

### 13. Learning How Abraham Showed His Faith

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand why Abraham is called the father of faith. We saw that Abraham placed his faith in the promises of God several hundred years before the Law was given to Moses. We also saw that Abraham placed his faith in the promises of God many years before he was circumcised. In our topic today, we are going to see how Abraham showed that faith in the promises of God.

One of the ways that Abraham showed his faith in the promises of God was by believing God when God promised him that he would be the father of many nations. Romans 4:16-18 says, “Therefore *it is* of faith that *it might be* according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all (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; 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.’” Since faith does not come by any works, God tells us here that faith is according to His grace.

The word that is translated “grace” speaks of the kindness of God by which He turns us to Christ and then helps us to grow in our Christian faith. Ephesians 2:8-10 says, “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.” Here, we see that God showed His kindness to us by giving us faith as a gift so that we could receive salvation. His grace is also shown by the fact that He created us so that when we placed our faith in Christ, we would be able to do the good works that God prepared for us.

The fact that salvation is provided by the grace of God shows that God wanted to make it certain that the promise was for every person including the Jews who had been given the law and the Gentiles who showed faith just as Abraham showed faith. God said that Abraham is the father of many nations. This was true both physically and spiritually. In addition to the nation of Israel, many other nations came through the descendants of Ishmael and the other children of Abraham that were given birth by Keturah. Additional nations also came through Esau, the brother of Israel (Jacob). However, these verses speak especially about the spiritual descendants who have showed the same faith that Abraham showed. The spiritual descendants of Abraham include people of all nations.

God chose to give spiritual life to each person at the moment one places his or her faith in Christ. Ephesians 2:1-6 says, “And you *He made alive*, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with

Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus.” Every person who has been given this spiritual life has become a spiritual descendent of Abraham by faith. God gave us that spiritual life. God chose to give us that spiritual life by placing the righteousness of Christ on us. This is what actually fulfills the promise that God made to Abraham.

Abraham was given this promise before Isaac was even conceived. That is why Romans 4:19-22 says, “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. He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. And therefore ‘it was accounted to him for righteousness.’” One of the times that Abraham showed his faith in the promises of God was the time when God gave him the promise that Isaac would be born.

In Genesis 18:10-11, God promised Abraham, “And He said, ‘I will certainly return to you according to the time of life, and behold, Sarah your wife shall have a son.’ (Sarah was listening in the tent door which *was* behind him.) Now Abraham and Sarah were old, well advanced in age; *and* Sarah had passed the age of childbearing.” When Sarah heard the promise of God she laughed. Then, God said in Genesis 18:14, “‘Is anything too hard for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.’” God kept His promise to Abraham and Sarah. Hebrews 11:11 says, “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.” Here, we read that Sarah as well as Abraham had faith that God would keep His promises.

That is why Abraham could give glory to God without wavering. As verse Romans 4:21 says, “And being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.” Abraham and Sarah showed their faith in the promises of God because they were convinced that God would do exactly as God had promised them. Here, we see another example of the reason why God put faith to the account of Abraham. Here, we see a key lesson that we want to model for our children. We will show them that they can trust the promises of God as we show that we believe God will keep His promises. That will only happen as we are also convinced that God will do exactly what He has promised us. That is why it is so important to have our own faith in the promises of God if we want to help our children develop that faith.

That is why Romans 4:23-25 goes on to say, “Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.” The word that is translated “imputed” is used eleven times in this chapter. As we have mentioned, it means *to put something to the account of a person*. God says that the promise given to Abraham that God put righteousness to the account of Abraham was not just written for his sake. God said that He also caused this to be written for our sakes.

God wanted to make it very clear to every Christian that at the moment that we place our faith in

Christ and trust Him for forgiveness of our sin that God puts that faith to our account as righteousness. That is why every Christian has been given the righteousness of Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:21 says, “For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” Christ did not have any sin. This verse tells us that the Father placed our sin on Christ. As a result, at the moment that we placed our faith in Christ, the Father placed the righteousness of Christ on us. That is why we are now able to stand before God. As He looks at us, He sees the righteousness of Christ instead of seeing our sin. This is explained more fully in these last two verses of Romans 4.

That righteousness is imputed to us (placed on our account) at the moment that we believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead. Here, we see a key point that we want to help our children understand so that they can explain it to others. We want to help our children understand that the message that we have is not just about the death of Christ. The message is also about the fact that the Father was satisfied with the payment that Christ made for our sins and He showed that He was satisfied by raising Christ from the dead. That righteousness can only be placed to the account of any person when they believe in the Father who raised Christ from the dead.

Christ was delivered up to death because of our offenses. Galatians 3:13-14 says, “Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree’), that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.” Christ bought us back from the curse of the law because He became a curse for us. As a result of what Christ did, we see that the Father promised us two things in these verses. First, the blessing of Abraham came on the Gentiles through Christ. Second, we see that we received the promise of the Holy Spirit through faith.

In addition to being delivered up because of our offenses, we also see that Christ was raised up because of our justification. In 1 John 2:1-2, we read, “My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.” The word “propitiation” means *that which satisfies*. The Father was satisfied with the payment that Christ made for our sins and showed it by raising Christ from the dead. This reminds us of the fact that it is important to help our children learn to teach the importance of the resurrection because of the fact that the Father raised Christ from the dead to prove that He accepted the payment of Christ for our sins. As we help our children learn to understand that Abraham showed his faith by being convinced that God would keep His promises, we help them to explain to others why they can rely on the promises of God. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain to others that God will keep all of His promises.