

Gotta Have Faith

Abraham's example of faith, not works
Blueprint for Breakthrough Series – Part 8
Romans 4:1-25
May 2-3, 2026

Introduction

- Faith – Faith is a big word in Christianity. Last week we began about another big word: Grace. Paul explained that we are saved, BY grace THROUGH faith. Faith = believing firmly in a someone or something as if it's fact despite doubt.
- The role of faith in breakthrough – when we truly believe and have faith in God's Word we do what it says even though there's a lot of distraction, even though we don't always know why He said what He said, even though it may not sound exactly right to us at the beginning. As we do what He says, we are set free from the pits and ruts that our sin has brought us. As we do what He says, we see the healing we desperately need. We see the power flow that we desperately want. We see the miracles that He promises.
- The need for continued faith – But here's the thing. Often it's human nature to go in waves. We get fired up and make good decisions, and then we lapse. We get excited and get on a plan and then let it fall apart. When it comes to our faith in God it cannot be like a gym membership, New Year's resolution, or emotional promise, it has to be legit. Our lives are important and our faith is vital. If we truly want change for the long haul, remember this...

Lasting Breakthrough Requires Lasting FAITH

- Last Week – one of the most important passages = raw gospel. what He did and what it means for those who put their faith in Him. What it means to become a Christian.
- This Week – Paul continues his argument for salvation by faith and not through religious systems. He uses Abraham...
 - The Story of Abraham
 - Abram's context – not at a random time in history.
 - Creation & Fall
 - The flood – after 1,600 years = so wicked God decided to kill everyone 8 people survived in an ark.
 - Tower of Babel – 150-350 years later = ticked God off again.
 - The Point - 300 years later = Abraham. In the 2200 or so years since the Garden of Eden, there is almost no positive interaction with God mentioned in the Bible (only Noah).
 - Abrams context: most places in the Middle East were polytheistic and pagan. It seems that God determined that it was time He turned things around with mankind and start something new.
 - Abram's call

- 1st meeting and promise – Abram. he was chosen (why Jews call themselves the Chosen People of God “I want to create in you a special nation, a massive nation. I will bless you and make you great (famous), for the purpose of being a blessing to others and I want you to move somewhere special that I have picked out.”
- Abram’s obedience – Abram went. didn’t grow up knowing God. = leave everything he’s known and move into an unknown land on a strange experience and a promise? How would we respond? Abram trusted God with a tiny bit of information and a herculean task. He moved 650 miles southeast to what we now know as Israel.
- Land promise – “to your offspring I will give this land.” (Gen 12:7). Promised Land. Abram built his first altar of worship to God and the relationship grew.
 - Confirmation promise – Soon thereafter, God told Abraham to walk around his new area (Canaan) because all of that would be given to his offspring forever (permanent ownership).
- Abram locked in spiritually – in each location Abram went, he built an altar to the Lord which shows submission and obedience. Every time God told him to do something he did it.
 - Where tithe comes from – Abram rescued Lot. Abram gave the priest a tenth of everything he won in the military victory.
- People Group Promise – Abram pointed out his lack of ability to have kids with Sarai (barren) - stars in the sky = Abram believed God at His word. He didn’t know how God was going to get it done, but if God said it, that was enough for him. “And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness.” (Ge 15:6).
 - Sarai’s plan – Hagar. Abram agreed (85 years old)
 - People group confirmation – 11 years later = changing your name from Abram to ‘father of a multitude of nations’ (Abram to Abraham).
 - Circumcision sign – all male infants on their 8th day, including your male servants.
 - Another kid promised – I will give Sarah a baby of her own: Isaac.
 - The terrible test (Gen 22) – some point later sacrifice his promised son Isaac on an altar to God.
- Bottom line – the bottom line of Abraham’s story is radical obedience.

Lesson

- The Faithful One
 - Abraham was called righteous due to faith
 - Romans 4:1-8 - “What then shall we say was gained by Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh?² For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.³ For what does the Scripture say? [in Gen 15:6] “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness.”⁴ Now to the one who works, his wages are not

counted as a gift but as his due. ⁵ And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness, ⁶ just as [King] David also speaks of the blessing of the one to whom God counts righteousness apart from works [in Ps 32:1-2a]: ⁷ "Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; ⁸ blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin."

- Abraham our forefather – Jewish & Arab world (through Ishmael). Religiously = Christians, Jews and Muslims.
- What made Abraham righteous? - What specific aspect denoted Abraham as 'righteous' in the eyes of God?
- Actions = bragging, but not before God
- "Abraham believed God." – Abraham's belief/faith in God was attributed, put on his record, counted to him, as righteousness. Righteousness, if we recall from last week, is conformity to God's perfect standard.
- Works = wages – But the problem with that statement being made DUE to Abraham's actions and religious works, is that there is no way that they could be perfect, AND even if he did, that would mean that God owed him righteousness for it and it wasn't a gift at all.
- God wants Faith - God desires and loves faith so much that He is willing to use it as the standard of His righteousness.
- Why cite King David's Psalm – Jewish arguing from Torah and prophets. it was speaking about the issue of forgiveness by God to mankind which is ALWAYS unearned.
- Pre-Cut
 - Abraham was declared righteous before circumcision
 - Romans 4:9-12 - *"Is this blessing then only for the circumcised [Jews], or also for the uncircumcised [Gentiles]? For we say that faith was counted to Abraham as righteousness. ¹⁰ How then was it counted to him? Was it before or after he had been circumcised? It was not after, but before he was circumcised. ¹¹ He received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. The purpose was to make him the father of all who believe without being circumcised, so that righteousness would be counted to them as well, ¹² and to make him the father of the circumcised [Jews] who are not merely circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised."*
 - Is the offer for salvation only for Jews due to Abraham? - not just for Jews. God is the God of the universe, so if He forgives ANYONE, it is an act of blessing and mercy.
 - How do we know? Statement made BEFORE circumcision sign. That allows all people to be 'children of Abraham'.
 - Spiritual Jews – Jews of faith, not just genetics.

- Faith Alone
 - Abraham demonstrates it's always been about faith
 - Romans 4:13-17 - *"For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith. ¹⁴ For if it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. ¹⁵ For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law there is no transgression. ¹⁶ That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring—not only to the adherent of the law but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, ¹⁷ as it is written [in Gen 17:5], "I have made you the father of many nations"—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist."*
 - Who did God say could be 'heirs of the world?' – 'inheritors to all that God has, including all of the world.' God's kids inherit God's stuff.
 - Clearly not those under the Mosaic law – didn't happen for another 430 years
 - Actually the law makes sinning worse in a sense by installing more rules - rather than increasing the amount of righteousness.
 - It depends on Faith because it's a matter of Grace. - Faith is the connector to grace.
- Prime Example
 - What's true for Abraham is true for the rest of us
 - Romans 4:18-25 - *"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." ²³ But the words "it was counted to him" were not written for his sake alone, ²⁴ but for ours also. It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, ²⁵ who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification."*
 - Abraham had a tough test (becoming a father) - Getting back to Abraham. He had to 'hope' that it could be since he couldn't imagine it. He had to fight all doubts.
 - He had to believe in God despite physical evidence in his body –he still hung in there and believed that God could do the impossible.
 - He stayed fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. – not that he was superhuman in faith. He was a real life example for us to follow. At the end of the day, Abraham was

CONVINCED that God could do what He said He could do, which is exactly what Christianity is based on.

- Counting faith as righteousness is not just for Abraham but us too - We can be 'counted as righteous' when we believe in God too.
 - We too have to believe that Jesus who died for us and raised for us, can save us.

Conclusion

- It's all centered on faith. If we want to please God, we must believe that He is who He says He is and can do what He says He can do.
- If we really believe that, then we will live a life that demonstrates that: loving God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength and our neighbor as ourself. Because what are the two great commandments of Christ? Believe and love.
- Breakthrough – let's continue to cling to God and live out His Word as if it's fact and allow that to bring our breakthrough this year.