

# "Faith in a Flawless God" Romans 4:9–25

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[ 0 : 00 ] Peace for our time. I'm sure those four words can be guessed. Who said those four words can be guessed this morning.! Of course, they were said by Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain in September of 1938 as he got off a plane and he addressed the empire that he had come to a peace agreement with Adolf Hitler.

He had just returned back from Germany and he held up a piece of paper and he said, peace in our time. Less than a year after that, World War II started and death ensued.

Tens of millions of lives were lost. Anything but peace in our time was the result. I bring this up to talk about misplaced hope and how misplaced hope is actually an incredibly dangerous thing. It's not a thing we ought to be indifferent about.

Having faith in the wrong person or thing, it can have absolutely dire consequences. It's a problem that we can all relate to on maybe a big scale, but for sure on a small scale.

Maybe some of us have experienced faith in the wrong person or misplaced hope this past week.

[ 1 : 19 ] Maybe some of us will experience it in the week to come. As we get into chapter 4 of Romans, we will find Paul addressing this very issue of misplaced hope.

An issue that every soul will experience to some degree or another. Paul will show that there is actually a proper way to place our hope.

That there is a true faith to be had. That there is a faith that is sure and true. That will never disappoint. That will be guaranteed.

As we open up Romans chapter 4, we'll look at how the faith that Paul will articulate is a faith that works for all people. Not just a select few.

That this faith will be one that is based on a promise made to us rather than a law or work that we have to keep ourselves.

[ 2 : 17 ] And finally, it is a faith that is incredibly flawed. But is actually at the same time flawless. So if you can turn with me to Romans chapter 4.

Matt read starting in verse 13 of 4. We're going to be going back to verse 9. So we'll be in 9 to 25. If you have a scripture journal, you can turn to page 20. If you have your own Bible, you can turn there now as well.

The first point. A faith that works for all people and not a select few. So last week we were in Romans chapter 4 verses 1 to 8. And found that the righteousness that Abraham enjoyed was a gift from God.

It was not a wage that he earned. We talked about how this is an imputed righteousness. A foreign righteousness that is given as a gift.

Not by way of works or merit earned. And therefore it needed to be received with humility and thankfulness. This is an important doctrine to understand.

[ 3 : 23 ] I mean really it is important to understand for the entirety of the gospel. Especially in Romans and especially chapter 4. And going forward in 5 in the following chapters.

It's the core of the gospel. But for us this morning, it has further implications. This gifted righteousness. This imputed righteousness. A righteousness that is a gift by faith.

A gift of God by grace that we accept by faith. Faith. It comes through faith in such a way that it ought to be enjoyed. Not just by a select few people.

But available to everyone who. And this is where Abraham comes in big time. Who like Abraham receive it properly and humbly. Look with me at verses 9 to 11.

We're just going to read the first half of verse 11. But 9 to 11a. This is what it says. In this blessing then. Is this blessing then only for the circumcised or for the uncircumcised?

[ 4 : 26 ] For we say that faith was counted to Abraham as righteousness. How then was it counted to him? Was it before or was it after he had been circumcised?

It was not after but before he was circumcised. He received the sign of circumcision. As a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith. While he was still uncircumcised.

You know I was telling Christine earlier this week. That the hardest part in preparing this sermon this week.

Was trying to be concise. There is so much packed. There is a lot of double clicking that could be done with this text. A big part of that is understanding the life of Abraham.

The whole Abrahamic story in Genesis. In the early part of Genesis. It is so important that we grasp it. I'll try my best to summarize it. It's either that or I'm preaching for like an hour and 15.

[ 5 : 27 ] So you take your pick. We're not going to be here for an hour and 15. So it's important that we have a little bit of a grasp on who Abraham is. In light of Romans chapter 4.

God chose Abraham. This is the story. Abraham was in what would likely be modern day Iraq. In this place called Ur. And he calls him to leave his place of birth.

Where he was native. And to come to this new land of Canaan. And what's interesting here is that God chose to bless Abraham. And to call Abraham without any conditions or requirements.

I mean in the text itself. If we were to go through Genesis. Abraham whether or not he was important or noteworthy or not. It doesn't say.

It just simply says that God called him. The Bible does not speak of him as being a noble person. Or a religiously upright person. In fact he almost certainly would have been a pantheist.

[ 6 : 33 ] He would have worshipped the sun or the moon. Or some combination of local and national gods. But the Bible doesn't even talk about that.

It just simply says that God called Abraham. God did not either. In addition to calling him without conditions or requirements. God doesn't say.

Hey listen. I'm going to hook you up with blessing. But we need to negotiate how this relationship is going to work out beforehand. If you can agree to it. Listen.

We're going to draft the contract. You're going to sign it. And then the blessings will come. What's interesting with the call of Abraham. Is that doesn't happen either. God does not strike up a deal with Abraham before he calls him or blesses him.

Simply God chooses Abraham and Abraham responds to the call. And that is how it begins.

[ 7 : 29 ] It was only after God had called Abraham and blessed Abraham and promised a future blessing that was remarkably relational and wealthy in terms of legacy.

Only then did God give him a sign of the promise which was circumcision. This is what Paul is getting at. All the promise. All of the blessing. All of the calling.

All of it happens before Abraham is circumcised. Circumcision. Again we could double click on it. But in short it's a physical sign of a spiritual reality.

In effect it was as if God was saying to Abraham and his offspring that would come after him. That the blessing and promise made to him would invoke every aspect of his life.

Including and especially the most private and intimate parts of his life. This relationship was so all encompassing and so deeply personal. That no part of Abraham's existence would be left untouched.

[ 8 : 37 ] It was a reminder to Abraham and his descendants that God had made these promises to them. But what ends up happening is that Abraham's offspring that would come centuries and centuries after.

They either forgot about or reinterpreted the sign and the covenantal promises that it signified. Instead the sign was confused with the thing that it was supposed to signify.

So it wasn't that the sign of the covenant was to remind them of the promises that God made. Somehow in some way the sign itself came to represent who was in and who was out of the covenant community.

It's a confusion. This isn't the greatest example but hopefully it helps to shed some light on what I'm trying to say here. It would be as if you were road tripping this summer out east.

Okay. Summertime. It's beautiful. You're heading to Halifax. You're heading to PEI. Wherever you're going on a road trip out east.

[ 9 : 43 ] And you pack up. You're passing Quebec City. You go into New Brunswick. And then there's a sign that says Halifax in X amount of kilometers.

You stop. You snap a picture with it. Maybe you have a picnic next to the sign. And then you pack up. And you drive home. Okay. The sign is supposed to point to the destination.

But the sign itself isn't the destination. Okay. That would be a giant colossal waste of your time. It would be a misunderstanding of the point of a sign.

The sign signifies something. Okay. The sign isn't the destination or the thing that was promised.

The sign is merely a reminder of that. Charles Hodge, he was a reformed pastor.

He talks of it like this. What answers well as a sign is a miserable substitute for the things signified. And isn't that true? A vacation at the sign is not a vacation.

[10:50] It is a waste of time. Circumcision and the law that was connected to it. Circumcision in some ways is like a short form for the law.

Well, unfortunately was misinterpreted so that what made the people of God wasn't so much the promise that was given to Abraham.

And therefore embraced as a gift by faith. It actually became the keeping of the law itself. Of circumcision. Righteousness no longer was found in God's promise.

But in the thing that pointed to God's promise. Therefore, what ends up happening is that counterfeit boundaries were established to define who was in and who was out of God's covenant people.

Of the people that God made a promise to. And listen. If you are on the inside looking out. If you're a part of the covenant people. Lucky you. Fantastic.

[11:53] Or. If this faith that we find in the Bible. Is just one road up the same mountain of salvation. But you can take another road. Okay. So there can be insiders and outsiders.

But whatever. I'm an insider to this faith. You're an outsider. But. I'm an outsider to your faith. You're an insider. It doesn't matter. We're all going to the same destination. Okay. But that's not what's happening.

It's not what the Bible teaches. And it's. Because this isn't the reality. Of what the scriptures teach. That there is only one God. And that there is only one faith. And that there is only one way of salvation.

And it is only through. The promise made by the one true God. It's very problematic. It's very problematic. When you. Redefine what it means to be. In.

God's family. In God's people. Or. Out of God's people. They're counterfeit boundaries. But you under.

[12:52] You have to understand. That. And we'll. We'll see here. In the rest of chapter four. That this was never the intention. Of. Of the faith. That God gave to Abraham. This was never the intention.

Of. Of what it meant to be. In covenant relationship. With God. In fact. The Abrahamic family. Rather than being. This exclusive group. Was actually. To be.

A herald. To evangelize the world. That actually. There's only one true God. Okay. And like Abraham. Who. Who left. A pantheon of gods. And left.

Potentially. Ancestor worship. Or all sorts. Of different faiths. You're called. To leave that too.

Because there's only one true God. And guess what. He is for you. And he's not against you. He is wanting to bless you.

And not to curse you. God's people. Have always been. An evangelistic people. The call has always been. To proclaim. The goodness.

[13:46] And grace. Of the one true God. To all people. Wherever they are. And like Abraham. That God calls people. Without condition.

Or requirement. So Paul is addressing this very thing. And he addresses it. By returning to scripture. And he addresses it.

By returning to the father of faith himself. To show that the promise made. And the righteousness received. Was counted to Abraham. Not after circumcision.

Or not through circumcision. But before. That is what he's getting at. Therefore. That is what Paul is doing. Therefore. What Paul is doing. Is he is. Taking down.

These counterfeit boundaries. That have somehow. Been erected. Over the centuries. Ever since Abraham's time. Abraham is the father of faith.

[14:41] To all people. Not the circumcised. But to the uncircumcised. Which is to say. To all people. In all places. At all time. Look with me at verses.

The second half of verse 11. All the way to verse 12. This is what it says. Actually we'll read. All of verse 11. He received the sign of circumcision.

As a seal of the righteousness. That he had by faith. While he was still. Uncircumcised. The purpose was to make him. The father of all who believe. Without being circumcised.

So that righteousness. Would be counted to them. As well. Verse 12. And to make him the father. Of the circumcised. Who are not merely circumcised. But who also walk.

In the footsteps. Of the faith. That our father Abraham. Had before he was circumcised. This means that we have a faith. That is not exclusive. Okay. It is for all people.

[15:37] It works for all people. Regardless of what nation. They come from. This is wonderful. Because the call then. Isn't. Hey listen. For sake.

For sake. Everything. That God. That God. Has sovereignly. Placed you in. The person you are. The food you enjoy. You have to. You have to forsake it all.

And then. Adapt. To this one monolith. It's not like that. The faith that God proclaims. It's always. And I. I feel like I'm a broken record. Saying this.

Because it is a faith of love. It is always looking to expand. And include. And to stretch out. And to welcome. It is a faith that works for all people.

Because ultimately it is rooted in the one true God. And what he offers. And not what we do. It is simply. A gift that ought to be received by faith.

[16:39] So the big idea in this section. This first point. Is that there is only one people of God. And actually the boundaries are pretty darn wide open. It is not just about circumcision.

Or uncircumcision. It's not about keeping the law. It's actually about receiving faithfully. What God is gifting to us. This faith is available. To all people.

Because God chooses. Unlikely people. Abraham being the perfect example. Right. The perfect example of an unlikely person. Is Abraham. Therefore you unlikely people here.

It's offered to you. Paul addresses this very point. Doubles down on it. In this next. Chunk of scripture. Verses 13 to 17. Because we also see that this faith.

That is offered. Again. And he's addressed this earlier. But it is based on a promise. That he makes. Not a law that we have to keep. Read verses 13 to 15 with me.

[17:38] For the promise to Abraham. And his offspring. That he would be heir of the world. Did not come through the law. But through the righteousness. Of faith. For if it is the adherents of the law.

Who are to be the heirs. Faith is null. And the promise is void. For the law brings wrath. But where there is no law. There is no transgression. There is.

An emphatic. In the first verse. Here. Verse 13. Paul will say. For the promise. To Abraham and his offspring. That he would be heir of the world. Did not.

It's like. Like. Cap locks. Bold. Underline. Italics. Not. Come through the law. And then the same thing. For but. So it did not come through the law.

But it came through the righteousness of faith. He is. He is emphatically making this point. That it is. Based on the promise of God himself. And promise actually features very prominently in this section.

[18:38] And refers to the promise that God made to Abraham. specifically in Genesis chapter 15. Namely. That he would give. An offspring. To Abraham.

In fact. Offspring. That would. Possess the land of Canaan. They would be so numerous. The land of Canaan would be. The land of Israel. That we see this especially in Genesis chapter 15.

Verses 18 to 21. And it simply says. And again. This is. The key verse that. That Paul is going to quote. Time and again. Is that Abraham believed in God. And it was credited.

Or counted. Or imputed to him. As righteousness. And then there's something else. And again. Another double click here. We're not going to get into it. I'll just try to sum it up quickly.

Then God makes. A covenant with Abraham. A covenant is like. A deal on steroids. Okay. And they're. With this covenant. Two parties would come together. They would lay out. What this covenant would look like.

[19:33] And then. They would lay out. The consequences of the covenant. If you break. The covenant. There would be. Death to pay. So to speak. What ends up happening.

In the story. Again. You can read it. In Genesis chapter 15. It's a bit of a bizarre story. But really. To sum it up. Is that God makes. A unilateral covenant. With Abraham. One Abraham.

Could never truly keep. So what does God do? He assumes. All of the consequences. For breaking that covenant. Now. We could just park it there.

Okay. We could talk about. How this points to the cross. How Jesus. Is the one who suffers. The consequences. For our breaking of the covenant. There is so much to be said. About Genesis chapter 15.

But. Just in short. God makes a unilateral covenant. With Abraham. Assumes all the consequences. For breaking this covenant. But. And this is what Paul is going to.

[ 20 : 28 ] He's going to anticipate. A rebuttal to this. But what about the law? The law should matter. For something. The law has come to define God's people. Surely that must factor into the economy of faith.

In some kind of way. In some kind of form. And again. Paul is anticipating this objection. What about keeping the law? Paul says this. Listen. If the law could bring about righteousness.

It would ultimately void the promise of God. Made to Abraham. The question is why? For two reasons. Okay. The first. The law wouldn't come. For some 500 years.

After Abraham. Received this promise from God. Okay. Maybe a promise. Takes a generation. To. To. To come about.

All right. That's not like. The second. It. It's instituted. It comes into effect. I'm not saying that's the case. It certainly does here. But I could understand that.

[ 21 : 26 ] Maybe two generations. This is 10 to 12 generations. This is half a millennium. Okay. If. If righteousness. If our right standing. If our. Connection to God.

Was through the law. Man. The law wasn't given for 500 years after. That's a long. Long time. Generations come. And go. That would hardly be a promise.

If it took that long. The second. Reason that. That no. Keeping of the law. Could bring about the righteousness. And how it would. Negate the promise of God.

Is because. Ultimately. We can't keep the law. And I mean. If. If. If you remember. It's a few weeks back now. Paul has gone to great lengths. To. To articulate.

Why we can't keep the law. Why we are law breakers. Romans chapter 1. The. After. Starting verse 18. All the way to. Chapter 3. Verse 20. Paul makes it very clear.

[ 22 : 22 ] Listen. Any which way. You try to figure it out. You can't keep the law. You just can't do it. Okay. Whether it's the law that God gives. On Mount Sinai. To the people of Israel. Or whether it's the moral law.

That is just. Baked into what it means. To be a human. There's just no way. You're keeping the law. Maybe you can keep it. But are you keeping it perfectly? No. And then if you get puffed up. And proud about keeping the law.

Man. You are really breaking the law. Nobody can keep the law. This is what Paul is getting at here. The law was never actually intended for us to keep.

In its fullness. So that we could somehow. Come to. Righteous standing before God. Where he would accept us. Not weighing our sins.

But looking at our merits. What's interesting is that. God already calls the people of Israel. Back with Abraham. But he also reiterates it. When he rescues Israel out of Egypt.

[ 23 : 21 ] He says listen. You're my people. And then he gives the law. The law comes after his promise. After his adoption. After his acceptance of the people. The purpose of the law.

And again. This is a sweeping statement about the law. But I think it stands. That the law was really given. To show us our deep need. For the grace. For the grace. That God offers.

To remind us of the promises that God made. That we have no hope at all. To satisfy his righteous requirements.

We are at his mercy. The law makes that very clear. So you see. In the same way that. Paul makes it very clear.

That circumcision has been. Manipulated. Has been. Reinterpreted. Has been. Twisted. To communicate something. It is not.

[ 24 : 18 ] So too the law. To treat the law. As a barometer. To show how righteous we are. It fails to understand. What the law is really about. Do we not fall into this trap constantly?

This is what it means to have misplaced hope. Israel is putting their hope in the sign. Rather than the destination. Right? They are putting their hope on the means of exposing their sinful hearts.

And their need for grace. And they are saying no, no, no. It is the basis for which we can be made righteous. It is a misplaced hope. Do we not do the same thing? Are we all not guilty of consistently putting our hope in our next paycheck.

Or our next prospect. Or in the kind admiration of people in our lives. That we so desperately want approval from. The problem with all these things is that sometimes they work.

Okay? Sometimes they actually give us what we want. But they never give us what we want in an eternal sense. Okay? So the money would run out. The prospects. Maybe we'd hit a ceiling.

[ 25 : 34 ] Maybe we'd enjoy the admiration for a season. But then we get in the way. And we hurt people. Or we're hurt by them. The point of all of this is. Is that our hope.

Our ultimate hope is constantly misplaced. It's constantly misplaced. We are looking for a well done.

And I think it is an admirable. And I think it's a God given desire to have a well done come our way. But we are looking for a well done from things.

And from people that can't give us the well done that we truly want to hear. The well done that we need is from God's own lips.

To hear that from his lips. And he's unchanging. So that well done isn't like well done now. For the next five seconds before you mess things up. It's a well done forever.

[ 26 : 34 ] I think that is what we are after. And when we put our faith and hope in anything other than that. It becomes misplaced. We want a salvation.

We want a righteousness. We want a hope that is guaranteed. That will not run out. Friends, I think Paul makes a very excellent case that it can only come from the grace of God.

Look with me at verses 16 and the first half of verse 17. This is where he's getting at here. That is why it depends on faith.

In order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring. Not only to the adherent of the law.

But also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham. Who is the father of us all. There it is again. Verse 17, the first part of it. As it is written, I have made you the father of many nations.

[ 27 : 43 ] That's where we'll pause quickly. God cannot and will not fail you. When your hope is in him. And it's not that he's just really strong and able-bodied.

And he has this kind of gumption and grit about him that he just will not give up. It's that he cannot fail. It's an impossibility for him. To fail is to render him not God.

And therefore to live in such a way that renders his promise void. Is to really call God something that he is not.

God will not fail. A hope placed in him is never misplaced. His word is always true. Friends, we fall prey to this all the time by speaking to the universe.

Manifesting what we want. Trusting in power of positive thinking. All ideals, all ideas that provide a facade of surety.

[ 28 : 55 ] A facade of a sure hope. But such actions, they're far from consistent. They're far from trustworthy. They're not absolute.

They're not guaranteed. Yet, what do we have? We have a God who is unchanging. Who proclaims that he will do something. And then it happens. Then it happens.

And often times, and what we'll see closer to the end of our text. Is that it happens always in a way that is far greater than what we hope for. This is the God that we are called to put our faith and trust in.

However, we are called to believe in some, quite frankly, outlandish things. If we are to have faith like Abraham, then we are called to have faith in something that seems to transcend the natural world.

Abraham is called to have faith that God will give him an offspring when he is 100 years old. When his wife is not approaching menopause. She's in her 90s.

[ 30 : 02 ] Okay? It's an impossibility. God's like, listen, you just need to believe me. Abraham goes, okay. Okay. Let's put on our skeptic hat for a minute and say, this seems a bit bizarre.

And this is what we're called to. So, the question is, is God calling us to an irrational faith? Is he calling us to a faith that suspends reason and logic?

And this leads us to our third and final point. That the faith that Paul is going to proclaim is a flawed faith, but an incredibly flawless faith.

Abraham, what does he do? He believes God for these completely over-the-top, skeptically speaking outlandish things. Certainly not in the realm of natural happenings. It says that in hope he believed against hope. And that seems to me like a kind of an irrational thing to do. If there's no hope in something, why would you believe in it and put your hope in it? [ 31 : 07 ] And I think that is actually a very logical thing to say. If the thing you're putting your hope in is not the creator God, who is powerful, who spoke the entire world into creation.

Verse 17, the second part of verse 17, what does it say? In the presence of God in whom he, that is Abraham, believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. If God is the creator of all things, if he is powerful to do everything, then when he calls the 100-year-old man and his 90-year-old wife to have a child, it's not irrational to believe in that. Unless he doesn't exist. But if he does, then what is this to him? If he spoke, if Genesis 1 and 2 communicate to us that God is the creator and he created it of nothing, it's not like he had a whole studio full of supplies that he just accessed, but he spoke it of nothing. What is a 90-year-old woman's womb? How is that going to get in the way for him to do something incredible and creative? So we see here in verses 17, the second part of verse 17 and verse 8, is that the hope of Abraham, this remarkable hope, it is rooted in the truth of God, that he is the creator of all things and creates out of nothing, that he has power and he uses it to fulfill good and godly promises.

[ 32 : 44 ] He does it to, that a part of his power is to even resurrect the dead. But this shouldn't be too surprising for us.

For something or someone that is worthy of our hope ought to have power to overcome obstacles. Why would one put their faith and trust in something that is weak and ineffective? I think one of the issues that young people are having these days is a giant mistrust of institutions, partly because they have over-promised and under-delivered. And I think this is a very rational thing to do, is to want to put our hope into something or someone that will do what it says. I think this is what Paul is pointing to, and especially what he's pointing to in the next three verses.

Look with me at verses 19 to 21. And he, Abraham, did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead.

[ 33 : 50 ] Remember, he's putting his hope in the God who can resurrect the dead. Okay? Read that again. He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead since he was about 100 years old.

Already considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God. Verse 21. Fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. Again, that word promise. It says in verses 19 and 20 and 21, he did not weaken. No belief made him waver. He was fully convinced. But again, if we were to double click and jump into the Abrahamic story, does his faith weaken? Oh, most certainly it does. Does he have unbelief? Does he waver? Well, it seems he certainly wavers. Was he fully convinced that God would bring about a child through Sarah?

[ 34 : 48 ] I mean, if you consider the fact that he ended up having a son with his slave servant woman in his household, it doesn't seem that he was fully convinced.

So what is going on? What is Paul getting at? Is Paul a bit fuzzy about the Abrahamic story? Is his scroll just full of dust and cobwebs?

Okay, he hasn't read it in a while. He forgets what the story's about. Or is Paul implying something else here? What is happening? I think the apostle, by the way, his scroll is not dusty.

Okay, he knows the Bible. Just to clear that up. The apostle Paul is highlighting something very important for us, especially us, to understand about faith.

That true faith will suffer some degree of doubt. But that God's promises are far greater than our flawed faith. God's promises are flawless.

[ 35 : 52 ] They are without blemish or mistake. God promises knowing the end from the beginning. It's not that he failed to consider an aspect of the future.

His promises are flawless. They cannot be undone by the first stumble of unbelief. You know, as Christians, we trust in God until things become a bit too uncomfortable for us.

So what do we do? We want to create fallbacks or contingencies. We want to augment our faith with our own ingenuity. We want to backstop, so to speak. Because either God's solutions are not what we want, or we perceive them as too costly.

So our faith, all too often, is added to by our own works.

At the very least, our own worries. We do not want to cede complete control over to God. And yet, even with this augmented, flawed faith, God, in his goodness and kindness, in his graciousness, what does he do?

[ 36 : 58 ] He doesn't allow his promise to falter in any way. It still remains flawless. May God be true, yet every man a liar.

He is never going to trip up. He is never going to be undermined with his promises. So the question is, why do we struggle with faith?

Why do we struggle to believe the promises of God when you are desperately trying to not be angry, and yet you fly into a fit of rage for the 477th time saying hurtful words to your parents?

Or maybe you are, you've resolved it in yourself to deal with conflict and not turn into the ice man and have a frosty existence at home for the next week with your spouse.

Or maybe you have decided that God, by your strength, I am going to trust you to help me live out this godly life and to look to you for strength.

[ 38 : 15 ] I'm not going to harangue my child when disobedience comes, when the same issue arises, when the talkback starts to happen, or when the frustration mounts. And yet it ends up happening time and time and time again.

Why do we struggle with faith? Why do we struggle with trusting that the Lord has our best intentions, that his promises are yes and amen, and that he wants to bless us and not curse us? And why do we constantly fail to believe him and fall into what seems to be a cursed life, or at least cursed behaviors? I think the law keeper in us would say that ultimately we can modify our own behavior.

We can be the savior of our own souls. We can fix whatever is before us. We have the power. But doesn't the fact that we are in the same position time and time again prove the opposite?

Even when we see incremental change, does it again not prove that our abilities are actually lacking in a far greater way than we would like to admit?

[ 39 : 23 ] Once again, I think we have a prime example in Abraham where we see that, like him, all of this, all of this wavering, all of this doubting, all of this kind of engaging with unbelief is rooted in allowing our situations and our fears and our self-justifications and our pride to completely overshadow the truth about who God is and what he does.

So what's the solution? I think it is really plain. It is constantly coming back to the truth about who God is and what he has promised to do. Again, his power and his promise.

That he has the power and the authority to ensure that the promises that he makes come to pass. I think it also has to do with being encouraged with one another to live out this godly life.

You cannot live out the Christian life by yourself. And he has given us gifts. He has given us his word. He has given us sacraments to remind us, again, similar to circumcision, right, to point us to his promises.

Right? They bolster our inner man, our inner woman. They help us to have strength in spiritual hearts, to have good and nourishing spiritual food.

[ 40 : 47 ] So what does Paul do here? He is highlighting not the strength of Abraham's faith, but the flawed aspects of it, which wavered. But he is doing that in such a way as to lift high the flawless promises of God.

You know, the wonderful thing about trusting God is that it helps us to trust him more and more, and we grow in this faith by his strength, by putting ourselves to his mercy. So, we say no to the things that in previous days and weeks and months and years we would say yes to.

Temptations we can stand firm in and have victory over that in previous time we would totally crumble. Our faith grows. Consider Abraham's life.

The culmination of the Abrahamic story is that he obeys God by taking his son on a three-day journey to Mount Moriah where he is obeying God believing that even if, and this is what it says in Hebrews 11, even if he was to slay Isaac that God could raise him from the grave.

By the end of his story we have a different guy, not because Abraham is so wonderful but because he was slowly, gradually trusting in the Lord and his goodness and his promises.

[ 42 : 06 ] He grew as a result. It's actually a wonderful, wonderful story. Genesis 22. Again, double click it. We're not going to but consider reading the Genesis story or the Abraham story in Genesis this week.

It's an incredible one. You see, a triumphal faith according to scripture is not one that is flawless. Your ability to, okay, to trust in God but it is when we trust in God when we are afraid. And when we are weak. And when we are a bit unsure of how things are going to pan out but we are saying, God, I am hoping in you even though there doesn't seem like there's hope in this situation.

I am hoping in you. This is the faith of Abraham. This is the faith that we are called to. This is the faith, the flawed faith in our flawless God. God. We'll close with this.

Abraham held on to the promises of God that he would have innumerable offspring but in the end he had two. Right? One was out of wedlock.

[ 43 : 19 ] One was not the promised child. He did not have innumerable children or at least he did not see them. He was promised the land of Canaan and yet in two generations his family would be foreigners in Egypt and not long after that they would be slaves.

Abraham believed God for promises that he would never see. But Abraham believed that God would bring it about not as a kind of Genghis Khan figure.

Okay? So that the promise of God to have innumerable children would be to spread his seed over the known world. No. But that through his offspring singular okay?

Jesus Christ the son of Abraham the Messiah himself through him and the faith in his life and death and resurrection the same faith that Abraham enjoyed would be the faith for all of God's people for all time and therefore he would be called what?

The father of all nations. Verse 23 24 and 25 Paul will close this section with this. But the words it was counted to him were not written for his sake alone that is Abraham's sake alone but for ours also.

[ 44 : 33 ] It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord and here is the gospel in short who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.

The life and death and resurrection of Christ we like Abraham we receive salvation and justification we receive the righteousness of God as a gift by faith.

All we need to do is rightly receive it with humility. So in the end faith is not some ignorant optimism nor is it this rational pessimism instead it is a sober understanding of the gravity of our situation that we are sinners and that we are lost but that God is powerful and faithful and he makes promises and he keeps promises.

Okay? That is what the faith of the scripture is. That is what the faith of Abraham is. The faith of Abraham is a hope that is sure and true. It is peace not just for our time but for all time.

So friends, listen. If you are a child of Abraham okay, this morning praise God lean into those promises afresh this morning.

[ 45 : 51 ] Remind yourself of the good news of Christ and ask him to rid yourself of all false hopes and misplaced hopes and if you are not yet a child of Abraham okay, listen, there is room in the family.

There is room. The false counterfeit boundaries have been taken down. The arms of Christ are wide open. Come, join, alright? To join. Put your faith in Christ in the same way that Abraham did. Join the family of God.