LIFE BIBLE MINISTRY

Romans 4 • Faith that is fully convinced

Pastor Paul LeBoutillier · June 21, 2026

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

We're going to begin here tonight by reading through the chapter, then we're going to pray, and then we'll kind of break it out, ask the Lord to make sense of it all. Follow along as I read. Here we go. What then shall we say was gained by Abraham, our forefather, according to the flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.

What does the scripture say? Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness. Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift, but as his due. And to the one who does not work, but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness. Just as David also speaks of the blessing of the one to whom God counts righteousness apart from works.

Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin. Is this blessing then only for the circumcised or also for the uncircumcised? For we say that faith was counted to Abraham as righteousness. How then was it counted to him?

Was it before or 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. 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. 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.

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. 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 the one who shares the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all.

As it is written, I have made you the father of many nations. In the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. In hope, he believed against hope that he should become the father of many nations. As he had been told, so shall your offspring be. 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, or when he 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, fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. That is why his faith was counted to him as righteousness. But the words, it was counted to him, were not written for his sake alone, but for ours also. It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, as we go through these verses and unpack them and talk about what they mean, we just really pray for your Holy Spirit to minister to our hearts, to enlighten us. And Lord, we confess tonight that it is only through the ministry of your Holy Spirit that the Word of God brings life and truth and nourishment. And so we ask you, Father God, to do this work and to speak to each and every one of us, to guide us through this study, that we might lay hold of it, to study, to show ourselves approved and to rightly divide the word of truth. We thank you and praise you in the authority granted us through the name of Jesus Christ our Savior. And all God's people said, Amen.

All right. Why did Paul write this chapter? You know, he didn't write a chapter. This is just a letter. We've divided it into chapters.

But why this section? Why was this written? You know, because in the first three chapters, Paul has essentially been arguing for two main points, and they're really very simple points. The first point is that all people, regardless of race, creed, color, you know, whatever, are all sinners. We're all sinners, and therefore, under the curse of sin and subject to God's wrath.

Remember, that's the bad news. But secondly, he was arguing for the fact that righteousness, which of course means right standing before God, right, doesn't come from things like morality. It doesn't come from keeping the law of Moses or by following religious observances, which are all the things that he talked about, or by just being a good person. You know, you ask people on the street, and I don't think you probably would do this, but if you were to go out and ask people on the street, those people who believe in God and believe in heaven, if you were to ask them, how do you get to heaven? Most of them are going to say, well, you just got to live a good life.

And Paul has argued persuasively in these first three chapters that that's just not a reality. There's no such thing as living a good life in the sense of doing so to the point of being deemed by God to be in right standing before him. It doesn't have anything to do. You know, people will say sometimes, well, I just have a hard time believing, you know, that God would judge a person who's lived a good life. Well, you know, what does that mean exactly?

Lived a good life. Compared to what? Compared to other people? Okay. But that's not how God grades on the curve, you know.

Everything is designed up against him. It's his law. It's his perfection, right? And we all fall short. So it doesn't matter whether someone in our eyes has lived a good life.

It's not going to be good enough. So these are the things that Paul has essentially written up to this point, and they may cause someone to ask the question, well, okay, if righteousness doesn't come through all these other things, being good, being moral, keeping the law, religious observance, and it now comes by placing one's faith in Jesus and his work on the cross, how different is that from the way people were declared righteous before the time of Jesus, right? Well, you know, Paul's obviously talking about righteousness through Jesus, post-Jesus, post-crucifixion, you know, suffering for our sin and resurrection. What about people before that? In other words, during Old Testament times, how were people declared righteous?

And that's really the whole point of what Paul's been saying up to this point. It's the same. It's the same way that we're declared righteous, by faith. People under the old covenant were declared righteous before God by faith, just like we are. Nothing has changed, even though a lot of people will tell you, well, you know, you went to heaven in the Old Testament by keeping the law, and now we follow Jesus.

No, that's not true. It's always been by faith. So Paul begins by going back to Abraham, and if you look with me again in your Bible, in verse 1, he begins with a question, what then shall we say was gained by Abraham our forefather according to the flesh? And you have to kind of wonder if Paul was aware of the fact that he was writing to Jews living in Rome at the time, because you'll notice he refers to Abraham our forefather according to the flesh. That would only apply to a Jew.

He's not my father according to the flesh. I don't have any Jewish DNA, at least I don't think so. I've never done the cheek swab or whatever. My son did. My oldest son did one of those tests, and we're trash, I mean, somewhere in France or somewhere like that.

But anyway, you know, we don't have any Jewish DNA. So I can't say, like Paul is saying here, our father Abraham according to the flesh. So it's kind of interesting, you know, that he recognizes there are people that are probably the same as him. But he goes on in verse 2 to say, for if Abraham was justified by works, in other words, if the righteousness that God extended to him was based on Abraham's good deeds, he's saying, well, in that case, Abraham would have had something to boast about. He could have said, well, I did it, and it was good enough, and God claimed or declared me righteous, right?

But he goes on to say in verse 3, what does the Scripture say? It says Abraham believed God, and then it was credited. counted it to him as righteousness, right? So this is gonna, the reason I, verses two and three, this is the key argument that Paul is using now, all right, for chapter four. So if you needed to understand the biblical foundation for what we're looking at in this entire chapter, we just read it.

Abraham believed God and it was counted to him as righteousness, that's it. That's the key, all right? You take that out of here and we're gonna have trouble. So he begins here by talking about the righteousness that came to Abraham by faith. And what he's doing is he's pointing back to a passage from the book of Genesis, which I'm gonna put on the screen for you so we can look at it together.

It goes like this. After these things, the word of the Lord came to Abram, this is before God changed his name, in a vision, fear not, Abram, I am your shield. Your reward shall be very great. But Abram said, oh, Lord God, what will you give me for I continue childless and the heir of my house is Elisha of Damascus. And Abram said, behold, you've given me no offspring and a member of my household will be my heir.

And it goes on and it says, and behold, the word of the Lord came to him. This man shall not be your heir. Your very own son shall be your heir. And he brought him outside and he said, look toward heaven and number the stars if you're able to number them. And then he said to him, so shall your offspring be.

In other words, as countless as the stars. And it says, and he believed the Lord and he counted it to him as righteousness. And again, I wanted to show you that passage from Genesis because once again, this is the foundation. This is the foundation of Paul's argument in this particular chapter. And he's also gonna bring the words of David into it from the Psalms.

And he starts by saying in verse four, now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift, but as his due. And this is of course, a very simple statement. It's obvious to everybody. You know, when you get paid from work, you don't bring your check home and go, look what they gave me. They gave me a gift.

They didn't give you a gift. They paid you for your time. It's not considered a gift. It's an obligation. But he says in verse five, and to the one who does not work.

In other words, does not labor for righteous standing, but rather just believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness. I wanna stop there for just a moment. And I want you to, oh, I'm gonna ask you, did you really see what we read there? Because this is really incredible. He says, and to the one who does not work, but believes in him who justifies, who?

The ungodly? Do you understand how this must have just tilted people when they heard this? Because, you know, honestly, this kind of logic runs contrary to everything we know, as people living on earth. I mean, we learn from a very early age that when you do something that is meritorious, you get a reward. I mean, starting, you know, when you're a child, you know, hey, you know, clean up your room and we'll take you to Dairy Queen or something like that.

That may not happen very often, but it only has to happen enough to begin to seek that idea in the heart and mind of a child. Hey, do good, get rewarded. And then you get old and you finally get a job, or you even start working as a kid and doing things, and hey, people pay me for doing this. And that just becomes the norm. And we understand that.

And then along comes the gospel, which turns this whole principle on its ear. And it says that God rewards righteousness to the ungodly. In other words, the undeserving. Those who do not merit that get it because of their faith. And it absolutely is mind-blowing.

So that's why I think the gospel is very difficult for a lot of people to accept. I really do. Because we're just, we're so tuned to this whole idea of I work, I get paid, I do good, I get rewarded. And then this just doesn't make any sense, you know. But then Paul goes on to deal with these quotes from David.

He says in verse six, just as David also speaks of the blessing of the one whom God counts righteousness apart from works, or rather, apart from what he's earned. And he quotes Psalm 32, saying, "'Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven "'and whose sins are covered. "'Blessed is the man against whom "'the Lord will not count his sin.'" And actually, the key word is actually back in verse six where Paul says that he speaks of the one to whom God counts righteousness apart from works. And I want you to see that in your Bible. God counts.

Now I'm reading out of the ESV. And the word that the new King James uses is imputes. Imputes righteousness apart from works. The New American Standard Bible uses the word credits. The God who credits righteousness apart from works, right?

We all know what it means to receive a credit. It's kind of fun, actually, when you receive a credit. You can go to a store and use your credit or whatever. But it's an incredible blessing to receive a credit that you didn't earn. I mean, think about that for a minute.

To receive a credit that you don't deserve, but you've been given it anyway. Now Paul has another question that he asks in verse nine. He says, is this blessing then only for the circumcised? And of course, the Jews believed that the answer to that question would have been yes. They didn't believe that the Gentiles were subject to these blessings, that they had been given by God.

But Paul asks, or is it also available for those who are uncircumcised, and that's his word for Gentiles. He goes on to say there in verse nine, for we say that faith was counted to Abraham as righteousness. How did the Jews believe that that righteousness or that sign of righteousness came about? Now remember, we talked about this before in an earlier study. It's all about circumcision.

Circumcision was the thing. And if you had the right of circumcision that had been performed on you as a Jewish male, you're in, you're in the club, you know? The righteousness of Abraham is now yours through circumcision, and I told you before, the Jews called themselves the circumcision. We are the circumcision. And they referred to Gentiles as the uncircumcised, and that was really kind of a derogatory, you know, way to address them.

So circumcision was the proof. So now Paul is gonna blow that one up. Verse 10, he goes, no, wait a minute here. How then was it counted to him when God, he's talking about the righteousness God gave to Abraham. He says, was it before or was it after he'd been circumcised, right?

And then he answers his own question. It wasn't after. It was before. It was before he was circumcised. He goes on in verse 11 to say he received the seal of circumcision as, or excuse me, the sign of circumcision as a seal, that's an interesting word, of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised.

This all happened, so here are the Jews putting all this emphasis on circumcision. We are the circumcision, you know. And Paul says, God declared Abraham righteous before he gave him the sign of circumcision. So now, what does that do to your theology? You know, if you're a Jew, well, that just really messes with your mind.

And then Paul gives the reason why this whole thing, I'm in the middle of verse 11. He says the purpose was to make him the father of all who believe without being circumcised so that this righteousness could be counted to them as well and to make him, Abraham, the father of the circumcised

who are not merely circumcised in the flesh, he means, but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised. So, you know, he's not decrying circumcision from the standpoint that this is the covenant sign, but he says, listen, circumcision isn't, it's nothing. Circumcision isn't what matters. Are you walking in the faith that Abraham had?

You see, he's coming down. And this is the thing. If you had to write the meaning of Romans chapter four, it's all about faith. That's the argument that Paul is giving here in this chapter. It's all about faith.

He's proving here in this, even to the Jew or the person who's convinced that they have to earn their righteous standing somehow by being good or doing this or that or the other thing, that with God, God, it's always been about faith. It's always been about faith. That's why I told you under the Old Testament, people were saved by faith then too. It's always been about faith, right? I told you in a previous study, God never, ever promised when he gave the law, if you keep the law, you'll go to heaven.

That was never a promise. That was something the Jews adopted, you know? So this is really important, and what this all means is that Abraham is the father of all who put their faith in God. So you see, even though I said earlier, I'm not a son of Abraham after the flesh, I am a son of Abraham after faith, right? You know, years ago, when Sue and I were living up in Washington, I was pastoring a church up there for a couple of years, and we had a neighbor.

We lived in an apartment complex that was pretty big. We were living just north of Seattle, and there was a elderly gentleman on the same floor with us, and his name was Philip Littman, and he was a Jew, and we somehow befriended him, and he and I had some great talks. He started, toward the end of our relationship, he kind of started slipping into dementia because he was quite old, but we had some great talks. He showed me some interesting relics he had, and he even took me to Jewish synagogue once in Seattle, which was a lot of fun, but we discussed, and I was going to Bible college, by the way, during that same time, and I was really enamored by the Old Testament and the Jewish things and ways and so on and so on, and so we had a lot of good talks, and of course, you know, I told him straight out. I said, hey, Jesus is the Messiah, buddy, and I know you're in your 80s, but it ain't too late to come to the, and he would just say to me, it's not possible, Paul.

It's not possible, but you know, toward the end of our relationship, one time, I remember I was bringing him home from the grocery store, because I took him to go get some groceries, and we were talking, as we always did, about the Bible, and we stopped right in front of his apartment, and before we got out, he just stopped, and he looked at me, and he said, Paul, you're a better Jew than I am, and I knew what he meant. There was a sense that I believe he began to grasp that children of Abraham are after faith.

It has nothing to do with DNA, and it has nothing to do with being a good person or anything like that, but by having the faith that Abraham had, and I think that that's, it's just, it's a beautiful thing. All right, now Paul goes on to make another point, verse 13, he says, 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. All right, let me remind all of us here what Paul's talking about.

He's referring to the promise made to Abraham, which is recorded for us in the book of Genesis. We'll put it up on the screen from Genesis chapter 12, and it says, now the Lord said to Abraham, go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you, and I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you, I will curse. And in you, all the families of the earth shall be blessed. And I bring this passage up for you this evening because I wanna make the point that Paul is making here that this promise that we read here came centuries before the law was given.

God gave this promise to Abraham. It has nothing to do with the law. And again, that's where the Jews made their fatal error is they connected what came centuries later to the promise given ultimately to Abraham. And Paul's making the point that none of these promises can be predicated on keeping the law because the law didn't come until hundreds of years later. Now, verse 14 is important.

He says, for if it is the adherence of the law, in other words, those who follow and seek to keep the law, who are the heirs or are to be the heirs, or if you will, the recipients of God's blessing, what then? Well, then he says, faith is null. It's been voided at that point, right? If it's by the law, if it's by keeping the law, then faith doesn't even come into view, right? Why?

Why doesn't faith come into view? He goes on to answer that in verse 15. For the law brings wrath. And this is so important. In other words, if you're gonna attempt to please God, you know, by law keeping, guys, all you're gonna do is incur the wrath of God.

If that's your goal, I wanna please God by keeping the law, all you're gonna do is incur wrath because none of us can keep the law perfectly. And in order to be declared righteous, you would have to keep it perfectly. So this is such an important statement. And then Paul goes on, we're in the middle of verse 15, to say, but where there is no law, there is no transgression. Now that's an interesting statement, isn't it?

Let me just tell you, Paul is not saying where there is no law, there's no sin. You'll notice he didn't use the word sin there. He used the word transgression. And the fact is, where there is no law, a person could be sending up a storm. But since this person has never heard the law, they've never received the law, right?

What they do in their sin cannot be referred to as a transgression, because a transgression, you'll remember, is breaching a known boundary. In other words, when your kids were little, and you told them, don't do that, whatever that is, and they go and do that, that's a transgression. If you never told them, don't do that, then that still would have been perhaps wrong on their part, but it can't be called a transgression. A transgression is when you know that something is wrong, and you do it anyway, okay? So that's what Paul's saying, where there is no law, there's no transgression, because they didn't know.

There's still sin. A sin of ignorance is still a sin, right? It's just not a transgression. Now Paul comes to his conclusion. Verse 16, he says, that's why it depends on faith.

In order that the promise may rest on grace, remember, grace is the favor of God that you don't earn, that you can't earn, that you didn't earn, and he goes on to say, and be guaranteed to all his offspring, not only to the adherent of the law, Paul's speaking to the Jews here, but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham. Don't you want that faith? I want that faith. I want the faith of Abraham. I love the faith of Abraham.

I wanna have that kind of faith. He says, who is the father of us all? Verse 17, as it is written, I have made you the father of many nations, not just Israel, in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead, and calls into existence the things that do not exist. That's a statement hearkening back to creation, that God created something out of nothing. Evolutionists think something came out of nothing, but they can't explain it.

They say that there wasn't matter, and then suddenly there was matter, and it exploded. And we say to them, well, where'd that matter come from? Well, I don't know. Well, we know, it came from God, right? So Paul calls our attention to that promise God gave to Abraham, that he would be the father of many nations.

Now, before we cover the last eight verses of this chapter, I wanna call your attention to what he said in verse 16, and I'm gonna put it up on the screen just so we can see it together, because I wanna kinda outline some things here with you. And the statement that Paul makes there is very simple. That is why it depends on faith, right? Faith, right? And by the way, if that verse isn't maybe highlighted in your Bible, it probably should be, because it's a very important, very important verse, because first of all, the word translated depends in the ESV is a Greek word that has some very simple meanings.

Let me show you on the screen. The Greek is a very simple word. I mean, it's just two letters, ek. That's the word translated in English, depends. And the Greek meaning is from, by, or out of.

And it carries the idea of something being the result of something else, all right? So when Paul says, that is why it depends on faith, he's saying, that is why it is from faith. But the first thing we have to do is we have to say, well, wait a minute. There's another word that's important. define, and that's the word it.

What are we talking about when we say it? Let me show you. The word it, well, it refers to the promise of righteousness. Okay? So, let's look at this verse now again.

That is why it, we'll just put in the problem, that is why the promise of righteousness comes from, is by, or comes out of, faith. In other words, what Paul is saying here is it all depends on faith. It all depends on faith. I can't say that enough. And you know what, guys?

We can hear it. You can sit in church and you can hear someone say, it's all about faith. The grace of God that has come to us and been revealed to us, we need to accept, we accept it by faith, and faith is the critical element. And you can still have those same people who hear that over and over again begin to doubt it and begin to have a performance-based relationship with God. And I'm emphasizing that again tonight, as I've done in the past, because of the emphasis that Scripture places on faith.

You know, it's so common for me to get all kinds of questions from people that tell me that they're not convinced that it's all about faith. And questions might come around something like this. If someone, they'll say, Pastor Paul, if someone confessed faith in Jesus Christ, and they lived their Christian life, you know, for a period of time, but then just before they died, they committed this huge sin, would they be saved still? It's funny, you know, my question always back to them is the same. Well, how are we saved?

What is it all about? It's about faith. You see, we're saved by God's grace through faith, so the question is, do we have faith? That's the issue, the issue isn't did you make a big boo-boo before you died. I once had a gal come to me when I was pastoring in Ontario who shared with me that she'd been told by a pastor in that town that right after she had committed a fairly nasty sin, the pastor told her, well, it's a good thing you didn't, you know, get hit by a truck before you repented or you'd have gone to hell.

And I just, I tell you something, I shudder when I think about guys like that standing before God or, you know, for saying something like that. What they're basically saying is your salvation depends on your performance. But Paul is arguing, and I believe persuasively, that it's all about, it's all about faith. You know, I actually had another note from a gal just today, came into my inbox just today, and the subject line of her message was, how can I know that I'm saved? Because she wrote me this fairly lengthy email about all the rotten things that have been happening to her lately, how she was convinced that she was under

some sort of a curse or God was judging slash punishing her and da, da, da, da, da, and how she hadn't, you know, recognized she hadn't been living the way she ought.

And so she responded, so she wrote to me and she said, give me three questions to consider, to ask myself, to answer the question, how can I know that I'm saved? And I wrote her back and I said, honey, it's only one question. Are you confident that what Jesus did on the cross was enough for you to pay the penalty of your sin? That's the only question you need to be concerned about. I said, all this other junk that's going on in your life, I'm sorry that it's happening.

But you know, that doesn't give a commentary on your salvation. What's happening to you in life does not comment as to whether or not God loves you or whether or not you're saved. If it did, the Apostle Paul had plenty of reason to doubt God's love and his salvation because he went through a lot of really hard things and yet he continued to know and understand that these things are, this is all out here. We live in a fallen, broken, corrupted world where rotten things happen. But you know what, that doesn't give any commentary on whether I am a child of God.

The only thing that matters is my confidence in the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross. That's it. One of the things that you're going to notice as you read through the New Testament, at least I hope you do, is the emphasis, particularly that the Apostle Paul puts on faith. Now Jesus also put a huge emphasis on faith. But Paul, if you read through his writings, you know, you will see over and over and over again this just incredible emphasis.

And I'm going to run through a bunch of them with you real quick, all right, on the screen. Romans 1, verse 8, we saw this in the very first chapter. First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, what, because you guys are really doing good work. Nope, because your faith is proclaimed in all the world. 2 Corinthians, or 1 Corinthians rather, 2, 3, and 5.

And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling. And my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. Why? So that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. Paul's always concerned about their faith.

2 Corinthians 1, 24, not that we lord it over your faith, but we work with you for your joy, for you stand firm in your faith. Ephesians 1, 15 and 16. For this reason, because I've heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. What is it that caused Paul such joy? He was hearing about their faith, right?

Colossians 1, 3 and 4. We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you. Why? Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints. Colossians 2, 5.

For though I am absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the firmness of your faith in Christ. That delighted Paul like nothing else could. Colossians 2, 6 and 7. Therefore, as you receive Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him rooted and built up in him and established in the faith. 1 Thessalonians 3, 5.

For this reason, when I could bear it no longer, I sent to learn about your faith. Isn't that something? He says, yeah, finally I said, Timothy, you got to go find out how these guys are doing. But he wanted to know how their faith was doing. And then 1 Thessalonians 3, 7.

For this reason, brothers, in all our distress and affliction, we've been comforted about you through your faith. Do you see the emphasis? Over and over again. This is what Paul's most concerned about. You know, we get so fixated on trying to be a good Christian.

And, you know, I'm not saying that you shouldn't have a desire to want to work with God, walk with God, please God, you know, live a life pleasing, you know, to God. Of course. But if that's the paramount goal of your life, you've missed the point. It's about growing in your faith, being grounded in your faith. So important to understand that.

And that's why Paul is also emphasizing Abraham's faith. You know, listen to how he describes it. Look at verse 18. He's going to talk to you and me about the challenges that Abraham faced to hang on to his faith. Verse 18, in hope he believed against hope.

I actually like the way the NIV says this. They render this, against all hope, Abraham in hope believed that he should become the father of many nations as he had been told, so shall your offspring be. Now, so here Paul is saying that Abraham had to hang on to his faith. He hoped against hope. And you might say to yourself, well, wait a minute.

I mean, if God told Abraham that he was going to do this, he was going to do this and that, and the other thing for Abraham, why would Abraham, I mean, what was the difficulty? Why would he have a hard time hanging on to that faith if God told him something? Paul explains in verse 19. He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead. What a nice thing to say of somebody.

Since he was about 100 years old, or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's women. By the way, Sarah was long past childbearing years, right? So why did, what were the challenges to Abraham hanging on to faith? Well, very simply, God told him something, but his circumstances were telling him to do it. something else.

Have you ever had that happen? Can you relate to that? Right? This is why people doubt their salvation when they go through hard times. I've had countless people come up to me after a message and say, Pastor Paul, I don't even know if I'm saved anymore.

I'll say, well, why? Why do you say that? I've just been going through the roughest time and it's just all these hurtful sort of things are going on and I haven't been living for the Lord like I should and I'm wondering, you know, if I'm even saved, does God love me? I say, okay, well, let's sit down and let's talk about some quick scriptures. Does the Bible say that God loves you?

Well, yeah. Then they come back and they say this, but I don't feel like he does. I want to smack them. Because you see, what they've done is they've elevated their feelings above the revelation of God's word. I don't feel like he's hearing my prayers.

Does the Bible say he's hearing your prayers? Yeah, but I don't feel like he is. What are you going to believe? See, there's always going to be challenges to our faith. There's always going to be challenges.

Things are going to crop up in life, hard times, tragic times. Are you going to hang on to your faith? Are you going to be steadfast in your faith? Or are you going to let the circumstances of your life cause you to be rattled and begin to wonder, I don't think God loves me, or I don't think he's hearing my prayer. I'm not even sure I'm saved.

What does the Bible say? You see, when I say that to you, what does the Bible say? I'm referring to the same thing that Abraham received, the word of the Lord. God's talked to you just like he did to Abraham. You see, even a guy like Abraham, it's possible that circumstances can begin to assault that strength that we would otherwise have to hold on to faith.

Look what he goes on in verse 20 to say. He says, concerning Abraham, no unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God. I love this. Verse 21, fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. You know what, guys?

That's my prayer for all of us in this room, and myself included, that these two verses would describe us. And that maybe at the end of our lives, someone would say about us, you know what? No unbelief

made them waver. Because they had received the promise of God that he loved them, that he had saved them, that Jesus died on the cross for their sins, and they never wavered. They just kept growing strong in their faith, and they were fully convinced that God was able to do what he promised.

Are you fully convinced? See, that's the question of the hour. Are you fully convinced? If you're not fully convinced, and this is something I would always ask people when they would kind of tell me that, you know, they had these rumblings and stuff, I'd say, okay, scale of one to ten, one being the least, ten the most. Where do you sit on your confidence that if you were to die tonight, you'd go to heaven?

And then they give me a number that's usually, rarely do I get people say, well, it's a ten. They usually give me a five, a four. And so I ask them, why'd you give me that number? Why aren't you 100% confident? Well, because this week was a rough one.

You see what you just did? You injected your life and what's happening in your life into the question of what Jesus did on the cross. Was that enough? You injected your life into that question. What does that have to do with the question?

And so my goal whenever I sat down to talk with people was, when we get done talking, you darn well better come up with a ten when I ask that question to you again, because it has nothing to do with you. And it's everything to do with him. But pastor, you don't know the kind of life I've lived. Yeah, that's true. But I know the kind of death he died.

I know the sacrifice he made. And it was enough. It was enough for you. Paul says in verse 22, that is why his faith was counted to him as righteousness, because he didn't waver. He held on steadfast.

By the way, if you want to know how to build your faith, well, you shouldn't need to. You're doing it right now. Being in church, hearing the word, studying the word, reading the word at home, studying the word at home, that's how you build your faith. Right? Faith comes by hearing, hearing by the word of Christ.

That's how you build your faith. So you want to get stronger in your faith? Stay in the word. Verse 23, Paul says, but the words that was counted to him were not written for his sake alone, but for ours also. It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.

So in other words, that whole thing that he did with Abraham, not just for Abraham, it's for you and me. And that's the good news. That this whole declaration of a righteous standing, apart from works,

morality, law keeping, and so on and so on and so on, is ours. It's a promise that it's for us. And guys, you can take every promise that God gives to the bank.

I want to close this evening by sharing a quote that I posted on my Facebook page back in March. I'll put it up on the screen for you. This is Andrew Murray from his book, The Two Covenants. He writes, Oh, that we knew how God longs that we should trust him and how surely his every promise must be fulfilled for those who do so. Oh, that we knew how it is owing to nothing but our unbelief that we cannot enter into the possession of God's promises and that without our trust, God cannot, yes, cannot do his mighty works in us and for us and through us.

I remember I read this here several weeks back and it was one of those quotes that I just I had to put the book down and just close my eyes and just, Jesus, make me a man of faith. Strengthen my faith. I do not want to limit what God can do in me and through me. And I'm sure you feel the same but the biggest limitation in our lives is unbelief, the biggest limitation. Without that limitation, the sky's the limit.

Nothing is impossible with God. Amen? Let's pray. Father, this has been an important chapter for us to look at and we are so thankful, Lord God, that you gave it. You're so thankful that we can take time tonight and thankful also, Lord, that we have the freedom in this country to gather together to worship, to study the word.

And we pray that this word would sink deep within our hearts. We pray, Father God, that we would not waver in unbelief but that we would be steadfast, holding tightly to the promises of God and that we might grow daily in our faith in the promises that you've given to us through your word. Lord, there are many challenges that crop up in everyday life that try to inject unbelief into our hearts. I pray, my Father, that we would stand strong and keep our eyes on you. We thank you.

We praise you. We worship you. In the authority granted us through the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and our King and all God's people said together, Amen.