

A Promise Keeping God – Romans 4:19-25

Bible Study ~ 5/25/16

Grace Church of Lockeford

Read *vv. 16-25*. When we reflect on Abraham's life, it seems like these words of Paul's are ill considered. After all, Abraham was declared righteous in Ch. 15, yet after that we have the Hagar debacle in Ch. 16 and in 17 we have him doubting that Sarah will have a son. What we find is that after God reconfirms his promise in 17 and makes it clear that Sarah will be the one to have the promised child, Abraham doesn't doubt again. So at this point in Abraham's life God had already spoken to him repeatedly and delivered him from trials. And as we have seen, the promise of Isaac had been repeated and clarified. Once Abraham had a complete understanding of God's promise, he didn't waver. **And so we learn that...**

1. A Promise Keeping God Teaches Us To Ignore Impossibility *vv. 19-20*

God had already kept promises with Abraham. Based on God's previous faithfulness, Abraham believes here. Abraham was not weak in faith. "Paul, how can you say that? Look at some of the mistakes Abraham made!" Yes, Abraham made mistakes. But after each one he confessed, repented, and kept moving forward. Strong faith is not a faith that never doubts or never falters, strong faith is faith that keeps on getting up. That is what I believe the life of Abraham teaches us. So Abraham's walk with God grew and he didn't consider his 100yr old body as dead. This is the key. It is 100yr old Abraham Paul is talking about. That is after God reconfirmed the promise in 17 & 18. From a physical standpoint it was impossible for Abraham and Sarah to have children. Sarah had always been barren. Yet that is what God had promised and so that is what Abraham believed! He did not waver with unbelief! He trusted in the promise of God. He had experienced God's faithfulness and so He trusted. Paul says that as Abraham trusted, his faith was strengthened. The more we trust the better we get at trusting. Through all of this Abraham gave glory to God. When we trust in God's promises we are able to ignore impossibilities. I love this blessing. We have a God who keeps his promises even when it seems impossible! He is a promise keeping God! And we can trust Him to keep His promises no matter what. **But also...**

2. A Promise Keeping God Teaches Us To Trust In His Ability *vv. 21-22*

Why is Abraham convinced God can do what He promised? Because of what he had already seen God do! Abraham's faith was based in what he had experienced of God.

Fully convinced = fully persuaded. This is passive. So Abraham has not persuaded himself. He has been persuaded or convinced by someone or something else. God and His faithfulness. What is Abraham fully convinced of? God's ability to do what He has promised! God is able to perform what He has promised. All Abraham had to go off of was preserved stories from the past and his own experience. We have the whole revealed Word of God, plus the experiences of thousands of years of believers, plus our own experiences to leave us "fully convinced" of God's ability to do what He has promised! Are we convinced?

Because of Abraham's belief in God's ability to do what He had promised, His faith was accounted to him for righteousness. Abraham believed God. Despite the impossibility, despite the occasional wavering, Abraham believed. He trusted that God could and would do what He had promised. This faith was credited to Abraham as righteousness. Abraham's righteous standing before God was not dependent on his works, but on his faith. What a blessing it is to know that there is no list of rules and regulations for us to keep! All that is required of us is to believe God. **That is what Paul's final point in this passage deals with...**

3. A Promise Keeping God Teaches Us To Believe In Spiritual Reality *vv. 23-25*

The record of how Abraham was declared righteous was not just a matter of historical accuracy or the recording of historical fact. It was recorded that we might know how he gained righteousness and understand that we gain it the same way! Righteousness is imputed to us who believe in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ! Christ was delivered up for our offenses. This is the idea of being

handed over. He was handed over to those who mocked and tortured Him. And the reason for that was so He could pay the penalty of our offenses. But that wasn't the end! He was also raised for our justification! We are declared righteous based on our belief in what Christ has done! I heard a great illustration about what it means to be declared righteous recently. "It's like there are 2 ledgers. 1 has a list of all my offenses, and the other has a list of Christ's righteousness. Justification is when we swap ledgers." Christ took our sin on Himself and paid the penalty for that sin. When we place our faith in Him we are credited with His righteousness! The righteousness is not credited apart from faith in Him!

Now, how can we be fully convinced of our justification as Abraham was of God's ability? Because of who God is and what we have experienced of Him and what is recorded of Him in His Word. It is our faith in Him that gives us justification, that saves us. What a blessing and joy it is to know that Christ paid for my offenses! We receive the righteousness of Christ! This is a great mystery and an incredible reality! Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, He was buried, and He rose again. When I place my faith in that reality, the righteousness of Christ is credited to me. What blessings we have in Christ!

CHALLENGE: Trust in God's ability to keep His promises, and believe that He has declared you righteous!