



Dear friends,

Abraham walked up the mountain in faith. His little boy followed him. Why would God ask him to sacrifice his only son? The why didn't stop Abraham's obedience. He found the place, he prepared the altar. He put on the wood and bound his son and placed him on top of that wood. He took out his knife and he prepared to slaughter his son, but he heard an angel of the Lord stopping him. And then he saw the ram, stuck in the thicket. He fetched the ram and he gave the ram to the Lord instead of his son.

Can you imagine the sounds that came out of that man? The pent up anguish, the relief, the absolute miracle of it all, the delight, the amazement of God's provision. How do we fully imagine how that faith culminated into huge worship to God? He named the place "The Lord will provide." But if we imagine the scene, I think there was more than a ram on the altar. I picture Abraham on the ground prostrate to God. Thankfulness. Then maybe he was dancing and screaming. And tears, lots of tears in the mix. What was his kid doing? Did he remember to unbind the boy immediately or was he in that thicket battling that ram, making sure the ram didn't get away? He must have been a scattered mess. I picture pandemonium. He had just passed one of the biggest faith tests of his entire life. Today God spared his son. The ram died that day because God kept His promise.

The promise was realized through Abraham's faith. The faith was more than his son, it was God's promise that he would be the father of many nations. The faith was about trusting God. Depending on God. Not weakening. Believing against hope. He was fully convinced that God was able to do what He promised.

Romans 4:13-25

"It was not through the law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith. For if those who depend on the law are heirs, faith means nothing and the promise is worthless, because the law brings wrath. And where there is no law there is no transgression.

Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring—not only to those who are of the law but also to those who have the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all. As it is written: "I have made you a father of many nations." He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed—the God who gives life to the dead and calls into being things that were not.

Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, "So shall your offspring be." Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead—since he was about a hundred years old—and that Sarah's womb was also dead. Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. This is why "it was credited to him as righteousness." The words "it was credited to him" were written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification."

Abraham's faith is a faith to follow. God's promise is not from the law, but through the righteousness of faith. The promise depends on the faith and rests on grace. We can share Abraham's faith. He believed. We can believe. In the presence of God he believed what did not exist. His faith didn't weaken. When his wife was barren and his body was old, in hope he believed against hope that he would become the father of all nations. He believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness. He continued to grow strong in the faith and his faith did not waver in the promise of God. He was fully convinced God was able to do what He promised.

Abraham's faith was "counted to him as righteousness." And that "counted to him" was not only for Abraham, but for us too. Our faith will be "counted to us who believe in Him." Our faith is to believe God. Our faith is to believe Jesus was given up for our sins. Our faith is to believe Jesus was raised from the dead to give us access to the Father, to God Himself. Our faith is to believe God is spite of what we can see, to walk in the footsteps of the faith of Abraham. For our faith to be counted is to be credited right with God, a credit we have not earned, a promise not deserved. But in our choosing to believe God, that faith is credited to us as righteousness.

So, may our faith grow, trusting the Lord will do what He has promised. Fully convinced that God is able. Our good-standing with Jesus is dependent on our faith. Will we share the faith of Abraham? We will believe against hope, against what seems possible. We will not weaken in our belief and we will ask God to forgive our unbelief. For this we know, God kept His promise. He sent His Son to take our place. Jesus took on what we deserved. He carried our mess on that cross. He took our pain and our wrongs. He bore all of it. Because our God keeps His promises. And when Jesus rose from the dead, God showed us our access to Him. He reconciled us to Himself through His Son being the sacrifice for us. Oh what a promise that we can be made right with Him.

May we believe God. He keeps His promises.