



2/12/26

I was really impacted by one of the messages from my biblical counseling conference. The speaker, Amy Baker, said that we tend to say things and then add a "but" at the end. Whatever comes after the "but" negates what came before it. For example, "I know God's word is true, but I feel like He's not paying attention right now." What we are really saying in that is, "I feel like God's not paying attention." She said that what we want to do is flip the statements and see how much more hope we can have. So to flip the statements would be to say, "I feel like God's not paying attention, but I know His word is true." It changes it, doesn't it? Or instead of, "I know God is merciful, but I feel like He is punishing me," we can say, "I feel like God is punishing me, but I know He is merciful." Does that impact you as much as it does me? The first way feels defeated and hopeless. The second gives me strength and hope. The first gives my feelings precedence. The second stands on what is actually true. I want to make this my practice!

*Blessings,
Jonna*

Romans 4:13-25

One of the biggest struggles I have in my walk with God is learning to live under His grace rather than His law. I always feel like I need to DO stuff to earn His approval. But living under His grace is an unconditional gift from Him. That's why Jesus' sacrifice is SO HUGE! The Old Covenant based on the law was conditional and impossible to live up to without fail. Jesus lived up to it without fail and fulfilled the righteous requirement of the law SO THAT His children could live in the unconditional generosity of His loving grace that never runs out. This passage in Romans 4:13-25 helps me understand it. O Lord, help me also to EMBRACE it!!!

Vs. 13-15 ~ When God made the promise to Abraham that he would be "heir of the world", He would not give the law for another 400 years. This is really important. God counted Abraham's FAITH as righteousness, not his ability to follow rules. If righteousness came by the law, then the promise of God would mean nothing because His promise came before the law was ever given. And Abraham's faith would not have mattered because he would have had to perfectly observe the law. But the problem with the law is that no human being other than Jesus can be

perfectly obedient to it. The law only brings condemnation. But if there is no law, there can be no judgment for sin. The fact that Abraham believed God's promise, and neither the promise nor his faith was tied to the law, means that there would be no condemnation for breaking a law that didn't exist at the time.

Paul had to share this in order to set the foundation for righteousness and faith being intertwined apart from the law. If the law gets mixed in, then salvation becomes conditional. Obedience to God is an outpouring of my faith done through God's grace, but it is not a condition of my salvation.

Vs. 16-17 ~ This is why righteousness is dependent on faith and not the law. The purpose of righteousness by faith is to ensure that the promise can be based on God's grace, the generosity of His love. God not only gives us His promises, but He guarantees His promises to ALL the offspring of Abraham... whether it's those who are his offspring through the law (Jewish people) or those who are his offspring because of his faith (all other people). In fact, Galatians 3:7 says that the ones who are truly Abraham's offspring are the ones who are of faith. It's not about the blood of the person; it's about the blood of Jesus flowing through that person for the forgiveness of sins.

God said to Abraham in Genesis 17:5, "I have made you the father of many nations." And He fulfilled that plan and blessed Abraham for his faith. Abraham believed God for his promises. Abraham believed that God could KEEP His promises because He's so big that He can give life to the dead and call into existence things that don't exist. It would take that kind of power to accomplish what God said He would accomplish. And that's exactly what He did.

Why is this important for me to understand? The bottom line is... God made the promise to Abraham without the condition of the law so that ALL nations could be blessed through Him, not just the chosen nation of Israel. God didn't just MAKE that promise, God KEPT that promise. The one who could speak the world into existence could also make one man the father of many nations... This would impact all people for eternity, not just for our time here on earth. This is about setting things up for the Messiah, for salvation to all who call on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Abraham's faith in God's promise brought a new lineage... Abraham to Jacob to David to Jesus. That's salvation through faith and not the law. "By works of the law no one is justified" (Galatians 3:11).

Vs. 18-22 ~ Against any chance of hope, Abraham put his hope in God's promise. Why was this "hope against hope"? God told him he'd have offspring from all nations BEFORE he even had one child. He was about 100 years old when God fulfilled the promise to give a baby to Abraham and Sarah. Her womb was lifeless, incapable of having a child. And yet, nothing is impossible with God.

Why does God sometimes allow things to go to such a great extent of "hope against hope" before He acts? So that there's no question that He is the one who did it. It HAS to be impossible for any other way to work or people will explain it away. Even in light of the fact

that God DOES bring the dead to life, and He DOES bring into existence things that could not exist, people still try to explain His power away. But Abraham could not be moved from his faith. And God blessed his faith.

Abraham refused to waver from his faith. Instead, he continued to give glory to God, and God grew his faith for it. This is so important. Abraham did not tell God he would believe in Him once He fulfilled the promise, and not until He fulfilled it. Abraham believed God FOR the promise, and He glorified Him for the 25 year wait until the promise was fulfilled, never wavering in his faith... FULLY convinced that God would keep His word.

God grows my faith AS I give Him glory... Telling God I'll glorify Him once He gives me tangible reason to trust His promise is not faith at all. He wants me to take Him at His word. His word is truth. God so deeply values my faith that He counts it as righteousness more than any work I do. And the more I glorify Him in my small amount of faith, the more He grows my faith to be stronger and stronger.

Vs. 23-25 ~ If I'm thinking, "Well, that was Abraham. It's different for me", I'm wrong. This explicitly says that the promise of faith being counted as righteousness was not written for Abraham alone. It was written for ALL who believe that Jesus was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. Jesus was delivered for my sins and was raised to life for my justification... the legal standing of being called innocent before God even though I horribly sinned against Him.

Do I understand how important the promise to Abraham is for my salvation??? Do I understand how important my faith in Jesus is? Do I understand that my faith in Him is far more important than any work I do? The only works I do that have any value are works done FOR Him through faith IN Him. Do I understand how huge the promise to Abraham was? Do I understand that the promise to Abraham changed the trajectory of my eternal life?

O Lord, if I'm able to grasp one thing from this passage, let it be this... You want my faith far more than You ever want my works. You don't NEED me to do good things. You GIVE me the PRIVILEGE of doing good things. You give me the privilege of believing You. You give me Your precious and very great promises, just like You gave to Abraham.

My name will never be written in any history book on earth, certainly nothing as valuable as the Bible. I won't be remembered by very many people. My life will fade. But my name is written in the eternal Lamb's book of life. YOU remember me. YOU call me valuable. That's all that matters. Please grow my faith more and more AS I give You glory so that I can give You more and more glory. Please help me to stop thinking that You're judging me based on my works. That's like judging a toddler based on how well she does brain surgery. My works absolutely can't measure up. But You love my FAITH, and You count that as righteousness. Praise Your name! Amen.