

“Hope and Faith”
Romans 4:17-25
Berean Baptist Church
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INTRODUCTION

The previous passage (Romans 4:8-17) shows that Abraham lived by faith trusting the promises of God. This faith, a simple decision to trust God, led to Abraham's salvation and countless blessings. Abraham placed his trust in God, not in symbols, works, or human strength. We also can have this blessedness and eternal life by trusting God.

And in this passage we see that our faith in God goes hand in hand with a powerful, life-giving hope. Romans mentions hope over a dozen times. Like “justification” and “righteousness,” “hope” is a central theme of Paul's letter. But this hope is not some wavering desire for good things, this hope is a sure, confident expectation that God will do what He has promised.

Faith is informed trust in the person and promises of God, and hope is the result of a living faith. Hope grows from experience in faith and the knowledge of God (Rom 5:4, 8:25, 15:4). And hope produces joy (Rom 5:2, Rom 12:12) because God is a God of hope (Rom 15:13). **This hope is a sure, confident expectation in the promises of God that sustains victory in the Christian life.**

From this passage, we see that Abraham hoped in God's promise and rested his hope on God's strength, and so God made him our example. Because when we place our hope in Christ we enter into the life of God.

Strengthen your faith by hoping in Jesus!

If you are saved, then you have some hope in Jesus already. But consider the biblical hope of a calm, confident assurance that guards our hearts and guides us to victory... is this blessed hope your daily experience? It can be!

Romans 4:17-18 Strengthen Your Faith by Hoping in the Word of God

Vs 17 ¶ “As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,” This is a quote from Genesis 14 and the most remarkable part of this promise is not what God says, but how He says it.

In Genesis 17, God gives Abraham the sign of the covenant, but first God speaks of His promises as though it is already accomplished. God uses the perfect tense (“I have made thee”) describing something that is, in the view of the speaker, already done!

Before circumcision, before Isaac had been born, God said “*I have made you a father of many nations*” as though it was already done. This is why Paul says that God “**calleth those things which be not as though they were.**”

God called Abraham “father of many nations.” Now, from our human perspective, bound by time, this was not true. Abraham was not a father of nations. But when God promises something it is as good as done.

Hope in God by trusting His word because when God says He will do something, it is as good as done.

This is why we can be absolutely sure of our salvation. When you trust Christ you are already seated in heaven with Him, “But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath

raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: (Eph 2:5-6).”

Vs 18 Hope and the Christian faith are inseparable. Faith hopes in the promises of God, and hope trusts in those same promises. But the hope of the Christian life is a "hope against hope" because it is hope at odds with the world.

Abraham had to "hope against hope" because he was too old to have natural children and God was saying that he would have a son from his own body.

At some point, you will have to choose between hoping in what you can see, or hoping in what you can't see. Faith places concrete hope in the promises of God that are not yet seen.

Familiarize yourself with the Word so that you can find hope in the promises of God day after day!

Romans 4:19-21 Strengthen Your Faith By Hoping In The Glorious Strength Of God

Vs 19 Notice the contrast between Abraham's flesh and his faith. His body was dead, but his faith was not weak. Abraham and Sarah were both entirely spent in the flesh. His body was dead, her womb was dead...

Vs 20 **But the promise of God stood and Abraham did not doubt it!** Faith places informed trust in God, hope rests in God's promises. Together they make us strong and give glory to God, but self-reliance and self-righteousness only give glory to man.

Vs 20-21 “staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief...and being fully persuaded”

In Genesis 17 God declares the covenant of circumcision and promises Abraham and Sarah a son of their own. Abraham laughed when he heard this promises, not out of unbelief, but because it was so marvelous. In Genesis 18 God reiterates the promise to Abraham and also, this time, to Sarah. And this time Sarah laughs as well, but Hebrews says this about Sarah

“Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised (Heb 11:11).”

Abraham and Sarah may have found the promises of God hard to believe at times, but at the end of the day they chose to hope in God who promised and they were not disappointed!

This is a powerful picture of deeply human faith. Abraham "staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief" but also thought the promises so marvelous as to be funny. He and Sarah were not plastered saints or holy robots who received the Promises and never thought about how impossible they seemed. They sized up the promises, considered their difficulty, and firmly concluded that their God was greater giving Him the glory!

Hope in God by honestly sizing up your problems in light of God's promises! The Christian hope is not a delusion. Hope does not depend on blind faith.

Vs 20 “giving glory to God” When you are faced with a problem in life, look to the promises of God and you will be able to choose which you think is greater: God's promise or your problem. Abraham gave glory to God – he decided that God's strength was better than the weakness of his worn-out body.

Hope in God by remembering that He is bigger than your problems and stronger than your weakness!

When you face a problem in life, do what Abraham and Sarah did:

1. Size up the problem, be honest and open with God about it prayer.
2. Consider the promises of God; weight God's promises against your problems.
3. Give God the glory by deciding that His promise is greater than your problem, and live according to the promise!

Do not live "under the circumstances," live by hope in the promises of God!

Romans 4:22-25 Strengthen Your Faith by Hoping in Jesus Death and Resurrection

Vs 22 Abraham's conviction that God would keep His word was counted as his righteousness before God! Faith in Jesus makes a person right before God and gives eternal hope that will live long after the world is burned away.

Vs 23 When we share the faith of Abraham we share Jesus' righteousness before God and Abraham's hope beyond anything the world could offer.

Vs 24 **"It shall be imputed if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead;"**

Although our promises have different content than Abraham's promises, they are of the same basic character and from the same God.

God promised Abraham a better home if he would leave his place in the world and live as a pilgrim on the earth. "For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. (Heb 11:10)." You have been promised a home in that same city, New Jerusalem if you will turn your back on the World and believe God.

Abraham was promised that his body would be strengthened long after it was apparently dead, "And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power (1 Cor 6:14)."

Place your hope in God's promise for a home and life beyond the power of the world!

Vs 25 **"Who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification."**

This is a fantastic one-line presentation of the Gospel:

Trust in Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins, and live by the hope of sharing in His resurrection!

If you do this you will be saved, but the power of the Gospel does not end with the salvation of souls. The grace of God teaches us and the hope of Jesus instructs us.

When sin seems sweet and tempting when you start to justify it in your mind, remember he "was delivered for our offenses" Jesus who loves you died in agony because of your sins and mine. Suddenly that sin you want to commit becomes much harder to justify.

And when sin (or the World) seems over-powering and dominating, when you feel like your only option is to give in and hope begins to die within you, remember he was also "raised again for our justification." He bore the entire weight of sin, all the cruelty of the world, and all the wrath of God, and after the horrific cost of sin was paid in full, he arose breaking the bonds of death for all who follow Him.

Set all of your hope on Jesus' death for your sin and resurrection for your eternal life; the love of God can never be taken from you!

CONCLUSION

Faith and hope are bound together in the Gospel message. Jesus died for you and yet He lives now offering you the sure hope of eternal life. Trusting Jesus enters you into a life of glorious hope. Remember, this "hope" is a sure, strong confidence that will carry you through your life and into eternity.

But if you are a stranger to the promises of God, then you are without hope, and without God in a dying world.

Hope in Jesus, confess his Lordship and trust His resurrection, and He will save you!

Whatever your situation in life, Jesus offers hope if you will trust Him and take Him at His word. And whatever sin you struggle with, whatever destructive habit has sunk its claws into you, the hope of Christ and the power of His gospel can set you free.

Remember, hope is a sure, confident expectation in the promises of God that sustains victory in the Christian life. How does hope sustain victory over sin?

“Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. (James 4:7).”

“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it (1 Cor 10:13).”

When Satan tempts you, if you resist Him in God, you will be victorious. Every time you fight with the weapons that God has given you, you win because God is on your side. So how can Satan actually win against you, how can he successfully tempt you to sin? By tricking you into thinking, or acting like, the battle is hopeless!

The Devil's only real hope is to trick you into giving up hope! As long as you retain strong hope in Christ, resisting evil in His name with His word, you will overcome temptations to sin. That is why John says " Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure (1 John 3:1-3)."

Strengthen your faith by hoping in Jesus!