

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Turn your bibles with me to Romans 4

Once again, we are continuing our verse-by-verse study through this amazing letter that the Apostle Paul wrote to the believers in Rome and us – about the fundamentals of Christianity –

Why are we saved by grace through faith in Christ alone???

Paul has been teaching us through Romans what does it mean to be justified by faith.

How it is not of works

How it is not of performance

And for the past couple of weeks – since most of the early church was of Jewish origin.

Paul has been using the life of Abraham – as the perfect biblical illustration to point this out.

Abraham was not saved by his works.

Abraham was not saved by his religious rituals.

Abraham was not saved by adhering to the law.

Abraham was saved by faith – the same way that you and I are saved - by faith.

He believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness.

And so – through the life of Abraham, we are able to gather some significant insight into what kind of faith it is - that justified Abraham.

What kind of faith is saving faith???

Because the people that knock on your door on Saturday morning – they have faith

An atheist, the person who makes the claim that they are agnostic – that their ignorant – they have faith.

But what kind of faith is saving faith?

That is what Paul is going to answer in our text this morning.

Let's pray...

Read Text

At the ripe age of 75 years –

Abraham received a promise from God.

“You are going to be a father of many nations”

75 years old

"I am going to give you a child, I am going to bless you Abram and Sarai"

"I am going to do it" God said

"It is going to be the work that I do"

And Abram received the promise and then time passed

1 year became 5 years - became 10 years - became 25 years

And the problem with time passing is that it gives us an opportunity to act out in the flesh.

Abram and Sarai received the promise – they got tired of waiting

They decided to help out God

God – Sarai said it was ok to take Hagar and here is Ishmael.

The work of the flesh.

Turn to Genesis 17 –

Because here in Genesis 17 – God is going to repeat the promise to Abram – despite Ishmael.

[Gen 17:1-8 NKJV] 1 When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I [am] Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless. 2 "And I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will

multiply you exceedingly." 3 Then Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying: 4 "As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations. 5 "No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; **for I have made you a father of many nations.** 6 "I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. 7 "And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you. 8 "Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."

God repeats His promise to Abraham – but this time – I had you make a note, God speaks it as it has already happened.

I have made you a father of many nations.

It is done Abraham.

Now, one would think that Abraham would have responded with – “ok God, trust You”

But look at verse 15

[Gen 17:15-19 NKJV] 15 Then God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah [shall be] her name. 16 "And I will bless her and also give you a son by her; then I will bless her, and she shall be [a

mother of] nations; kings of peoples shall be from her." 17 Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart, "Shall [a child] be born to a man who is one hundred years old? And shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear [a child]?" 18 And Abraham said to God, "Oh, that Ishmael might live before You!"

Abraham's response –

Look at me, look at my wife –

Can you just bless the work of my flesh???? Use Ishmael.

19 Then God said: "No, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, [and] with his descendants after him.

Abraham's faith was far from perfect.

But God....

[Rom 4:17-25 NKJV] 17 (as it is written, "I have made you a father of many nations") in the presence of Him whom he believed--God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did;

Abraham's faith was centered on a Person.

His faith wasn't on a religious system.

His faith wasn't on a philosophy.

His faith is in God's own revelation of Himself.

This is the God who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did;

By the way –

Isn't this what Jesus revealed to Martha moments before He rose Lazarus from the dead.

[Jhn 11:25-26 NKJV] 25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. 26 "And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

Jesus claimed the ability to not only bring Himself back to life but to bring you back to life – to bring me back to life.

So this God is the source of Abraham's faith

The God who makes a specific promise

And the same God who is going to keep that promise.

Don't lose sight that Abraham and Sarah – when God repeats the promise to Abraham – they are both passed the age where they are able to have children.

They are well passed the age of being able to conceive.

Everything down there is dead.

So – how does a 100 year old man and a 90 year old woman have a child with the flesh dead?

It is going to require a work of God.

A God who can bring dead things back to life.

The writer of Hebrews – write this down.

[Heb 11:11-12 NKJV] 11 By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised. 12 Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born [as many] as the stars of the sky in multitude--innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore.

God makes dead things live

God makes promises and keeps promises

18 who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, "So shall your descendants be."

So not only was Abraham's faith on the God who had resurrection power.

Abraham believed the promises of God

Once again, Abraham and Sarah are past the point of hope.

They are beyond human help

Abraham has to trust God for something that no human resources can provide.

How does this apply to you and me?

We must believe God for that, which is impossible.

We must trust God for something that no human resources can provide.

All humans are born with a sinful nature

We are dead in our sin and trespasses

And this cannot be fixed by going to church

This cannot be fixed by doing religious things or trying to be good or trying to be nice to everyone.

In order for it to be fixed, in order for to heal what is broken inside of us, God Himself is going to have to come inside of our heart and forgive our sin and reconcile you and me to the Father.

Abraham believed in God and then believed in what God said.

He believed His word.

You see loved ones, faith is rooted and grounded not just in the Person of God but the Word of God.

And far too often in our walk, our mistake is that instead of placing our faith on who God is and What God has said – we chose to rely on our emotions.

And emotions can supplant God's promises

"I know that this is what God says – but I don't feel that way"

It is at that point that we must lay down our emotions and trust what God says.

We are never to base our Christian experience on our emotions –

Because our emotions will go from one extreme to another.

Highs and lows

And when our emotions are low – that is when the enemy is there waiting to pounce on us.

Abraham believed a verbal promise

But we have it in writing – we can go over it again and again

We can read His promises and receive them

His word is unchanging

His word is unending

His word is unmovable

The promises of God are established – regardless of our emotions or what our circumstances may be.

This is what led Abraham to resort to the flesh –

he realized how old he was, he got tired of waiting and then, he acted.

19 And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb.

I had you make a note of the phrase – he did not consider

Paul in effect is saying that Abraham doesn't give it a thought that what God promised was not going to be possible.

He had faith in the ability of God to do what He said He was going to do.

I want you to consider the following –

Was Abraham going through some difficult circumstance – Yes

Was an impossible circumstance? Again, Yes!

His reproductive system and Sarah's reproductive system were dead.

Real faith doesn't ignore the difficulty or circumstances.

What real faith does is – it magnifies the God who is able to take the difficulty and the circumstance and then do something about it.

Real faith doesn't ignore the problem, real faith magnifies and glorifies God in the midst of the problem.

Think about Peter – as he walked on water as he was going to Jesus

When did he start to sink –

When he took his eyes off Jesus and focused on the waves and the wind.

It is then that he cries out to Jesus and Jesus grabs Peter – they get back to the boat – and then – the wind stops.

God doesn't want us to walk through life with a blindfold on –

The problem is when we've gotten a twisted perspective and the problem seem bigger than God.

20 He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, 21 and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.

Turn to Genesis 22

God promised Abraham that he would be the father of many nations

God delivered on His promise – by bringing back from the dead the reproductive system of Abraham and Sarah

God tells them to name the child Isaac

Isaac grows up to be a young man

And then in Gen 22

God tells Abraham to take Isaac to Mt Moriah and offer Isaac as a sacrifice.

Abraham has to make a choice

If God has asked me to do this

What must God do in order to fulfill His promise?

He's going to have to bring someone who is dead back to life.

[Gen 22:6-12 NKJV] 6 So Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid [it] on Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife, and the two of them went together. 7 But Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." Then he said, "Look, the fire and the wood, but where [is] the lamb for a burnt offering?" 8 And Abraham said, "My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering." So the two of them went together. 9 Then they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there and placed the wood in order; and he bound

Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, upon the wood. 10 And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. 11 But the Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" So he said, "Here I am." 12 And He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only [son], from Me."

By the way –

Did God ask Abraham to offer up Isaac because He wanted to know whether Abraham was really sincere in His faith?

No – because God knows everything about everything.

The purpose of ch 22 was so Abraham would know the truth about himself.

To see if he had faith that God can take dead things and bring them back to life.

By the way – it works the same way in our lives.

We may write someone off –

I know the promises of God, but He can't save my brother, He can't save my sister –

He can't save that family down the street.

God is able to make promises

God is able to keep promises

God is able to save

The question becomes – do we really trust in God's promises – like Abraham.

Abraham was fully convinced – and look at the effect of faith -

22 And therefore "it was accounted to him for righteousness."

By the way – I want you to notice that Paul – as he is recounting the story of Abraham – he never mentions Abraham and Sarah's mistake in trying to help out God – in the work of the flesh.

And the reason for this is because that is the whole point of faith and the righteousness it brings.

Remember, being right with God is a gift that He gives and we receive by faith.

Being declared righteous, all guilt and condemnation are removed.

That means – all sin, all of our failures our stumbles are forgiven and forgotten – forever, by the blood of Jesus Christ.

23 Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, 24 but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead,

Question –

Did God record the book of Genesis in Abraham's lifetime? No

Genesis was written 400 years after Abraham's lifetime.

Why do we have the record of Abraham's biography?

Paul argues that they were given to you and me – for our benefit.

So that we would know – how to be right with God.

By faith

And in the same way that Abraham believed that God can give life to the dead, we believe that God raised Jesus from the dead.

25 who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.

The death and resurrection of Jesus

This is the reality that changes everything because Jesus on the cross took all of our sin and shame.

Our offenses is in reference to our two problems.

We have a sin problem and we have a death problem

And really, we have a death problem because we have a sin problem

Jesus was handed over to die because of our sin

And then Jesus was resurrected so that we would experience a right relationship with God.

That is what Paul is saying here

A real Jesus

Dying and coming back to life and the righteousness of Jesus is placed on the believing sinner – how?

By faith.

Abraham's faith had to do with a promise that was made in the past

What is the past promise for us today?

Come to Me, believe in Me, turn from your sin and accept me as Savior.

Faith is believing the incredible

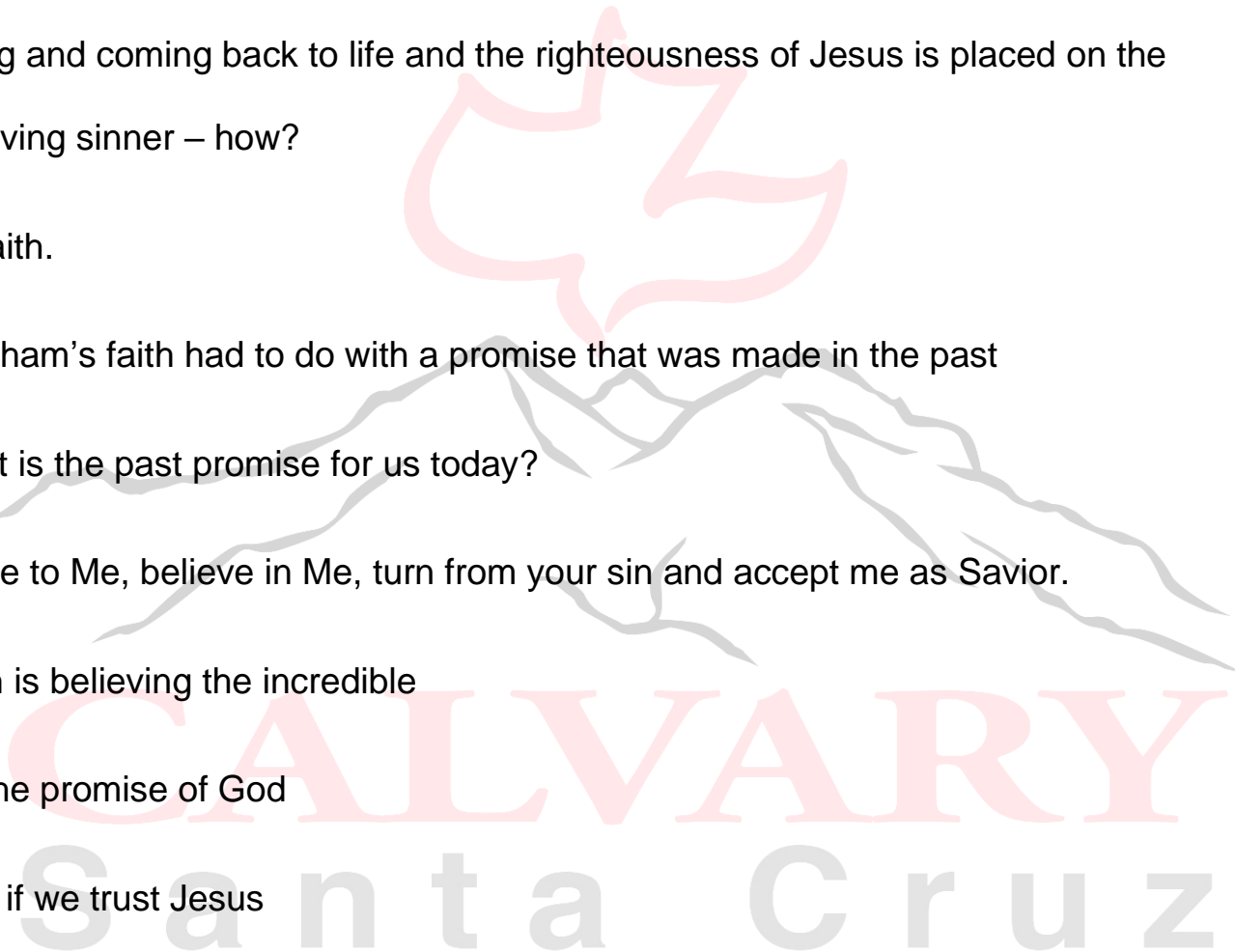
It's the promise of God

That if we trust Jesus

If we believe in Jesus

If we love Jesus

If we turn from our sin to Jesus



That He will save us and in doing so receive the impossible –

Forgiveness

Cleansing

Hope

Freedom

Redemption

And eternal life.

Amen

Let's pray...

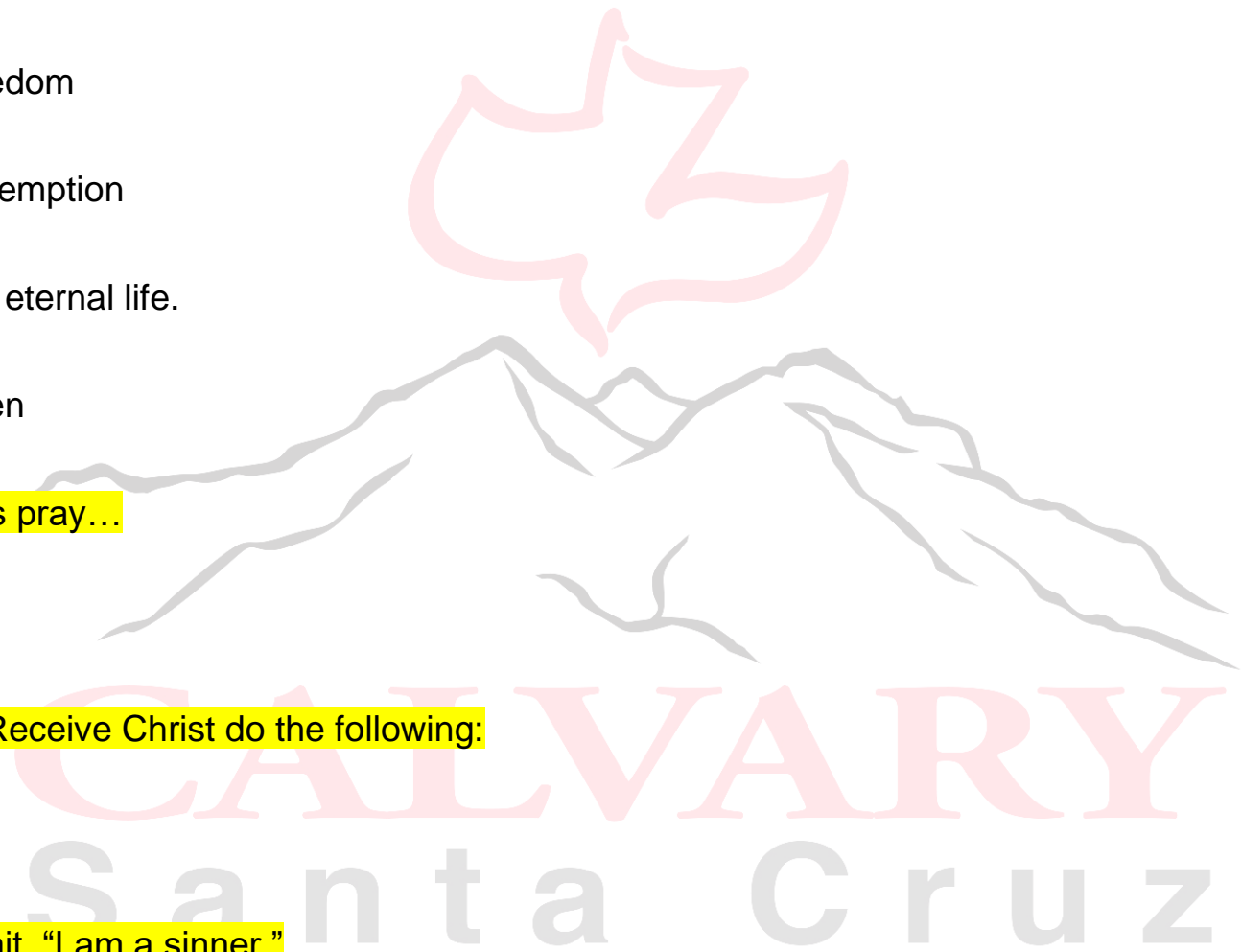
To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.



Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

[Isa 55:8-11 NKJV] 8 "For My thoughts [are] not your thoughts, Nor [are] your ways My ways," says the LORD. 9 "For [as] the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts. 10 "For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, And do not return there, But water the earth, And make it bring forth and bud, That it may give seed to the sower And bread to the eater, 11 So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper [in the thing] for which I sent it.

That is God's Word in our life

That is His promise

We don't have to make the Word of God happen

We don't need to take thing into our own hands

We don't need to help out Gd

We just need to believe – and God through His Spirit, will bring it to pass.

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 '

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'



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