



HOW TO BE STRONG IN THE FAITH

Preaching and Teaching Resources

ADRIAN ROGERS





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How to be Strong in the Faith

SERMON REFERENCE: Romans 4:16-25

LWF SERMON NUMBER: #1639

Adrian Rogers says, “Faith is the medium of exchange in the kingdom of Heaven.”

Faith alone enables us to live this Christian life. It is our faith—not our fame, feelings, or finances—that is the measure of God’s blessing to us.

Romans 4 reminds us that in spite of Abraham’s sins, God remembers him for his faith, not his failures. By his example, we can learn how to be strong in the faith.

First, we see that a strong faith is a response to the promises of God.

Faith comes from hearing from Him and taking Him at His word. Faith is received as a gift of God according to grace (see Romans 4:16); but we must abide in Him and allow the Spirit of God to make the Word alive in our hearts.

We must also understand the character of God.

We cannot trust someone we don’t know. Abraham knew God: who gives life out of death and can make something out of nothing. A strong faith comes from an adequate understanding of the character and nature of Jesus Christ.

Strong faith also requires us to renounce all confidence in human resources.

We must put our hope in what God says is possible. Abraham was faced with a choice between two impossibilities: having a child despite being barren, or believing God could break His promises. He knew that God cannot break His Word and God cannot fail, and that was reason enough to hope.

Abraham learned to cooperate with God, and he experienced the miracle of having a child in his old age.

“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” (Romans 4: 20-21).

To believe is to obey. When we obey what God has commanded, faith and works—or the natural and the supernatural—perform together to achieve more than we ever thought possible.

Finally, strong faith glorifies God because faith and praise are inseparable.

Adrian Rogers says, “Praise is faith turned inside out.”

Abraham obeyed God, knowing that He would work through him; his story reflects the glory of God.

Life Application

Strong faith begins by hearing from God: getting a promise and truly knowing and trusting the character of God. Spend some time alone with God to hear from Him.



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1) INTRODUCTION

- a) Faith is the medium of exchange in the kingdom of Heaven.
 - i) When we go to the grocery store and buy food, we give dollars.
 - ii) We pay our rent with dollars.
 - iii) But in Heaven, we offer faith to God in exchange for what we need.
 - (1) "According to your faith be it unto you."
 - (a) Matthew 9:29
- b) Archimedes was a philosopher and physicist who once said that if he were given a lever long enough, a fulcrum to rest it on, and a place to stand, then he would be able to move the Earth out of its orbit.
 - i) He was speaking about the law of physics.
 - ii) But our lever is faith.
 - iii) The fulcrum is the Word of God.
 - iv) The place to stand is in that Word.
 - (1) By it and through it, we can move not only the Earth but Heaven also when we learn to be great believers.
- c) Romans 4:16-25
 - i) Salvation is by grace; therefore, it must be of faith.
 - (1) If there is anything required for salvation other than faith, then it cannot be of grace.
 - (a) For example, suppose God said that everyone who wants to be saved has to give a hundred dollars.
 - (i) It seems simple enough, but some people don't have a hundred dollars.
 - (b) There is one thing that anyone and everyone can do, and that is to believe.
 - (2) If we depend upon anything other than faith in God's grace, then we can never be sure that we are saved.
 - (a) If any percentage depends upon us, then we can never be sure.
 - ii) "To all the seed" in this verse means, "to everyone".
 - (1) Believing is something that everyone can do.
 - d) Abraham was the brightest star in the Hebrew Heaven.
 - i) He is the father of the faithful.
 - (1) Not only to the Jewish people, but he is also the father of us all.
 - ii) He is the father of faith.
 - e) Abraham is the classic illustration for every one of us.
 - i) God did some incredible things with Abraham.
 - (1) Abraham received an incredible miracle from God when God gave him a son, Isaac.
 - ii) If we believe as Abraham believed, then we can receive as he received.
 - iii) Romans 4:16-25
 - iv) What happened to Abraham is to be an example for us in this day and age in which we live.
 - f) When we read the story of Abraham, we see that he made some big mistakes.



- i) He fathered a child out of wedlock.
- ii) He lied about his wife and put her into jeopardy.
- iii) He disobeyed God on several occasions.
- iv) He had flaws and problems.
- v) But when we read about Abraham in the New Testament, we don't read about his failures; we read about his faith.
 - (1) God buried Abraham's failures in the grave of His forgetfulness, and God remembered his faith.
 - (2) What so pleased God about Abraham was that he was strong in faith.
- g) The measure of God's blessing to us is our faith.
 - i) "According to your faith be it unto you."
 - (1) Matthew 9:29
 - (2) It is not your fame, your feelings, your finances, but your faith be it unto you.
- h) Today's message gives us five faith factors so that we might be strong in faith as Abraham was strong in faith.
 - i) Because he was strong in faith, God blessed him.
 - ii) The Bible says that this was written for us.
 - (1) Abraham is our example.

2) THE PROMISE FACTOR (ROMANS 4:16-18)

- a) If we would have strong faith, then we must get a promise from God.
- b) Romans 4:16-18
 - i) Abraham had faith because God had spoken to him.
 - (1) God gave him a promise.
- c) Without a promise from God, there can be no faith.
 - i) Without a word from God, there can be no faith.
 - ii) We cannot ask God for faith about anything if we are merely guessing at the will of God.
- d) Faith is not man's way of getting man's will done in Heaven, but it is God's way of getting God's will done on Earth.
 - i) Faith is not some way that we superimpose our will on Heaven and say, "Now, I'm going to believe God for this and get it."
 - (1) When we put it this way, this puts us in control.
 - (2) The other way puts God in control.
 - (a) We have to hear from God in order to have faith.
 - ii) Many of our prayers try to bend God's will to fit our will.
 - (1) We try to get God to cooperate with us rather than us cooperating with God.
 - iii) God has not promised that He will do whatever we want if we just have enough faith.
 - iv) We cannot have faith for anything that is not the will of God.
- e) We cannot have faith until God gives us faith.
 - i) God will not give us faith for anything that is not His will.
 - ii) We cannot have faith apart from the will and purpose of God.
 - (1) The will and purpose of God are found in the Word of God and the promise of God.
- f) Romans 10:17
 - i) Faith is not positive thinking.



- (1) Positive thinking is not wrong.
 - (a) A Christian should be a glowing optimist.
 - (i) We should be positive and not negative.
 - 1. After the resurrection of Jesus Christ, there is not a negative verse in the Bible.
 - (2) Positive thinking may spring out of faith.
- ii) Faith is not following a hunch.
- iii) Faith is not hoping for the best.
- iv) Faith is not a feeling of optimism.
- v) Faith is a response to the Word of God.
 - (1) We must hear God, not hear about God.
- g) Romans 4:17
 - i) God spoke, and Abraham believed God.
 - (1) In believing the promise, Abraham was believing the Promiser.
 - (a) We must hear God.
- h) Romans 10:14
 - i) In this verse, "in whom" may be correctly translated that way, but the New American Standard version of the Bible puts it this way, "How shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard?"
 - (1) Both translations, properly interpreted, mean the same thing.
 - (a) We must hear from God.
- i) John 15 speaks of abiding in Christ, and He abides in us.
 - i) John 15:7
 - ii) We may get a promise out of the Word of God, or the Holy Spirit of God may take the general truths of the Bible and specify a promise to us.
 - (1) But we must abide in Him and have fellowship with Him.
 - (2) We must allow the Spirit of God to speak to us and take the Word and make the Word alive in our hearts so that we get a promise from God.
- j) We must hear from God in order to have faith.

3) THE PERSON FACTOR (ROMANS 4:17-20)

- a) We must know the character of God.
- b) What good is a promise from someone who doesn't have character?
 - i) The promise is no better than the person who makes the promise.
- c) Abraham not only knew the promise, but he also knew the Person.
 - i) Romans 4:17
 - (1) Abraham believed God because he knew the character and traits of God.
 - (a) We cannot trust someone we do not know.
 - (2) He knew that God has two great characteristics:
 - (a) To give life out of death.
 - (b) To make something out of nothing.
 - (i) God is the only one who can do these two things.
- d) Psalm 9:10
 - i) We have to know God in order to trust Him.
- e) Everything in the Christian life depends upon an adequate understanding of the character of God.



- i) An illustration of this is found in the New Testament.
 - (1) There was a centurion who had a servant who was sick.
 - (a) Matthew 8:5-13
 - (2) This army officer knew that he was over the private because he was under the general.
 - (a) He understood that he was under authority; therefore, he had authority.
 - (i) Because he was under authority, he was over those who were under him.
 - (3) He understood that Jesus was under the authority of Heaven.
 - (a) Because Jesus was under the authority of Heaven, Jesus had authority over sickness.
 - (i) He could tell sickness to go, and it would go.
 - (ii) He could tell health to come, and health would come.
 - (4) The Bible says that Jesus marveled.
 - (a) Matthew 8:10
 - (b) When we cause Jesus to marvel, we have done something.
 - (5) Where did this Gentile's faith come from?
 - (a) It came from an adequate understanding of the character and the nature of Jesus Christ.
 - (b) Because he knew who Jesus was, he had great faith.
- ii) Abraham had great faith because he knew the character of God.
- f) It is not primarily great faith in God that we need, but it is faith in a great God that we need.
 - i) It is the greatness of God that causes us to have faith in Him.
- g) We must understand who God is.
 - i) If your faith is weak, then do not make it your ambition to have strong faith.
 - ii) If your faith is weak, then make it your ambition to get to know God.
 - (1) Make your ambition the same ambition that the Apostle Paul had in the book of Philippians when he said, "Oh, that I may know Him."
 - (a) Philippians 3:10
 - iii) To know God is to trust Him.
 - (1) To trust Him is to obey Him.
 - (a) To obey Him is to be blessed.
- h) If you are willing to be nothing, then God can make something out of you.
 - i) He makes something out of nothing.
 - ii) Bring your deadness to Him, and He will give you life.
- i) Romans 4:18-20
 - i) Abraham had a big problem.
 - (1) God was going to give Abraham a son.
 - (a) But at that time, Abraham and Sarah were both past child-bearing years.
 - ii) However, Abraham glanced at his problem and gazed at God.
 - (1) He didn't see how big the problem was.
 - (2) He just saw how great God is.
 - (a) God can bring life out of death.
 - (b) God can make something out of nothing.
- j) We have to focus on who it is that we are trusting.
 - i) Glance at your problems.
 - ii) Gaze upon your God.
 - iii) Get to know God.

**4) THE POSSIBILITY FACTOR (ROMANS 4:18)**

- a) We need to renounce all confidence in human resources.
- b) Romans 4:18
 - i) In this verse, the word “hope” means “confidence”.
 - ii) He speaks of two hopes:
 - (1) The confidence Abraham had in God’s promise.
 - (2) Hope in his own ability.
 - (a) And in his own ability, it was hopeless.
- c) Abraham faced the problem, but he focused on the promise and the Person of the promise.
- d) Abraham was faced with two impossibilities:
 - i) That he could have a son.
 - (1) He was dead physically to generate a son.
 - (2) Sarah couldn’t conceive.
 - ii) That it is impossible for God to lie.
 - (1) Hebrews 6:18
 - (2) The first impossibility became a possibility because God cannot lie, and Abraham believed that God meant what He said.
 - (a) This is what it means when it says, “Against hope he believed in hope”.
 - (i) Romans 4:18
- e) God cannot break His Word, and God cannot fail.
 - i) Don’t say that something is impossible if you get a promise from God.
 - (1) Matthew 19:26
- f) Many times, we take the promises of God, and we parade them past the judgment bar of our mind.
 - i) We say that this is possible, and that is not possible.
 - (1) We put the human factor onto it.
 - ii) Charles Spurgeon said, “Look at yourself and doubts will increase; look at Jesus, and they will disappear.”
- g) Romans 4:18
 - i) Abraham just simply stood on the Word of God.

5) THE PERFORMANCE FACTOR (ROMANS 4:20-21)

- a) Learn to cooperate with God.
- b) Romans 4:20-21
 - i) Who did this? Did God do it, or did Abraham do it?
 - (1) God did it, and Abraham did it.
 - (a) Abraham fathered a child.
 - (b) Yet, the Bible says that what God promised, God was able to perform.
- c) Faith and works merge together.
 - i) When the Bible speaks of Abraham as being the father of the faithful in Hebrews 11, the Bible



says that by faith Abraham obeyed.

- ii) What is believing God?
 - (1) It is not just sitting around.
 - (2) To believe is to obey.
 - (a) Our English word “believe” comes from an old English word “by-live”.
 - (i) Whatever we really believe, we live by.
- d) There is the natural and the supernatural that cooperated together.
 - i) God did it, and Abraham did it.
 - (1) Abraham couldn’t have done it without God.
 - (2) God wouldn’t have done it without Abraham.
 - ii) There was the actual cohabitation of Sarah and Abraham; and yet, the Bible says that God did it.
- e) James 2:21-23
 - i) This passage of Scripture is not talking about the conception of Isaac but the offering of Isaac.
 - ii) The word “perfect” here means “mature” or “complete”.
 - iii) Faith without works is a hollow profession.
 - (1) Works are the proof and the product of faith.
 - (2) We are not saved by faith and works.
 - (a) We are saved by faith that works.
 - (i) To believe is to obey.
- f) 1 Corinthians 3:6-7
 - i) In this passage, Paul uses the analogy of farming.
 - (1) No farmer can have a crop without God causing the seed to germinate and grow.
 - (a) That is the supernatural work of God.
 - (b) All growth and all life come from God, whether it is spiritual, physical, vegetable, or animal.
 - (i) It is all of God.
 - (2) Suppose a farmer was just depending upon God for a crop, but the seed was in the barn, and the fields were not plowed.
 - (a) He can’t have a crop without God, but he has to plant and cultivate.
 - (i) It is God who gives the increase, and so it is with faith.
- g) Faith without works is dead.
 - i) James 2:20
 - ii) Abraham and Sarah cooperated with God.
 - (1) And the natural and the supernatural worked together.
 - iii) It doesn’t mean that we are not trusting God when we get up and do something about it.
 - (1) It means that we are trusting God.

6) THE PRAISE FACTOR (ROMANS 4:20)

- a) Romans 4:20
 - i) Abraham gave praise.
 - ii) One translation of this verse says, “He gave praise to God for the miracle that was to be wrought through Him.”
- b) Faith and praise are inseparable.



- i) We need to learn how to praise God.
 - (1) The promise factor – When we see a promise, praise Him.
 - (2) The person factor – When we see who He is, praise Him.
 - (3) The possibility factor – When it is impossible from man’s viewpoint but possible from God’s viewpoint, praise Him.
 - (4) The performance factor – When we see that the Lord will use us to do it, praise Him.
- ii) As we praise God, faith will grow in our hearts.
- c) Praise is faith turned inside out.
 - i) When faith is in our hearts, it comes out in the form of praise.
- d) Praise strengthens faith, and faith strengthens praise.
 - i) Praise makes faith shout.
 - ii) When faith hears the shout of praise, faith gets stronger and stronger.

7) CONCLUSION

- a) The clue to having a strong faith is hearing from God and getting a promise from God.
 - i) We have to be quiet and still to know God.
- b) Romans 4:22-25
 - i) Not only did Abraham get a son, but he also got salvation.
 - ii) Just as God raised up Isaac from Sarah’s dead womb, God raised up Jesus from the tomb.
 - iii) Just as God gave Abraham salvation when Abraham believed looking forward to Jesus, God gives us salvation.
- c) You have a promise from God.
 - i) Acts 16:31
 - ii) You are dead in trespasses and sins.
 - (1) But He will bring life out of death.
 - iii) You are nothing in the sight of God.
 - (1) But He will make something out of nothing if you will trust Him.
- d) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
- e) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
 - i) Romans 3:23
 - ii) Romans 10:9-10
 - iii) Romans 10:13
 - iv) John 3:16



How To Be Strong in Faith

SERMON REFERENCE: Romans 4:16-25

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Would you take God's Word and be finding Romans chapter 4, and as you're finding Romans chapter 4, I want you to imagine something. I want you to imagine two letters that have been placed in the mailbox. One letter is on crisp, embossed stationery, very expensive stationery. It is typed impeccably. It is full of cogent thoughts, not one word is misspelled, not a smudge on that letter, but it has no stamp on it. It's placed in the mailbox. Another letter, written in a pencil, written on inferior paper, with many misspellings, smudged and dirty, is dropped into the same mailbox, but this letter has a stamp on it. Now which letter is going to be delivered? The one that is beautiful with no stamp, or the one, though inferior, has a stamp on it. Well you know the answer.

Now, folks, in the spiritual life, in the Christian life, faith is that stamp. Now some of us may look better than others, but you know what God looks for? God looks for the stamp of faith upon our lives. I want to talk to you about faith, strong faith, and how to have it.

We've been studying about Abraham, and when God called Abraham, God said to Abraham, "Abraham, through you, all the nations of the world are going to be blessed." Now God did not want to make the Jewish nation simply a reservoir of blessing; He wanted to make them a channel of blessing; that through them all the nations of the world would be blessed. And God did not bring you here today to make you simply a reservoir of blessing, to have you sit, soak, and sour, but to make you a channel of blessing. And the same way that God made Abraham a blessing, God will make you a blessing and God made Abraham a blessing by faith. And the Scripture that we're going to study today talks about Abraham's faith, and the Bible tells us that it was strong faith. Would you like to be strong in faith, would you?

Well, let's read here in God's Word, beginning in verse 16, Romans 4 verse 16 through verse 25. The Bible now is talking about our relationship to God, and it says, "Therefore, it is of faith, that it might be by grace, to the end, that the promise might be sure to all the seed," that is, to all of Abraham's descendants, "not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham who is the father of us all, Jew and Gentile." Now, we can all call him, "Father Abraham." "As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations, before Him whom he believed," Abraham believed God, that's what that means, "Even God, who quickeneth the dead," the word quickeneth means He brings the dead to life, "and calleth those things which be not as though they were," that is, He brings something out of nothing. And then it speaks again of Abraham, "Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed," or thy descendants, "be." And now watch this, verse 19, "And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither the deadness of Sarah's womb." Oh I love this verse, watch it, "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was," here's our key, are you reading? "But was strong in faith, giving glory to God and being fully persuaded that what He," that is, God, "had promised, He was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness." Now watch this, this is not just ancient history. Look now in verse 23, "Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him." In other words, God did not have a message for Abraham only and not for us, "but for us also, to whom it shall



be imputed. If we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered for our offenses and was raised again for our justification." It's clear, folks, what happened to Abraham so long ago is an example and a lesson to us.

Now why is faith so important? Friend, you can't please God without faith. The Bible says, "Without faith it is impossible to please Him." And if you please God, it doesn't matter whom you displease. And if you displease God, it really doesn't matter whom you please. And the way to please God is to believe God, Hebrews 11 and verse 6. Folks, you can't be saved apart from faith, "For by grace are ye saved through faith, therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," and anybody in this building today who is lost can be saved if they will put their faith where God put their sins, upon the Lord Jesus Christ. We're saved by faith. It's faith, friend, that enables us to live the Christian life. Some folks here are stumbling and failing, other folks are victorious. What is the difference? It's the difference in those two letters I told you about. By faith, the Bible says, "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." Some are overcomers and some are overcome. What is the difference? The difference is faith. Some folks have a bright hope for Heaven. To some people Heaven is very real. To others it's not real. But for those who have faith, "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Heaven is just as real to some folks as if they were already there. What makes the difference? Faith makes the difference.

Now what is faith? Listen carefully, listen carefully. What is faith? Faith is not a hunch, faith is not positive thinking, faith is not believing everything will work out. Faith is taking God at His word. Are you listening? Did you hear that? Faith is taking God at His word. Faith is not responding to emotions, feelings, icicles up and down your spine, miracles and signs. Faith is not believing simply that God can, faith is knowing that God will. Real faith, strong faith is death to doubt. It is dumb to discouragement. It is blind to impossibilities. It knows that God will. Now this is the kind of faith we need, and we're going to learn the kind of faith that Abraham had and then we're going to learn that what Abraham experienced, we can experience. Now, folks, if we believe as Abraham believed, we will achieve as Abraham achieved. That's what this passage is all about. We're studying, and what an encouragement this ought to be to us.

You say, "Adrian, the illustration that you used about the smudged letter was that a good illustration, because are you encouraging us to have a smudged life?" No, no. Well let me tell you something wonderful. Abraham smudged the letter, if you'll read the Old Testament. I mean, he did some dumb, bonehead things. Abraham made some industrial strength mistakes, he really did. You study the life of Abraham, he wasn't perfect by any stretch of the imagination. But did you know, in the New Testament, you can't read one word about all of his mistakes, not one. Do you know what God remembered Abraham for? Not his failure but his faith. Isn't that great, isn't that great? It's the stamp of faith that God is looking for.

Now the Bible says that, "Abraham was strong in faith." Would you like to be strong in faith, would you? Let me mention about five things that are true about Abraham's faith that I want to be true about your faith. First of all, write down the word gift, GIFT. See, **strong faith is received as a gift of God**; strong faith is a gift of God. Now look if you will again in verse 16, Romans chapter 4 and verse 16. You're going to see here, "Therefore, it is of faith that it might be by grace." Now, what is grace? Well grace is God taking the initiative. Grace is the unmerited favor of God given to sinners such as we, where there is no merit whatsoever. Now, folks, salvation is the grace gift of God, but so is the faith that we have to receive that salvation. Now grace is not the reward for our faith, it is grace that takes the initiative to give us that faith. You don't generate faith, you are totally depraved, by nature. There's nothing in you that could generate faith. As a matter of fact, the



Bible says in Ephesians 2 verse 1, "And you hath He quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins." It's not just that you're sick, folks, without Jesus you are dead, you're dead. So learn this, now, grace is not a reward for our faith. Our faith is the gift of God's grace. It's an amazing thing. You see, God must give us faith. Well does He give us faith? Indeed He does. Well does He give faith to some people? Put down Romans 12 verse 3, we'll get to it later, but it says that, "God hath dealt to every man a measure of faith." "God hath dealt to every man a measure of faith." The only reason that we could have faith is that God takes the initiative and God puts that faith in our own hearts.

Now, faith is a gift of God, faith receives the gift of God. Now listen very carefully. Does that mean, therefore, that God is going to believe for you? No, He will not. You must do your own believing. Well you say, "Adrian, I thought faith was a gift of God." Indeed it is. Apart from God you could not believe. Let me ask you a question. Is breathing a gift of God? It really is. God gives you lungs and God gives you air but you can smother if you want. God gives you lungs, you couldn't breathe without lungs. God gives you air, you couldn't breathe without air. But friend, you can smother if you wish, and you can fail to believe God. Now faith is the gift of Almighty God, and thank God for that. Now what does that mean? That means that not a mother's child in this building can say, "Well, I just can't believe, it's not my fault." Yes you can, yes you can. If you wish to believe, you can, but you can smother the truth and smother yourself if you wish, but God will enable you to believe. But when you do believe, no bragging, no boasting. To God be the glory, even for that faith which is the gift of God.

You see, remember what I said, that faith is simply taking God at His word? Now you've got to find a word from God. Look in Romans 4 verse 13, look, "For the promise," see the word promise, underscore it. Look in the end of Romans 4 verse 14, "That the promise might be made of none effect," underscore the word promise. Look in Romans 4 verse 16, "Therefore, it is of faith, that it might be by grace to the end, that the promise might be sure." The promise, the promise, the promise. Faith is your response to the promises of God, to the Word of God. And that's the reason the Bible says in Romans chapter 10 verse 17, "Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by," what, "Word of God, Word of God." You'll never have faith if you don't get a Word from God. You've got to get a promise from God in order to have faith. And friend the Bible is chocked full of them, the Bible is chocked full of promises. And, you see, God gives you the lungs, that's the promise, and God gives you the air, but you've got to believe, you've got to receive, it's a gift of God.

Now we're all familiar with Billy Graham. But unless you know something about church history, you might not know Dwight L. Moody. But Dwight L. Moody was the Billy Graham of his day, many years ago. And Dwight L. Moody said something about faith, and I want you to listen very carefully because it's important. He said, "I used to close my Bible and pray for faith, 'God give me faith, God give me faith, God give me faith, please.'" And he said, "Faith never would grow." And then he said, "I read in the Bible in Romans chapter 10 verse 17, 'Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.'" And he said, "I stopped praying for faith and started reading my Bible and faith just burst aflame in my heart." You see, faith is a gift of God, you've got to get into the Word of God. And by the way, in soul winning, when we bring people to faith in Jesus Christ, if you want them to believe, you've got to get them something to believe. Give them the Word of God, the promise, the promise, the promise. So first point, strong faith, strong faith receives the gift of God, have you got that?

Second thing; **strong faith releases the grace of God.** It receives the gift of God and then it releases the grace of God. Look in Romans 4 verse 16 again, "Therefore it is of faith that it might be by grace to the



end that the promise might be sure." You see, faith links us to grace. We're not saved by faith, we're saved by grace, but it is faith that links us to grace. The only way that grace can ever operate is through faith. Now Jesus died on the cross, He paid for your sins, but that does you absolutely no good until you put your faith, as I've said, where God put your sins, upon the Lord Jesus Christ. You see, grace is released by faith; unbelief holds grace a prisoner.

Matthew chapter 13 verse 58, it speaks of the Lord Jesus and His hometown of Nazareth, and it says, "He could do no mighty works there because of their unbelief, because of their unbelief." They had fettered the grace of God in their own lives. You see, the only way that the promise can be sure is if it's by grace. Look in the, in verse 16 again, "Therefore it is of faith that it might be by grace to the end that the promise might be sure." You say, "Adrian, are you sure that you're saved?" Yes! "How can you be sure, you've got a lot of confidence in yourself, don't you?" I don't have any confidence in myself. You see, if I had any confidence in myself, I could never be sure, I don't know if I'm good enough or not. But, if it is by grace, then I can be sure. That's what it says right here.

Suppose everybody said, "Everybody wants to be saved, run around the block. Some can't run. Everybody wants to be saved, read a chapter of the Bible. Some can't read. Everybody wants to be saved, give a hundred dollars. Some don't have a hundred dollars. But there's one thing that can make the promise sure, and that is grace, grace. You see, faith receives the gift of God, faith releases the grace of God.

You know, if you think that you're going to get to Heaven by your good works, I'll guarantee you you'll never be sure. You'll always be wondering, "Have I done enough?" You'll not have a knowso salvation; you'll have a hopeso salvation. Rather than being an exclamation point, you'll be a question mark. Until you understand it's by grace, and then you say, "Praise God, Hallelujah. I know that I'm saved."

I heard about a group of people who were queuing up to get into Heaven and they were checking them into the pearly gates. And there was a long, long line. People standing at the end of the line heard some jubilation there at the front of the line, they were leaping and dancing and cheering. And they said, "Go down there," to a friend. Said, "Run down there way to the front of the line and find out what all of the good news is." He came back, he said, "It is wonderful news!" He said, "Well, what is it?" He said, "They're not counting prayer meeting attendance." Now listen, folks, you ought to come to prayer meeting, but you don't get saved by coming to prayer meeting or by Sunday School or by giving your tithe or whatever it is. You'll never have the assurance of your salvation if you do that. But to say, "Thank God, I know that I know I'm saved," it is by grace that it might be sure.

So, what does grace do? It receives the gift of God. I mean, what does faith do, strong faith, it receives the gift of God. What does strong faith do, it releases the grace of God. Third thing, I hope you're getting this, **strong faith respects the greatness of God.** Now here's the key to his strong faith. He had respect to the greatness of God. Begin reading in Romans 4 verse 17, "As it is written, 'I have made thee a father of many nations,' before Whom he believed," the whom refers to God, he refers to Abraham, "even God," now watch this, "who quickeneth the dead," that means He gives life to the dead, "and calleth those things which be as nought as though they were." Now what's he saying about this? He's saying, "Our God specializes in two things." You want, matter of fact He's cornered the market in these two things. You want me to tell you two things that nobody else can do that only God can do, of course there're many, but these are the two that he mentions right here. Number one, God raises the dead. Number two, He makes something out of nothing. Now He's cornered the market there, hasn't He? Now this is what Abraham believes. Look at it. It says here



in Romans 4:17, “He believed even God, who quick, quickeneth the dead and calleth those things which be nought as thou they were.” He is saying, “God, this is Your specialty. I know what you can do. You’re the one, Almighty God, who brings life out of death and something out of nothing.”

Well why was this very important? Well you’ll have to remember now that Abraham was a hundred years old when God spoke to him and his wife was ninety years old and they were both past the age of procreation, that is, having children. Look if you will here in Romans 4 verse 19, “And being not weak in faith he considered not his own body now dead when he was about a hundred years old, neither the deadness of Sarah’s womb.” Now what he’s talking about is, that Abraham, a hundred years old, he’s impotent, and Sarah’s been through the menopause, there’s no way they can have a baby. But he says, “Now wait a minute, God, wait a minute, God, you’re a God who brings life out of death. You’re a God that brings something out of nothing.” And what strong faith does, it doesn’t look at the problem, it looks to God, Almighty God. So Abraham, coming out of the maternity ward on a cane saying, “It’s a boy!” Can you imagine, can you imagine? How do you explain that? A miracle of God. Now the Bible says that, “Abraham had respect to the greatness of God.”

Do you know that people with weak faith just have a small God? Listen, if your faith is weak, you need to get to know God. The Bible says in Psalm 9:10, “They that know Thy name will put their trust in Thee.” Glance at your problem, gaze at your God. Notice here in Romans 4 verse 18, look at it, speaks of Abraham. Now watch this, “Who against hope believed in hope.” Now look up here and let me ask you a question; do you think you’re hopeless, do you? Do you think there’s no hope for you? Do you think God is finished with you or never got started with you? Listen to me. Do you think that other people can know God but not you? Friend, let me tell you, God sent me here to tell you that God has hope for you. Now you listen to me. “Who,” watch it, look at now in Romans 4 verse 18, “Who against hope,” that is, human hope, “believed in hope.” That is, there is human hope; impossible. There is heavenly hope; “With God all things are possible.” Now the difference is that Abraham now looked at God, God who can bring life out of death and make something out of nothing, and Abraham said, “I am going to believe in that God!” Now don’t you look at yourself, don’t you look at your problems, don’t you dare say that you’re hopeless, you are not, you are not! God can bring life to you and God’ll make something out of you. And by the way, the only thing that God makes something out of is nothing, and so if you’ll become nothing he’ll make something out of you. When you stop trying and let God.

You see, Abraham was faced with two impossibilities. First impossibility, that he could have a child; impossible. Second impossibility, that God can tell a lie. So he just says, “I’ll forget that impossibility and I’ll take this one.” And that impossibility became a possibility because God did exactly what he said he would do because God cannot lie and Abraham had a promise from God.

Now, are you following? Strong faith receives the gift of God, God enables you to believe. Strong faith releases the grace of God, so you can be sure. Strong faith respects the character of God! God is God, and when you see that God is God, then you’re going to have strong faith. Faith, mighty faith, the promise, sees, looks to God alone, laughs at impossibilities and says, “It shall be done.”

Now, the next thing. **Strong faith**, watch this now, **regards the guidance of God**, strong faith regards the guidance of God. Look in Romans 4 verses 20 and 21, “He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God and being fully persuaded that what He had promised He was able also to perform.” Now, who did the miracle, who caused Isaac to be born, the son of promise,



who caused it? Well, the Bible says what God promises God performed it. Well I want to ask you a question; do you think that Abraham and Sarah slept together? Of course they did. Now I don't mean to be crude or vulgar, but God did it, but God did it through Abraham and Sarah. Are you listening? Listen, now let me tell you something. Real faith responds to the guidance of God. And real faith doesn't just sit back and say, "Well, now God, You said You're going to give us a son, and that's all there is to it." No, Abraham and Sarah certainly did their part, and you see, there was the obedience of faith.

Put this verse down in your margin, Hebrews chapter 11 and verse 8, when it speaks of Abraham and his faith. And it says, "By faith, Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive as an inheritance, obeyed." Now the point I'm trying to get out of that is by faith he obeyed. Faith is more of a verb than a noun. You know the difference between belief and faith? Faith is belief with legs on it. Strong faith not only believes that God can but it believes that God will and God will do it by me.

Now, we cannot be in this passage without going to James chapter 2, put it in your margin, James 2 verses 21 through 23. Now remember that the Bible says that, "Abraham was justified by grace, by faith." But now notice what old James said. He says, "Was Abraham our father not justified by works when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?" Now remember this was after he'd already been justified by faith, now it says he's justified by works. "Saying, 'Seest thou how faith was wrought with his works and by works was faith made perfect.' And the Scripture was fulfilled which saith Abraham believed God and it was imputed unto him for righteousness and he is called the friend of God." What does all of that mean? Are James and Paul in contradiction? No. You have to understand it. You see, Paul is talking about being justified before God. James is talking about being justified before men, not that men justify us, but that men can see. James says, "Listen, you show me your faith without your works, I will show you my faith by my works."

Now listen very carefully. You are not saved by faith and works, but you are saved by faith that works. Did you hear that? You are not saved by faith and works, you are saved by faith that works! You are justified by faith alone, but the faith that justifies is never alone; it always has works. If your religion hasn't changed your life, you'd better change your religion. I mean, "If any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature," Second Corinthians 5 verse 17, and when God does something in your heart and in your life, it will be seen. That's the reason I'm going to, in a moment, give you an invitation to confess your faith in Jesus Christ. Now you just sit there and you say, "Well I'm trusting Him but I'm not going to make it be known. I'm not going to take any stand." Then you're not really trusting Him. The Bible says in Romans 10:11, "When we believe on Him we'll not be ashamed of Him." Faith without works is dead. Walking down an aisle won't save anybody, but what it indicates will save everybody. If you love Him enough that you're not ashamed of Him to make it public, openly glorify the Lord Jesus. The Bible, in Luke 9 verse 26, Jesus said, "If you're ashamed of Me and of My Word before this sinful and adulterous generation, I'll be ashamed of you when I come in the glory of the Father." It's very clear, folks, that Abraham and Sarah did something because of their faith. You see, faith responds to the guidance of God. Faith is acting upon what we know to be true. We faithfully obey. And I'm going to tell you something. If you have Paul's faith, you'll have James' works; they just simply go together.

Now here's the last thing, and I must close. Here's the last thing; **faith reflects the glory of God**. Look in Romans 4 verse 20 again, "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith," now watch this, "giving glory to God." Would you like to give glory to God? Do you think your unbelief glorifies God? No! Faith reflects the glory of God. Do you know the greatest thing that you could do to give



God glory, not give a million dollars, not give your body to be burned, not go overseas as a missionary. The greatest thing that you could do to glorify God is to believe God. He, "Was strong in faith, giving glory to God." Faith says, "God, you're trustworthy." First John 5:10, "He that believeth not God hath made him a liar." Don't prate about your belief in a great God, a good God, a strong God, and all the rest of that and then fail to believe Him. Believe God! Strong faith glorifies God.

And then the last two verses says this, that wasn't just written for Abraham, it was written for us. Abraham believed that God could bring death out of life and make something out of nothing. Do you believe, listen, do you believe that God raised Jesus from the dead? Do you believe He can make something out of you? Then you can be saved, that's it. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. You'll be saved. I promise you on the authority of the Word of God, He'll save you. And it's by grace so you can be sure. Folks, isn't that good? Ain't God good? Amen.

Would you bow your heads in prayer? Heads are bowed and eyes are closed. Now if you're not saved, you can be saved today. And remember, even the faith is a gift of God. Faith is not an emotion, it's taking God at His word, and God will enable you to do that. Why don't you pray this way? "Dear God," just pray it, "Dear God, I'm a sinner. My sin deserves judgment, but I want mercy. I am spiritually dead and I need life. Jesus, thank You for paying for my sin on the cross. Thank You, Jesus, for dying for me. Thank You for paying my sin debt with Your precious blood. Oh, thank You, Jesus. And now by faith I trust You, Jesus. Come into my life, forgive my sin, cleanse me, save me, save me, Jesus. Lord, give me the courage now to make this public, not to be ashamed of You. And by Your grace and for Your glory I'll live for You the rest of my life if You'll only help me, and I know You will. In Your name I pray, Amen.



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