

Title: ABRAHAM'S FAITH, GOD'S PROMISE, ROMANS 4:13-25
(Chatham, NJ; 03/01/15, AM) [Pc & Pt – Diamond Outline: Facets of Faith]

Theme: Of the many facets of faith, trust in the God who raises the dead and keeps His promises is the one that Paul reveals when he speaks of Abraham in Romans four.

Purpose: To build up our confidence and trust in God's promises, and to strengthen our faith for a more perfect and complete life of obedience.

Introduction:

1. Faith is like a diamond: it has many facets or faces that show off its beauty.
2. In the passage before us, Paul emphasizes trust.
3. In the whole context of the book, the apostle is addressing the question of how to understand the Law of Moses in relationship to Christ.
4. Part of his answer is to demonstrate that the faith of Abraham and his trust in God preceded the covenant given to Moses.
5. Today we consider the importance of Abraham's trust in God.

I. God Can Be Trusted

A. God creates

1. Abraham believed in God's power, 17
2. God gives life to the dead, 17 – only God has the power over life and death
3. He "calls into existence the things that do not exist," 17
4. That God is creator who made the world from nothing (Hebrews 11:3) is one of the pillars of our religion
5. God began with nothing and created everything.
6. This is the God that Abraham trusted

B. Trust was Abraham's key

1. He believed against all reasonable evidence, 18
2. He was old, and Sarah was barren, 19
3. This was not a recipe for beginning a family, and descendents were essential to the promise that Abraham would be the "father of many nations," 17.
4. And yet, he was "fully convinced that God was able to do what he promised," 21
5. Paul even says, "No distrust made him waver," 20
6. This faith that God could and would fulfill his promise provided the foundation for Abraham's faith

II. Justification by Faith and Salvation by Grace God Hand-in-Hand

A. Salvation is always a gift

1. Ephesians 2:8 – no one can boast that he has earned it
2. Titus 3:5 – we aren't saved because of righteous things we have done
3. Verses 4-8 affirm these things
4. Wages are something we earn, 4
5. But trust is what brings about our righteousness, 5
6. This is the point of Psalm 32:1,2

B. Repentance and good works are a response of faith

1. Repentance must not be seen as something we do to earn righteousness
2. It is a response of faith in the Gospel
3. Hebrews 3:19 equates disobedience with unbelief, so trust does not remain a simple assent to God
4. We run into trouble when we think that God owes us because of our obedience, see Luke 17:7-10

C. The Law of Moses and Faith in Christ

1. Paul's intention is to demonstrate that only this allows for the entrance of the Gentiles as well as the Jews, 9-12
2. Adhering to a kosher household does not bring about the righteousness of God
3. The promise to Abraham came before circumcision and before the dietary laws, 10-11
4. Thus, Abraham becomes the father of all who imitate his trust

III. Romans Four Speaks of the Commonality of All Who Believe

A. Not through law, but through grace, 16

1. "All his offspring" (16) refers to Jew and Gentile alike
2. The promise did not rest on the Law, (13) which came later
3. Rather it rested on the righteousness of faith, 13
4. Righteousness, thus, comes to the "one who shares the faith of Abraham," 16

B. Our faith is "counted as righteousness" (22-25)

1. These words were written for us "who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord," 24
2. We trust because our God overcame death by his Son
3. He was "delivered for our trespasses and raised for our justification," 25.

Conclusion:

1. We are saved because we believe and trust in that.
2. The foundation of our salvation is what God can and has done.
3. That kind of trust is what faith is all about.