

Intro:

XV. Salvation by Divine Power, Not Human Effort

A. An Analysis of Abraham's Faith - vs 18-21

1. An Astounding Faith

a. Came from an idolatrous family - Josh 24:2

b. his initial call - Gen 12:1-4

i. name meant father of many, though Childless, God promised descendants as numerous as the stars - Ge 12:2; 15:5

ii. When he arrived in Canaan, faced many trials

- Famine - Ge 12:10 - a potentially hostile pharaoh - 12:14-20

- conflict w/ nephew - 13:5-9 - struggle w/ fear - 15:1

c. remained faithful

i. waited 40 years for the promised son

ii. Between his name and his effort to have a son with Hagar, everyone knew the problem

iii. More embarrassment when God changes his name to Abraham - father of many nations and says Sarah at 90 will have a son - Ge 17:5-8

d. simple lessons for us

i. God's promises can only be fulfilled by God's power - Ga 4:21-23

ii. Legalistic human effort leads to bondage, freedom comes through Faith in a gracious God - Ga 4:24-28

2. Seven Key Characteristics of Abraham's faith

a. who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, - vs 18

i. hope - *elpis* - expectation or confidence:--faith, hope. Believing in what God has said will happen in the future, when there is no human reason to think it could happen

ii. His hope was in God's word - according to what was spoken, "So shall your descendants be." - Ge 15:5

iii. His Hope - so that he (Abraham) became the father of many nations,

b. not being weak in faith, - vs 19

i. weak - *astheneo* - to be feeble (in any sense):--be diseased, impotent folk (man), (be) sick, (be, be made) weak.

ii. to be weak in faith is to allow doubt to cloud and undermine belief

c. Didn't get discouraged by understood truth or natural weakness

i. he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), - he no longer had the capacity to procreate

ii. Believed truth - God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did; Ro 4:17b

iii. Noah had similar faith - Heb 11:7; 2 Pe 2:5

d. When God says it will happen, things that make it impossible, are non-factors

i. and the deadness of Sarah's womb.

ii. God repeated the promise twice - Ge 18:10-14

iii. God foretold that His covenant would be with Isaac - Ge 17:21

e. He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief,

i. wavering between faith and doubt, being unstable - Jas 1:6-8

ii. From human perspective,

- Sarah waived when she laughed - Ge 18:12
- Abraham was fearful - Ge 15:1-3
- iii. Struggling faith is not the same as doubt
 - Sarah - Heb 11:11
 - Abraham - Ge 15:4-6
 - when tested, both were “strengthened in faith” - *endunamoo* - to empower:--enable, (increase in) strength(-en), be (make) strong.
- f. The character of real faith - “giving glory to God”
 - i. b/c of what happens in salvation - new heart, new spirit, The Spirit of God living in this new person, faith will show itself! - 1 Jo 5:10
 - ii. A contrast to the natural man that doesn't - Ro 1:21
- g. being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.
 - i. Abraham's faith was complete and unqualified - Gen 22; Heb 11:19
 - ii. Fully persuaded - *plerophoreo* - to carry out fully (in evidence), completely assure (or convince), entirely accomplish:--most surely believe, fully know (persuade), make full proof of.

B. The Result of Abraham's Faith - vs 22

1. And therefore "it was accounted to him for righteousness."
2. The Gospel of God - Ro 1:1; 2 Cor 5:21
 - a. God takes the faith that He enables a person to possess
 - b. God counts that faith as divine righteousness on the sinner's behalf

C. An Application of Abraham's Faith - vs 23-25

1. it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, but also for us. - Ro 15:4; 1Co 10:6,11
 - a. no scripture is just for the time that it was written - Ps 78:5-7; Ro 15:4
 - b. when one honestly looks at Abraham's life, perfect divine righteousness was not earned - he lied, he acted from distrust,
2. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him
 - a. faith has always been God channel through which He has saved people - Heb 11:6
 - b. imputed - *logizomai* - to take an inventory, estimate, conclude, (ac-)count (of), esteem, impute, lay, number, reason, reckon, suppose, think (on).
3. Notice in Who/ what you are to have faith
 - a. Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, - Ac 2:24; 13:30; Ro 10:9
 - b. the death was necessary - Ro 6:23; but w/o the resurrection,
 - i. faith is vain - 1Co 15:14, 17
 - ii. There is no power to live righteously - Ro 8:2,13
 - c. what the death and resurrection cover
 - i. who was delivered up because of our offenses, - Isa 53:5-6; Ro 8:32;
 - ii. and was raised because of our justification. - 2Co 5:21;
4. The result in our lives
 - a. faith and hope in God - 1Pe 1:21
 - b. might live for righteousness - 1 Pe 2:24
 - c. that He might bring us to God—1 Pe 3:18