heartbreaking problems and get your eyes upon Him. Get it off of yourself and get it off of your problem and get up in the morning when you can listen to God and read this Bible for thirty minutes and come on Wednesday nights and listen to it and come to S. S. next Sunday and stay in the Word of God and keep your eyes upon the great God we have and I'll guarantee you, you'll find some help. You'll find some relief! Some relief for yourself.

Lets stand.