

# Isn't Faith a Leap in the Dark?

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 29 July 2001

Preacher: Paul Barker

[ 0 : 00 ] This is the morning service at Holy Trinity on the 29th of July 2001. The preacher is Paul Barker.

His sermon is entitled, Isn't Faith a Leap in the Dark? and is from Romans chapter 4 verses 1 to 25.

Please be seated. And you may like to have open the passage from Romans chapter 4 on page 916 in the few Bibles in front of you.

Romans chapter 4 page 916. A retired welder called Ted died earlier this month. I'm sure you would have paid a lot of attention to his death.

He was in his late 80s. Fairly insignificant person in some ways we might think. A retired welder who lived in a retirement village in Bunbury south of Perth. The thing about Ted that is notable was that he was also the Earl of Lincoln.

[ 1 : 08 ] He was surprised when he became the Earl of Lincoln because at that stage when he was 75 he was still, or already I should say, a retired welder in Bunbury. And he got a phone call to say that he was now the Earl of Lincoln.

Because the previous Earl of Lincoln who was a bachelor had died in England, in Devon I gather. And now it fell to him. This retired welder called Ted, born in Australia, worked all his life as a working class person in Australia.

Didn't really have a jacket, just a cardigan. He was now the Earl of Lincoln. What a surprise to discover that you were a descendant from the first Lord High Admiral of Queen Elizabeth I in 1572.

Wouldn't that be exciting? I must say Ted apparently was a bit disappointed that there was no great inheritance and manors and mansions and grounds and acres in England that he inherited.

Just the title for which he had to pay a few thousand dollars anyway. Tracing your family history is all in vogue in recent years, especially in this country it seems.

[ 2 : 13 ] And I guess people who trace their family history have in the back of their hearts or minds that little glimmer of hope that they might find some long lost inheritance that will bring them great wealth and prestige.

It would be a bit more scary to find a scandal, but it's glamorous these days to find a convict. Indeed, it's prestigious if you find a first sleeter in your ancestry. Well, I haven't pursued the ancestry of me, but various other family members have.

To no great effect, we found that a great, great, great grandfather of mine in 1854 owned a pub outside Launceston. That's not especially exciting. Four years ago when I was in England, I discovered in a local bookshop of a town just north of London a photograph of my great, great grandfather, who was a butcher, standing outside his butcher shop, which has now gone and it's become a hairdressing salon.

And his son, who was also a butcher, my great grandfather, was killed in crossfire between two bandits in Mexico in the 1920s. That's pretty exciting, but it doesn't get me that much money or prestige, I must say.

And I remember when I was a child travelling in the very north of Scotland, not far from Donna Groats, with my parents and grandparents, and we stood for family photos outside a house, because we believed that that's where some great, great, great grandpappy, as my grandfather used to say, once lived.

[ 3 : 36 ] And years later discovered it was the wrong house. It should have been a house next door. Well, it's a pretty depressing line, I must say, in my family. I wonder whether you've thought about facing your spiritual lineage, rather than your parents and blood ancestry, your racial ancestry.

What about going back to the people who led you to Christian faith, and then beyond that to the people who led them to Christian faith? Now, for some people that would be the same, or more or less the same, as their racial bloodline.

That is, our parents have led us to faith, their parents led them to faith, their parents led them to faith, and so on. But for many of us, myself included, that's not the case.

There may be other people who've been instrumental in your conversion to Christian faith, and then go beyond that to whoever led them to Christ, and so on. And if we were able to pursue that, which of course most of us can't beyond a couple of steps, we would think that we would someday get back to Jesus.

Because Jesus was the one who led some people, his apostles and disciples, to be Christians, and then it was they who converted various people, and then down the line eventually to us.

[ 4 : 50 ] Many Christians would stop, I guess, if they got back as far as Jesus, if you could indeed trace that spiritual line. But indeed we can go beyond that. And that's where the argument of Romans 4 comes in.

Many of us would think that if we went beyond Jesus into the Old Testament, we're really tracing a different line. We're there tracing a racial line of Jewish people whose ancestry goes back all the way to Abraham, 4,000 years ago and 2,000 years before Jesus.

And certainly Jewish people, racially Jewish people, who can trace or know that therefore they're descended from Abraham, have got something to boast about. And indeed many Jews of Jesus' day and Paul's day would think that being descended from Abraham, racially a Jew, would give them some right standing with God, something to be proud about, even to boast about.

Well, Paul challenges that view in this chapter. He does so on a couple of different counts. He shows that Christians can trace their lineage not back just to Jesus, but indeed to Abraham, 4,000 years ago.

And that the key to that, for Jews and non-Jewish people, is that the right line from Abraham is not a racial line, but a line of faith. And that is the issue here.

[ 6 : 14 ] Paul has been showing that all people stand condemned under God's law, and that the only way out for that is for all people, whether they're Jews or not, is through faith in what Jesus Christ has done on the cross to bring about a right relationship with God, that is a declaration of righteousness from God about us.

Now, people might object to what Paul has been arguing and saying, but that's not the case in the Old Testament. Take Abraham, for example. He doesn't fit the pattern that Paul's been describing.

So might be the objection. Paul shows how we should understand and read the Old Testament, and in particular, Abraham. So he asks a rhetorical question, anticipating an objection, at the beginning of chapter 4.

He says, What then are we to say was gained by Abraham, our ancestor according to the flesh? That is, he's really speaking as a Jew, to Jews or Jewish Christians at this point. What about Abraham then?

And so he asks the question, and then he says in verse 2, For if Abraham was justified, that is, declared righteous, by works, that is, by things that he had done, then he's got something to boast about, although not before God.

[ 7 : 29 ] That is, you can't boast before God, but certainly if Abraham had done lots of good things, and it was those good things that stood him in good stead with God, then indeed he could boast about what he'd done.

But Paul says that view, which is a very common view, let me say, of the Old Testament, not only in Paul's day, but in ours, is wrong. And Paul argues this by referring to a passage in Genesis about Abraham.

In verse 3, he quotes from Genesis 15, Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.

That is, Abraham had been promised in chapter 12, all sorts of things from God, a land, descendants, great blessing, a relationship with God, and that there would be blessing for the world through him.

Those promises were made in Genesis 12. In Genesis 15, God reaffirms those promises to Abraham, and in particular, the promise of an heir, a descendant for Abraham.

[ 8 : 32 ] And Abraham trusts what God has said. And therefore, he's declared righteous by God. That's what Genesis 15 says, and Paul is saying, it's on account of him trusting God that he is declared righteous.

Now, this is a good week for me. It's a good week, because it's payday week. And there in my account on Monday, if I could be bothered to look up the internet banking thing, I would find a deposit for my pay.

And when I see it, but when I see it, I'm not going to go running to the treasurer, to Ken, and say, thank you, thank you so much for all this money you've put in my account. It's so kind and generous of you. I'm not going to do that at all, because it's work, it's wages for my work.

It's what I'm owed. In fact, if it's not there, I might go racing after him and complain. But I know the cheque's already been given, so it's okay. But the point is, it is wages for my work.

It is what I am due that will be there in my bank account on Monday. Now, Paul uses this argument about wages and gifts and accounting terms to understand what is, how God declares Abraham righteous.

[ 9 : 45 ] He says in verse 4, Now, to one who works, wages are not reckoned as a gift, but as something due. And that will be the case with what's in my bank account tomorrow.

But imagine I go to my bank account tomorrow, and not only is there the cheque from Holy Trinity for my wages, but there is also some other amount, maybe inexplicable, anonymous even, a gift, some money that's been put into my account that I haven't earned.

That would be a different matter entirely. And that's the contrast Paul makes. In verse 5 he says, But to one who without works, trusts him who justifies, that is, declares righteousness ungodly, such faith is reckoned as righteousness.

Now, the word reckon there is really an accounting sort of term. That is, his account is credited with righteousness. And it's a gift. A gift of God's grace, as we saw back in chapter 3 last week.

What Paul is saying about Abraham is, his credit standing with God is in the black and is positive, not because he's earned it by doing things, but rather it's been put into his account by God as a gift.

[ 10 : 58 ] A gift of God's grace, received through faith. Not even that Abraham's faith is a work, as though Abraham's got so much faith and therefore God says, Well, I'll put that much into your account.

I'll reckon that to you as righteousness. No, that's not actually what Paul is saying either. It is a free gift of grace that means righteousness is reckoned or calculated into the account of Abraham that is a spiritual account with God.

It is a gift, freely given, not earned, not his wages, not because he's done good things. And therefore, through faith, Abraham is reckoned by God as righteous.

Now, Paul uses another Old Testament figure to back up his argument here and he uses the figure of David, a king, one of the great kings, one of the great heroes of the Old Testament.

What about David then? David wrote a number of the Psalms and Paul quotes in verses 7 and 8 from Psalm 32 written by David. David said, Now, in effect, the same argument is going on here, although in a slightly different way.

[ 12 : 11 ] All people, Paul has been arguing, are sinners. But a person is blessed if their sin is not debited from their account. The end of verse 8 says, Blessed is the one against whom the Lord will not reckon sin.

That is, when we sin or fail to honour God as God and glorify him, then what should happen is that there is a debit from our account. But Paul is saying here and quoting David as saying that sin is not debited to our account when it is forgiven.

So, in a sense, it's a flip side of righteousness being credited into our account, which we don't deserve, and at the same time, our sin is not debited from our account. Indeed, as we saw last week, what happens with our sins is they're debited to Jesus' account, stacked up, if you like, so that it's well and truly in the red, and the way in which Jesus, in effect, pays off that debt is by dying for us as a sacrifice of atonement for us.

On Friday night, I must confess, I did something wrong. I parked in the wrong place. The car parks at Colonial Stadium were full, the match had started, and I parked where lots of cars were parked, but thought to myself, I'm not sure that this is legitimate.

It wasn't. Some stage in the next few days, my account will be debited by the amount of a parking fine. Now, let me say, the fact that we won meant that I could cope with it rather well.

[ 13 : 43 ] If we'd lost, I would have been very angry indeed with myself. It's what I deserve. There's no excuses. But my account will be debited because of my failure to obey the law.

David is saying, and Paul is saying, that through faith, God does not debit our accounts for our sins, but they are paid for by Jesus.

They're debited to his account. He takes the tab, if you like, and pays for it for us, as we saw last week. This is God's economy of grace.

It doesn't make a lot of sense in one way. It doesn't make good accounting sense. It is economic madness, in a sense, for our sins not to be debited to our account, and righteousness to be credited to our account, even when we don't earn it.

And we never do. It is economic irrationalism. But that is God's economy of grace. And Christians stand in credit with God, in righteousness, because of God's gracious gift.

[ 14 : 55 ] And our accounts are not debited because of God's grace to us in Christ. Even though this is, in a sense, such good news, it is extraordinarily difficult to grasp it and believe it day by day.

Our pride keeps saying to ourselves, we earn it. We must earn it. We must at least contribute something to it. We must be, in some ways, good enough to at least meet God halfway with the payment of the debt and the achievement of righteousness.

We trick ourselves to think that our goodness somehow helps in our standing with God. We deceive ourselves to think that our piety is somehow worthy before God. We fool ourselves in saying that our decency is deserving of God's favour.

Doesn't something about us count with God? But Paul's argument has been, no, nothing. Our hands are empty when we come to God.

No merit of our own can we claim. But our account is in the black purely because of God's grace in Jesus Christ.

[ 16 : 09 ] And for that we contribute nothing, nothing at all. Human pride is such a thing that we hold on to wanting to have some standing of our own basis before God.

It was the same in Paul's day and for the Jewish people one of the things in which they fell back on as a statement of pride and boast was being circumcised. Surely our circumcision the Jews would claim would put us in some right standing with God.

Surely that's something that we have done that enables us to be righteous in God's sight. Paul's already addressed this in part in chapter 2. But so strong is human pride that something about us warrants God's favour to us that he deals with it yet again here in chapter 4.

After all the Jews might say Abraham was circumcised. Surely his right standing with God is in some ways based on the fact that he circumcised himself. But Paul asks when was Abraham circumcised?

He wasn't circumcised when in chapter 15 God said or God reckoned Abraham's faith as righteousness. He was at that point still uncircumcised. Indeed he wasn't circumcised until chapter 17 13 years later when at that stage he was about 99 years old.

[ 17 : 28 ] Yes circumcision is not a bad thing Paul's saying it is a sign and seal of the right standing with God that Abraham already had. It didn't achieve that standing but it was confirmation of the righteousness that God had already reckoned to the account of Abraham.

So Paul says in verse 9 is this blessedness then that David's talking about in verses 7 and 8 from Psalm 32 is this pronounced only on the circumcised David would have been circumcised or also on the uncircumcised and then he quotes again in effect from Genesis 15 faith was reckoned to Abraham as righteousness.

How was it reckoned to him? Before or after he'd been circumcised? Well it wasn't after it was before circumcision came later. So he says that Abraham received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised.

That is it doesn't add anything to his standing it just confirms the standing that God had already reckoned to Abraham. And the purpose of this Paul says at the end of verse 11 was to make Abraham the ancestor of all who believe without being circumcised and who thus have righteousness reckoned to them and likewise the ancestor of the circumcised who are not only circumcised but also follow the example of the faith that our ancestor Abraham had before he was circumcised.

The issue you see Paul is addressing here is that Abraham is the father not the father of circumcised Jews only but rather the father of those with faith.

[ 19 : 05 ] And you see he even says in verse 12 he's the father of Jewish people who are circumcised but only if they practice the faith that Abraham had. You see circumcision in the end is an irrelevancy.

It is whether you have faith or not whether or not you're Jew or Gentile faith is the issue that means that you're a descendant of Abraham. That is the Old Testament rightly understood.

And so Paul is saying to you and me whether or not we're Jewish by race or not if we are practicing faith in God and in the Lord Jesus Christ then we are true heirs of Abraham.

He is truly our father and our spiritual lineage can be traced all the way back beyond Jesus to Abraham 4,000 years ago. And therefore we are the heirs of the promises of Abraham.

The promises of the Old Testament apply to us who are Christians. They're not just there for Jewish people but indeed rightly they're for Christian people. They're only for Jewish people if they exercise faith in the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[ 20 : 06 ] So today when there are people who say the Old Testament still applies to Jews and the modern state of Israel and all those sorts of things they've misunderstood what Paul is on about here. The promises of the Old Testament apply to Christians whether or not they're Jewish by ancestry.

They apply to the people of faith in the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. What about then the Old Testament law? That's another thing that Jews would have claimed some pride in.

Paul says the same sort of thing applies. The law came much after Abraham 430 years later in the time of Moses at Mount Sinai. Abraham's righteousness was reckoned before the law.

Without the law, apart from the law, it was reckoned through faith and not through things that Abraham did. So Paul argues that in verse 13 and 14 and 15. Indeed, the law brings wrath, he says in verse 15, not because the law is bad, but because people don't keep the law.

For, he says, the end of verse 15, where there is no law, neither is there violation. There was no parking laws, I wouldn't have got a parking ticket on Friday night. But because there is a law and I didn't keep it, I violated the law and therefore I incur in a sense its wrath.

[ 21 : 17 ] Paul, of course, is not talking about parking laws, he's talking about God's laws. And all of us incur the wrath of God because all of us fail to keep the law. The law is not what reckons us as righteous in God's sight, but rather it is faith in God and in Jesus Christ.

Now for some of you who might be thinking this is a bit of a convoluted, almost esoteric argument that's going on here. It is a difficult argument, I acknowledge. But let me say that the point of all this is to give us Christians wonderful assurance in God.

You see, the promises of God to us do not depend on us. They do not depend on our ability to keep the law. They do not depend upon our perfection.

None of us is perfect. The promises of God depend on God. As Paul says in the next verse, verse 16, for this reason, the promises of God and our standing with God and righteousness from God depends on faith in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all Abraham's descendants, not only to the Jews, the adherents of the law, but also to those who share the faith of Abraham.

He's the father of all of us. You see, God's promises are guaranteed, reliable and secure to us. That is sure and certain and it's independent of us.

[ 22 : 46 ] So be not anxious about your standing with God. Your standing with God is secure and sure because it rests on God's grace and not on our ability.

Be not disquiet about your eternal destiny. That is definite, secure in God's hands. Be not fearful of the final day because God has assured us that on that final day we will be declared righteous through faith in Jesus Christ.

We'll be justified is the word that's used. That is God's promise. It rests on his grace, not on our ability. Be not jittery about judgment judgment.

Because on that judgment day God will say acquitted you are of your sin. Righteous in my sight you stand. It rests on God's grace and not on our ability.

And God can be trusted to keep his word absolutely. You see that's the point of this argument. It is to reassure us that our standing with God and our inheritance of the promises of God made first to Abraham is secure and sure for eternity and it rests on God's grace and not on us and hallelujah for that.

[ 24 : 03 ] And this is where the example of Abraham is so powerful indeed. God promised him an heir, a descendant, many descendants. Indeed amongst his descendants there'd be kings and people of all sorts of different nations.

There's a promise made first in chapter 12 of Genesis, reaffirmed in 15 and again in 17. Didn't finally come true until chapter 21. In fact in Genesis 15 Abraham was told to look up at the night sky, count the stars if you can, as numerous as they are so will be your descendants.

But the thing is that Abraham was an old man at that time. He was 86 and then 99 when the promise was reaffirmed in chapter 17 and his wife was barren.

Now I wouldn't want to hazard a guess at how many of you here are aged 86 or 99 or somewhere in between. But if God made a promise to you that now at that age you were going to have a child, I think you'd probably laugh.

I think you'd probably think you've got it wrong. But Abraham trusted the promise of God. Circumstances said it's hopeless. How can a man of that age with a wife who's barren have a child?

[ 25 : 15 ] They haven't got any children to this point. This is a ludicrous promise for God to make. Circumstances are hopeless. Childlessness is what he would expect. for the rest of his life surely.

Humanly speaking, it was a bizarre promise to be made by God. But despite the circumstances, Abraham trusted God's word and God's word was kept.

A child came and more followed. And now the descendants of Abraham reckoned by faith belong to every nation of this world. Us Christians included of course in that.

Now it doesn't mean that Abraham was perfect when he trusted God. If you read Genesis 12 to 25, you see many instances of Abraham failing God and disobeying God. But he was a person of faith.

His life was a life of faith. And he trusted, despite circumstances, the promise that he and his barren wife in old age would have a child through whom God's blessing would come to the world.

[ 26 : 18 ] faith. That sort of faith glorifies God. That's what Paul says in verse 20. But let me read from verse 18. Hoping against hope, that is humanly speaking, it's hopeless.

But despite that Abraham hoped, he believed that he had become the father of many nations. That's what God had promised him in chapter 17 of Genesis. According to what was said, so numerous shall your descendants be.

He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was already as good as dead. Certainly for the reasons of producing children, he might as well have been dead. He was about 100 years old. 99, in fact, in Genesis 17.

Or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God. Remember the description of sin in chapter 1?

Refusing to give glory to God or honouring God as God, people exchanged the glory of God for idolatry and lies. Faith glorifies God. Faith is the opposite of sin, in effect.

[ 27 : 22 ] That is what God looks for. Him being glorified and he's glorified through faith. Because Abraham saw that he could contribute nothing to producing an heir. He was old, his wife was barren. But he trusted God and faith in God glorifies God.

Being fully convinced, verse 21, that God was able to do what he promised. Therefore his faith was reckoned to him as righteousness. Now we don't receive exactly the same promises of Abraham.

We can't say that God promises us an heir. He did to Abraham. He doesn't make that straightforward promise to us necessarily. But God does promise us various things.

He promises us a declaration of righteousness on the final day because of Jesus. He promises us that our sin will not be debited to our account because of Jesus.

He promises us life beyond death, resurrection life, because of Jesus. He promises us that he will never abandon us or forsake us and always will protect us.

[ 28 : 24 ] He promises us that all things will work for our good. He promises us that he is the ruler of the universe and all things are under his care and protection and sovereign power. That's just a handful of some of the promises of God that are made to us.

They're the promises that Christians trust in. Despite circumstances, despite when we look at this world and think how can God be in charge, despite the fact that when we look at ourselves or this world and think how can my sins not be debited to my account, how can my sin be atoned for, God has promised it and Christians trust those promises.

So Paul finishes this chapter by saying now the words it was reckoned to him were written not for his sake, that's Abraham's sake alone, but also for ours. It will be reckoned to us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was handed over to death for our trespasses and raised for our justification.

Notice how important and central the death and resurrection of Jesus is for Christian faith. That is the linchpin of it all. That is the evidence of God's faithfulness to his promise.

If we want to believe one of the promises of God to us, the death and resurrection is God's stamp to say it is true, it will be fulfilled. We can be sure of it. Christian faith is faith that trusts the God who makes promises to us.

[ 29 : 47 ] But notice also what God does not promise us. He does not promise us long life or perfect health. He does not promise us prosperity or passing exams. He does not promise us an absence of antagonism from people who are not Christians.

He doesn't promise us freedom from pain. He doesn't promise successful work ventures. Christians ought not be people who trust things that God does not promise. Notice too that faith, Christian faith, is not a leap in the dark.

It's not turning off our mind or our reason and trying to believe something that we really think is untrue. Christian faith is not wishful thinking or naive optimism.

Christian faith trusts the things that God promises and trusts the God who promises them. Therefore, Christian faith is reasonable faith.

It understands God, his character, and it understands the promises that he makes to us. A good definition of Christian faith is verse 21, being fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised.

[ 30 : 57 ] When we conduct marriage preparation seminars, one of in the session that I take, I ask people, what aspect of character do you value the highest?

And almost without exception, the group will come up with trustworthiness or something to that effect. Trustworthiness is something that is highly esteemed, at least amongst people who are preparing to get married.

How do you know that someone is trustworthy? When you first meet them, you don't. But after some time, you might see evidence of their trustworthiness.



You might realise that they're reliable. If they say they'll be somewhere at a certain time and they regularly are, you begin to trust them when they say, I'll meet you tomorrow at three o'clock. If I were to say to you that next Sunday's service will start at 10am, give or take 30 seconds, you might well trust me because you believe that the services here do generally start pretty close to 10am and not quarter past or 20 past or half past 10.

But if I was to say to you next Sunday's service will start at 10am, but for the last 52 weeks the services started at 10 past 10, you'd say, no, it's not going to start at 10 o'clock. He's unreliable.

[ 32 : 20 ] Don't trust him. So you might think I'm reliable and say, yes, service will start at 10 o'clock next week. But what if I said to you that I promise you perfect health for the rest of your life? Now that would be a dilemma because I'm a reliable person, I hope, but somehow I'm not sure that you trust me saying that to you.

The reason you wouldn't trust me is not because I'm unreliable, because I'm just unable to do that. You see, if we're to trust somebody, two things need to apply. One is that the person whom we trust is reliable, but the second thing is that they're actually able to do what they promise.

Both things are true about God. And the Bible is evidence of God's reliability and his ability to do what he promises. He promised an heir for Abraham, it's done.

He promised indeed that Abraham would be the father of many nations, it's already done. Look around us now, we're evidence of that. The church throughout the world is the fulfillment of that promise. Time and again through the Bible, what God says he'll do, he does, without exceptions.

Always he does what he says he will do. And time and again we see God's reliability and his ability to do what he promises. For Abraham, he brings life from a barren womb, an heir to an old couple.

[ 33 : 41 ] And from the dead body of Jesus, he brings resurrected life. You see, we have much more reason to trust God than Abraham ever did. There is much more evidence for us of God's reliability and ability than Abraham ever had.

We've got a whole Bible full of it. And in particular, the death and resurrection of Jesus as the guarantee of God's reliability and ability to do what he says. So our grounds for faith are much more substantial than Abraham's.

Faith is not a leap in the dark for Christian people, but rather recognizing the true character of God as revealed to us in Scripture, the right response, the only response is to trust him because he is reliable and he is able to do what he says.

So therefore, if we ask the question, is it right for Christians to be absolutely confident of salvation? Yes, it is because God says so. Is it right for us to be sure that when we die, we will be in heaven?

Yes, it is because God says so. Is it right for us to be certain that our sins are forgiven? Yes, it is because God says so. And where does he say so?

[ 34 : 52 ] In Scripture and above all in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. He died for our sins and his resurrection is the guarantee that we are declared righteous by God.

Paul will later say in this same letter, no one who trusts in God will be disappointed. How firm a foundation, you people of God, is laid for your faith in his excellent word.

What more can he say than to you he has said to you who to Jesus for refuge have fled? Have faith in God, my heart.

Trust and be unafraid. God will fulfill in every part each promise he has made. Let's pray. And I pray using the words of a hymn from Charles Wesley.

Father of Jesus Christ, my Lord, my Saviour and my Head, I trust in thee whose powerful word hath raised him from the dead.

[ 35 : 55 ] O God, thy record I believe, in Abraham's footsteps tread, and wait expecting to receive the Christ, the promised seed.

Faith in thy power thou seest I have, for thou this faith hast wrought. Dead souls thou callest from their grave, and speakest worlds from naught.

Things that are not as though they were, thou callest by their name. Present with thee the future are, with thee the great I am. In hope, against all human hope, self-desperate I believe.

Thy quickening word shall raise me up, thou shalt thy spirit give. Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees. And looks to that alone, laughs at impossibilities, and cries, it shall be done.

Amen.