

The Nature of a Faith that Justifies
Romans 4:17-25

I. A Misunderstanding of the Nature of Faith (Introduction)

- A. Faith is not gullibility (an innocent child being duped)
- B. Faith is not fallacy (a superstitious thought)
- C. Faith is not absurdity (an excuse for irrationality, “a conviction which cannot be shaken by contrary evidence”)
- D. Faith is based on reason but goes beyond human reason
 - a. It means that faith is not a refusal to look at the facts (escapism) Faith looks at the facts, but is not weakened by it.
 - b. It means that faith is not empty of doubt. Faith enables you to deal with your doubts. It answers the question, “What do you do with your doubts?”

II. A Godly Transformation Takes Place in Our Lives When We Have the Right Kind of Faith (Bible Exposition) – What kind of faith is it?

For the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith . . . For this reason it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (for he is the father of all of us, as it is written, “I have made you the father of many nations”) – vv. 13, 17a

- A. That Kind of Faith has a Sole Object: God

What did God promise Abraham?

- 1. Abraham believed God’s promise that he would be a father in the ‘natural’ sense: Father of Many Nations (Jews too!) “*So numerous shall your descendants be*” – Genesis 15:5ff “*Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them. So shall your descendents be.*” *And Abraham believed the LORD and the LORD reckoned to him as righteousness.*
- 2. Abraham believed God’s promise that he would be a father in the ‘spiritual’ sense: Father of Faith (Gentiles too!) *That is why the fulfillment of God’s promise depends entirely on trusting God and his way, and then simply embracing him and what he does. God’s promise arrives as pure gift. That’s the only way everyone can be sure to get in on it, those who keep the religious traditions and those who have never heard of them. For God is father of us all. – Romans 4:16 – See also Galatians 3:6-14*
- 3. Abraham believed God’s promise that he would be a father in the ‘supernatural’ sense: Father of the Seed (Messiah) – Romans 4:18 *Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring (seed); it does not say, “And to offsprings (seeds),” as of many;*

but it says, “And to your offspring, that is, to one person, who is Christ (Galatians 4:16).

John 8:56-58 “Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad.” “You are not yet fifty years old,” the Jews said to him, “and you have seen Abraham!” “I tell you the truth,” Jesus answered, “before Abraham was born, I am!”

B. That Kind of Faith has Several Symptoms:

1. That kind of faith enable you to believe the staggering promises God gave to you
2. That kind of faith enables you to rely simply on the Word of God without additional evidence
3. That kind of faith enables you to live in spite of all the contrary appearances
+ the God who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were, v. 17b
+ Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed . . .
+ 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.- v. 19
4. That kind of faith enables you to be SURE
+ Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God
+ being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised
5. That kind of faith enables you to act upon what you believe

III. What Must We Do to Have that Kind of Faith in Our Contemporary Lives?

- A. You Must Know the Secret of a Strong Faith (Giving Glory to God)
- B. You Must Feel Confident in God’s Character and His Promises
- C. You Must Release Your Need to Cover Your Wounds with Pride (Who is the Lord of Your life? Him or You?)

TABLE TALK:

- Where are you being stretched in your ability to trust God’s promises? What personal wounds may be hindering you from that trust?
- There are only two times Jesus comments about great faith: Luke 7:1-10 and Matthew 15:21-28. How similar were their faith to Abraham’s faith? In what way?

4 Lent, Rev. Dr. Tony Baron, Rector/Sr. Pastor; St. Anne’s Anglican Church. All sermons are on CD and can be picked up after the service in the lobby or can be heard on our web, www.saintanneschurch.net.