***Abraham's True Faith
RO42-02***

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We ask you to turn to Romans 4:19-25. This is the second segment on "Faith Unmovable."

**Abraham's Stability of Faith**

Abraham was not only a classic example of faith in God, but he was also the great example of stability within that faith. Abraham was not weak in his faith in God. So, he could view the physical problem that he and his wife had of sexual deadness without doubting God's promise that he would become the father of a great nation. The Word of God tells us that Abraham never fluctuated for a moment between belief and doubt, relative to God's promises to him. So, the stability of Abraham's faith is as much an example to us as his faith itself. This stability was due, in part, to the fact that he was giving glory, or expressing gratitude, to God. Because he was a thankful man, he was a strong man in faith.

So, we now begin with verse 21, but let's begin reading first 19 once more, in order to get the context: "And being not weak in faith, he considered his own body now dead" (sexually dead), when he was about 100 years old, and the deadness was Sarah's womb. They were a couple totally incapable of bearing an heir. Yet everything hinged upon that heir.

Verse 20: "He did not stagger (he did not fluctuated) at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God."

Verse 21 begins with the word "and," which adds further emphasis on the persuasion of Abraham's faith: "Being fully persuaded." This word is the Greek word "plerophoreo." "Plerophoreo" is a word that means "to be fully assured" or "to be absolutely convinced." It is in the aorist tense, which is the kind of a tense that talks about things as a whole. It makes a point of things. So, it brings all of Abraham's life together, and it views it as a whole, and it says, "This man was fully convinced." It is passive because Abraham didn't talk himself into this. This was a conviction upon Abraham's mind that was the result of what he had his eyes fixed on. And we have just seen that his eyes were fixed upon the promise of God, because that was the case. He did not stagger at what that promise contained. This is in the participle mood, which is the way a principle is stated. Here it is the principle of an assured, convinced man.

**Doubt**

An attitude of God in spiritual things is sometimes viewed among believers as being a sign of humility. Many times you'll ask a person, "Are you going to heaven?" And they'll say, "Oh, I certainly hope so." And they think that this is an expression of humility. And that's nonsense. Any kind of equivocation of that nature is an insult to God. It is not a compliment. It is a sign of ignorance. It is a sign of distrust of God. The Bible makes it very clear that you can be saved by trusting in Christ as Savior. It is an in-or-out issue. This attitude of dancing around a specific statement relative to God is not humility. It is simply ignorance. It is refusal to rest in God's provision which He has provided by His grace. The Christian who is not certain is the Christian who is acting in old sin nature arrogance.

This word "plerophoreo" is another one of those aorist participles in the Greek grammar. You may have learned by now that this particular feature gives us a time element. And it tells us that this quality of Abraham, of being absolutely fully persuaded, preceded something else here in the text that is the main action. And the main action is back at the start of verse 20: "He did not stagger." And it is important to notice the reason that Abraham did not stagger. We pointed out that this word in the Greek means "to fluctuate back and forth between two positions: belief and doubt; and, belief and doubt." He did not fluctuate for the simple reason that preceding that, one of the things he did was to be fully persuaded about God's promises, and God's capacity to keep those promises.

If you believe that God is capable of doing what He says He will do for you, then you will not fluctuate back and forth. So, when you fluctuate in your relationship to God, and you're uncertain of your dealings with Him, and of how He will deal with you, it just shows that you do not have the confidence that God is who He says He is, and what He says He is. Abraham, because he was fully persuaded as to what God was capable of doing, had no problem to resist fluctuating back and forth. He was not blown like a blade of grass by every wind of doctrine.

He was being fully persuaded about what? "That..." And it introduces now what he was fully persuaded about: "what He had promised." This is speaking about God speaking to Abraham. "Promised" is the Greek word "epaggelleo." "Epaggelleo" is perfect tense in the Greek. Perfect tense means that something happens in the past, and then that thing that happens continues on to the present. So, God promised something in the past. We have it recorded first in Genesis 12:1-3. God promised way back in Ur of the Chaldees that Abraham would be saved; would have a great name; and, would have tremendous blessings if he would believe God. And that promise was unconditional. It took place back there, and it continued right down forever. It's indicative. It's a statement of fact. It's in the middle voice. God was the agent of this promise.

The idea here that is stressed by this word is that God Himself had made this promise. And Abraham was fully persuaded that what He (God) has promised, He was also able to perform. The word "able" is the Greek word "dunatos." It's an adjective. It means "strong" or "powerful," and it's associated with "to be." So, it indicates that God was fully, powerfully capable of doing this thing that He had promised to do: "He was also able to perform." And the word "perform" is the word that we have had many times before. It's "poieo." "Poieo" actually means "to do." Here's where the doing comes in in the Christian life. There was nothing that Abraham had to do. Abraham couldn't do anything.

I cannot reiterate often enough that Abraham got absolutely nothing by doing. As a matter of fact, whenever Abraham got into the act to do something, he got nothing but trouble. But it was God who was the "poieo" one. All the doing was on God's part. Again I remind you that Paul is closing down a major line of instruction here in the closing part of chapter 4. Once more, he's going to try to make it very clear to the human race that if you do not come to God on the basis of receiving a grace salvation, you cannot come to Him at all. If you come to God and contaminate the approach to salvation with some human element, whatever it might be, and however sincere it is, we have every indication in the Word of God that you're going to go straight into hell. You may go out of this life praising God and singing His name, and thinking you're going to heaven because you believed in Jesus Christ and had water baptism, and you're trusting in that water baptism, and you have contaminated the grace basis of salvation, and won't it be a shock to discover yourself in hell. What a scream that will be when you open your eyes on the other side.

So, that's why Paul almost laboriously (and almost tiresomely, it seems sometimes, here at the end of this fourth chapter) keeps coming back to this issue. And if you've been with us over the past few months, you know how again and again and again this very point has been made. Paul says, "Just don't add anything to salvation. That is the kiss-of-death game to play.

This word "poieo" is very significantly used here, because it is a strong word in the Greek language, which means doing, doing, doing. But notice that it is attached to the fact that God is the doer. It's in the aorist tense. This was done at the point of the fulfillment of the promise. He knew that God could do this (give him an heir). It is active. God does it. This time the mood is infinitive, which indicates that it was God's purpose. Infinitive here means purpose. It was God's purpose to do this for Abraham.

Now, if God's purpose is to give you and me eternal life on the basis of what Christ has done on the cross, that's exactly what He's trying to do. If it is God's purpose to reward you with fantastic treasures in heaven because of your Christian service, that's exactly what He's going to do. But He will not do what He has promised to do except on the ground that He has laid out. He is not going to save you on some basis that you come up with. He is not going to reward you in heaven on the basis of some system of service that you have come up with. The doing is on God's part.

**We are Nothing**

So, here again is the humiliation to a human being that he's absolutely nothing.

Adam and Eve started in a perfect environment. Everything was just great in the Garden of Eden. When Satan came along, and he contaminated them by sin, then God cursed His whole creation. He threw the whole thing out of kilter so that everything that man touched was disastrous. That's what human beings never seem to be able to learn. I know politicians never learn it. Politicians always think that they can pass a law to solve the human problem. The Word of God says that this can never be done. No matter how many laws you pass, you cannot solve social problems with laws. Only God, through changing human nature, can solve the problem.

The reason God cursed the earth, and the reason God made man absolutely helpless, is so that it could be made very clear that when there was forward progress in the human race, it was God who was doing it. When there is forward progress in your life, then look to God and say, "Father, I am really happy to thank you, that in spite of the clod that I am, you have made progress with me." And as long as you keep giving the Lord the credit, you're going to keep making progress.

Abraham was absolutely and fully frustrated persuaded, beyond any question of doubt, that what God had promised, He was able to do, and He alone could do it. Any doubt in God's ability and God's freedom to save by grace through faith will leave the door wide open for you to start interjecting your human effort help toward salvation or toward spirituality.

2 Timothy 1:12 puts it this way, when the apostle Paul (looking back at his life) has this to say: "For which cause I also suffered these things. Nevertheless, I'm not ashamed. For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I committed unto Him against that day." Paul knows the kind of a God to whose hands he has trusted himself. And he knows that that God is fully capable of coming through for him in the matter of eternal life.

**False Substitutes for Faith**

For a moment, let's take a look at some false substitutes for people. "Faith" is a word that's knocked around among people a great deal, and it comes out very often with some very false ideas.

1. **Denial of Reality**

Here's one great falsehood: It's denial of reality. Sometimes denial of reality is actually looked upon as being an expression of faith. The cult of Christian Science is based entirely upon this principle. Christian Science takes the attitude that since God is perfect, everything that God has created must also be perfect. That's the argument. Therefore, if we see anything imperfect within ourselves; within society; or, within this world, then that is just a delusion of man's mortal mind, because everything that God has created has to be perfect. Therefore, God made your body, and God is not going to make your body so that it is sick. God made a perfect body. Therefore, if you are ill (if you are sick), that's only a delusion of your mind. It's an error of mortal mind. Now that's the denial of reality.

This is like the little boy who had a lady that lived on his block who was a Christian Science lady. She was very, very sick one day. And he went to visit her, and she explained that she wasn't sick. It was just a delusion. She just thinks she's sick. But she said, "I know I'm not sick. It's an error of mortal mind." A couple of days passed, and the little boy came home to his mother and said, "You know Mrs. So-and-So down the street who thought she was sick the other day? Today she thinks she's dead." And that's what happens to all Christian Scientists. They eventually think they're dead too. Now, are they dead, or are they not dead. So, who are they kidding? This is a denial of reality, because they believe it is a lack of faith in God to say that they're sick.

If you have ever been to a Fourth of July picnic at Berean Memorial Church, unless you're in shape, there are a lot of activities that go on that make you realize the next day that you are out of shape. I remember one year we had a Fourth of July picnic on a Saturday, so the next day was Sunday. And we had a man who had begun visiting our church. He had been at the picnic on Saturday, and on Sunday he went out the door and I said, "I hope you don't have as many aches as I have today." I suspected that he did, because he had been very actively playing ball and everything that day. He shot right back at me, "I don't have any aches. I don't feel any soreness." And it kind of took me aback – his adamancy on the matter. And then I remembered his background was Christian Science, and immediately he could not admit, no matter how sore he was, that he did ache. That is the denial of reality.

What the problem with Christian Science and this denial of reality is, is the fact that they forget that when man ignored God's order in the Garden of Eden, that God responded by cursing His creation, and that God Himself has placed upon creation these things that distress man: the sickness; the human problem; and, so on. It is the curse of sin. And yet, trying to believe that something is so, in spite of reality, is not faith, but it is monumental self-deception.

I had this brought home to me very strongly many years ago. In fact, it was my very first year at Berean Memorial Church, over a quarter century ago. We had a lady who was attending who had (at some time previous to her attendance here) had an operation for cancer. At the time that she was attending, she sang in the choir and participated very actively. We were here at the church in the process of being at a pioneer stage where ministries were being formed and brought into reality. One of them was the ministry to our youth in the form of Christian Service Brigade and Pioneer Girls. This was a big thing. It was a thing that we talked a lot about. The congregation was actively involved in it. Plans were being made; the program was being inaugurated; and, the vision was being created for the congregation as to what it would mean to a youngster to grow up in a planned, social life that gave him orientation to the Word of God and orientation to himself as a human being in relationship to other people. We were planning the achievement program, and the superior value of the Christian Service Brigade and the Pioneer Girls against the secular youth organizations of such a nature, and so on. So, this was a big thing on everybody's mind.

On Sunday morning, as she was leaving after the service, she informed me that she had begun developing signs again of a re-occurrence of her cancer, and that she was going back to the doctor. It wasn't very long before her case was terminal. I remember being called in the night of her death, and visiting with her for a little bit. And one of the things that she said to me was, "I don't believe that God is going to let me die. I believe He has called me to work in the youth ministry at Berean Memorial church. I knew immediately when I walked in that she was desperately ill. And what she was doing was trying to express a faith in God by denying the reality of the fact that by morning she would be in His presence.

That is not faith in God to deny the reality. What she should have reached over and grabbed hold of at that moment was divine grace. Perhaps she didn't have time to develop it. But there are some people who check out of this life just like they're going on the trip. It's an exciting vacation; they're packing their bags; and, they're moving on to the next stage. And they're happy to go on. That's dying grace. It's the same grace that has sustained us in life. But grace in this life has the quality of facing reality, as Abraham did. God's grace was magnificent to him, but he didn't kid himself about the fact that there was no way that he and Sarah could have a child.

The charismatic movement is based upon the fact that faith requires them to believe what the evidence contradicts on every account. So, people who are dying of deadly diseases will look you straight in the eye and tell you that they are healed. People who have cavities that are eating out the innards of their teeth will look you straight in the eye and tell you to look in your mouth and that God has healed their cavity. And they're playing the ignorance of saying, "This is my faith in God, even though the cavity is still there."

So, it is a false faith to deny reality. That is not faith at all. Yet it is very often done today.

1. **Presumption**

There is a second false kind of faith that you want to avoid, and that is presumption. We act presumptuously and we call it faith. One of the great presumptions of our day is that human reason is capable of analyzing what is right and what is wrong. We presume that human reason is capable of coming to the mind of God. Man's reason is held as being capable of arriving at divine viewpoint conclusions. Consequently, human reason is held as being capable of even looking at the Bible and judging what is worthy of acceptance and what is not worthy of acceptance.

**Thomas Aquinas**

Well, the fact is that sin has affected the human mind. No matter what Thomas Aquinas taught to the contrary, sin has affected the human mind. Thomas Aquinas opened a can of worms when he taught, and it was accepted (by the thinking during the Middle Ages) that man's mind has not been affected by sin. So, by thinking, man could arrive at God's thoughts, and nothing can be farther from the truth. That is presumptuous. There are people who think that it is an act of faith to have great confidence in the ability of reason. The fact is that sin has contaminated reason.

**Equality**

The French Revolution was based upon the fact of all facts – that human reason was capable of arriving at truth, and that human reason was capable of leading man to nobility, and that was presumption in the extreme. The French Revolution, by reason, concluded that the most valued quality in life was equality. The most valued possession was equality.

**Liberty**

This was in such direct contrast to the great founders of our nation, who said, "No, equality is not the thing that is the greatest in life. Equality is not the thing that God wishes us to pursue. What God wants us to pursue is liberty. And that's exactly what the Declaration of Independence pointed out – that it is liberty for us and our posterity that we seek. Freedom is what God says that He has for you." And when you pursue equality, you are pursuing a satanic notion. That is why governments violate their role of government by passing laws to solve human problems. And basically, human resolution of problems means to make everybody equal.

So, the pursuit of equality always produces tyranny. It is always powers above forcing people against their conscience and against what they want to do. Well, freedom permits everybody to equally exercise their unequal capacities. So, it is presumptuous to have faith in human reason as being capable of giving us the thinking of God.

The French Revolution produced nothing but a nightmare. And after the terror of many years, and the working with the guillotine, finally, a young French military officer moved in; set up a few gun; shot down a few hundred people; and, Napoleon Bonaparte took over as dictator. That's where equality leads a nation. That's where reason, at the highest level, led the French Revolution.

So, it is presumption to think that we have an object of faith in human reason. That is not faith.

1. **Credulity**

Then there is one other, and that is credulity. Credulity is very often considered to be faith – blind faith in some unconfirmed authority: blind faith in your witchdoctor; blind faith in your smooth-tongued preacher; or, blind faith in your charismatic politician. Whether he says is what you believe. Christianity is not blind faith. It is based on the confirmed reliability of Scripture. It's not based on some emotion where somebody is disturbing you. Most counseling, unfortunately, devolves into a person turning his will over to the counselor so that the counselor acts as God. And then whatever the counselor says, credulity comes in, and it is viewed as an act of faith to take the advice of the counselor. Faith in a false authority is a false faith.

So, as we look at Abraham, and he stands out in our thinking of the great man of faith, it is evident that he did not deny reality. It is evident that he was not presumptuous. He didn't act according to what he thought was the way things should be. And he was not credulous. He did just release any false story that somebody came along to give him, but he believed the promise and the authority of the Word of God.

**The True Faith of Abraham**

So, let's look at the true faith of Abraham – kind of summarizing now the things that we have been reading about him:

1. **Faith is not Weak**

Point number one is back in verse 19. It says that: "Abraham was not weak in faith." Faith begins as a very small seed, but then it's supposed to grow in strength. Christians who remain weak in faith toward God are Christians who are forever spiritual babies. They like spiritual growth. So, I would not feel that you compliment yourself by talking about how weak your faith is. Especially if you've been in the Christian life for some time, this is the one thing that should not be true of you. Your faith should not be weak.

1. **Faith Begins Small**

Now, it does have a small beginning. Not only does it have a small beginning, but it starts as a gift of God. You remember that Ephesians 2:8-9 tells us that very point: "For by grace you are saved through faith, and that (faith) not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast." So, faith comes to it as a gift from God, but it is a very small thing.

1. **Faith Grows**

God revealed himself to Abraham, and Abraham had a baby faith, and he was born again. That's all he needed. All you need is a mustard seed of faith, and you're born again. With an infinitesimally small amount of faith in Christ, you're born again. And you begin with faith that is weak. But from then on, it's always the problem of developing that faith.

That's a whole subject in itself, and we have touched upon it before, and we're not going to go into it now. But you know that at the core of developing your faith is the intake of the Word of God into your soul. Nevertheless, we may certainly enter into the prayer that the disciples in Luke 17:5 expressed to the Lord when they said, "Lord, increase our faith."

It is obvious that this is going to be a point of great satanic attack. The one thing Satan will not want to see you do is to grow more confident and more confident and more confident in God. The one thing Satan is not going to try to see you do is to take less Alka-Seltzers for your upset stomach because you're relaxing and faith resting in God. He's going to try to keep you on edge; he's going to try to keep you upset; and, he's going to try to keep you under pressure. He does not want to see your faith develop.

It was a great thing for Abraham to have said about him that he was not weak in faith.

1. **Faith is not Troubled by Inward Circumstances**

The next thing that this section has pointed out to us was that he was not troubled by his inward circumstances of sexual deadness. He was not troubled by inward circumstances. Abraham's sexual incapacity was fully faced by him, and he looked upon it as a fact of life. But it was no problem to him because his eyes were on the Lord, who had told him that he would have a son which was necessary to fulfill the Abrahamic Covenant.

Now, others around Abraham (and even thoughts that arose with himself) could have made quite an irrefutable case for the fact that there was no way he was ever going to realize the promises of that covenant. There just was no way. It all hinged upon having a son, and there was no way he could have a son. That was an inward circumstance that he had to face, and he just ignored it. When God has spoken in Bible doctrine, that settles the way things are going to be.

Now, the Roman Catholics have that attitude toward their Pope. When the Roman Catholics debate an issue, they always come to the bottom line. The bottom line is when the Pope has spoken, the discussion is closed. Now that isn't true, but it is true relative to doctrine. When doctrine has spoken, then the discussion is closed. There's no further discussion on the matter. Yet, lack of faith seeks to evade that. Abraham had some real inward circumstances that were discouraging to faith, but they did not trouble him.

1. **Faith is not Troubled by Outward Circumstances**

Furthermore, in the next place, he was not affected by the outward circumstances of Sarah's sexual deadness. No error was possible by the appointed mother. God said, "Sarah has to be the mother," but there was no way that she could be the mother. Abraham could not hope for a solution to his problem through his wife. Death was in himself, and death was around him and Sarah. Again, this was no problem to Abraham. The outward circumstances were no problem to Abraham. Why? Because Abraham's God was big enough to deal with Sarah's incapacity. And Abraham knew it. Abraham knew that his God was big enough.

1. **God is Big Enough**

Many of you may not know that. Many of you struggle and agonize over situations simply because you have not learned that your God is fully big enough to handle these problems. I have heard many times great dishonor done to God within church meetings; within church conferences; and, within church gatherings, as people would stand up, and they would speak out against something that God was leading this congregation to do, and they would speak out in such a way that it was evident that their problem was that the God that they had was just not big enough. He was not the God of Scripture, and He was not the God that had revealed Himself to Abraham. He just was not big enough, and that was their problem. And it is very embarrassing for me to listen to people (who are sometimes leaders within the church), and recognize that this man's problem is that his God has shrunk beyond any recognition of Scripture. If your God is big enough, then the problems of your outward circumstances are absolutely meaningless.

Think of Caleb and Joshua. Caleb and Joshua were sent with the 12 spies to spy out the land. The spies came back and said, "Yes, indeed, it is a land flowing with milk and honey." Joshua and Caleb looked, and they saw giants in the land. But while they looked and saw giants in the land (for the people who dwelt in that land were powerful, big people), their eyes, saw God interposed. So, when they came back, they said, "Yeah, there are giants in the land, but we'll chew them up. That's where this phrase originated: "The bigger they are, the harder they fall."

When I was in Chicago, and the Dallas Cowboys were coming up (a week-and-a-half or so ago) to play the Chicago Bears, the Bears knew they were in a lot of trouble. It was kind of interesting to watch the commentators trying to build everybody's spirits up, such that Dallas just was not going to take this thing away from them. So, this was a great thing, and one of them said, "You know, those cowboys – they're really pretty big. They're really big. Does that disturb you?" And the fellow representing the bears said, "Well, yes, they're big, but you know the old saying: 'The bigger they are, the harder they fall.'" Then he laughed, but I didn't think that his heart was in his laugh.

So, this was the attitude of Joshua and Caleb. They came back and said, "Man, the bigger they are, the harder they're going to fall." That was what the two of them said. There were ten other men. They saw the Giants, but they did not see God. What did they see? They saw themselves as grasshoppers. Isn't that interesting? They saw themselves as grasshoppers. Why? Because their God was not big enough. If your God is big enough, the giants will not disturb you. But if your God is not big enough, you're going to turn into a grasshopper. And you will act like a grasshopper. And you will act with that kind of intimidation and that kind of fear. You will not stand tall as God's man and God's woman. And that's a shameful thing for people who are members of the royal family.

Abraham never was a member of the royal family. Please remember that. Abraham was just a commoner. Everybody in this room is royalty. Take a look at that queen sitting next to you, or that King. You may call each other "Sire" and "Ma'am" man because you are royalty. Abraham was not even that. He was not a member of the church. Caleb and Joshua had a big enough that it was no problem.

1. **Faith Does not Waver in Unbelief**

In the next place, this passage has taught us that Abraham did not waver in unbelief. Abraham's eyes were fixed on the Lord. Consequently, he could follow a straight path. One of the great chapters in the Bible is Hebrews 11. When I was a youngster in Vacation Bible School back in Chicago, we spent one summer memorizing this whole chapter – this great faith chapter. This chapter just lists one great man and woman of God of faith after another.

1. **Looking unto Jesus**

Then you come to Hebrews 12, and Hebrews 12:1-2, read: "Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily besets us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." And the key phrase there is "Looking unto Jesus." Immediately that he describes in chapter 11, one great person of faith after another from Old Testament history, he says, "Now those are the witnesses surrounding us. We must follow in their steps." How? "By looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith."

That is the thing that Abraham did. He did not waver in unbelief by getting plowed under with the circumstances that he saw in himself, or the circumstances that he saw outside of himself. He kept his eyes on the Lord.

One of the things that you learn when you fly an airplane is that it is very difficult to fly straight and level. You are forever wandering all over the sky, getting exactly no place. Actually, you can completely lose your course. The only way you can fly straight and level is if you pick something out on the horizon (some object), and you point the nose of the aircraft toward that object, and you stay on it. Then you fly straight. But otherwise you will not fly straight.

If you are a farmer and you're going to plow a straight furrow, you can only plow a straight furrow by taking that tractor and pointing it on something directly ahead of you, and you keep it pointed on that. Then the furrow will be straight. Otherwise, it will wander all over the field.

That is the principle that was characteristic of Abraham. He was a man whose eyes were on the Lord. Consequently, Abraham was a man whose faith was not undermined. Abraham was a man who kept moving in the right direction. When he had his problem with his nephew Lot, they were both men of considerable means. Abraham said, "I'm not going to squabble with you over money. We're a family, and we're not going to have conflicts between my workers and your workers. There's plenty of area here. God has given us the whole country. We don't have to sit on each other's doorsteps.

"Now, Lot, where do you want to go? Take a look across the countryside and select where you want to live, and I'll take what you leave." That was a very gracious offer made by Abraham – the man whose eyes were on the Lord. But our friend Lot – his eyes were on the dollar mark. So, he looked over to Sodom and Gomorrah. That's where the lush territory lay, and that's where all the action was. So, he went in that direction. His eyes were on material gain, and that's where it led him. So, he took that, and Abraham went the other direction. But who ended up the wealthiest? Who ended up the richest in the long run? Lot became very rich. He became so wealthy that he became a leading politician in the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. But when Jesus Christ (in His pre-incarnate state) with those two angels visited Sodom and Gomorrah, Lot found himself in the embarrassing position of trying to defend this man from the homosexual weirdos who gathered around his house, and wanted to abuse these men.

When the Scripture says, "Bring them out so that we may know them," that is the scriptural way of talking about sexual relations. And you may say, "We must defend Lot because he defended his guests." Well, that was Oriental custom. He was obliged to do that. But you remember what his answer was as a substitute. He said, "I've got two daughters here. They're virgins. Let me send them out to you, and you may use them as you please in your delight."

Now, where did Lot get with his eyes on his money? He became a clod. He became a fool. He became a degraded creature; while we honor Abraham unto this day.

So, he wavered not in unbelief because his eyes were on the right place.

We think of Peter that time he was walking on the water. As long as his eyes were on the Lord, he was a mighty man of God. When he took his eyes off the Lord, and got his eyes fixed on the waves, Peter was just another clod in the woodwork who was subject to his circumstances.

It is only doctrine that gives us the orientation to keep our eyes on the Lord. You can't keep your eyes on the Lord by getting up in the morning, and saying, "Lord, I'm going to follow you all day today. I'm going to keep my eyes up there on the clouds, and I'm going to look for your messages in the sky." You're not going to do that. You're going to be occupied with Christ only as you're occupied with His thinking, which is the Word of God.

1. **Strong in Faith**

In the next place, we're told that Abraham was strong in faith. Abraham acted without hesitation upon what God had declared to him. Abraham jumped right in. God said, "Leave the Mesopotamian Valley," and Abraham went home and said, "Pack up, Sarah. We're moving out. We're going to a new land." Ant the strength of his faith is clearly demonstrated that he was a man who was strong in faith. Later, he finally did get the son, Isaac (the Hebrew word for laughter). Isaac was finally born, but a few years later, when he was a young lad, God said, "Now, I want you to sacrifice him." And his faith was so great that he just commenced to do it. Abraham just made it clear to Isaac that whatever God asks, we will do. That was a man strong in faith.

It is not that you don't have faith. Many times people do have faith in the Scriptures. We've had evidences of that. But it is the fact that they are not strong in faith. In Matthew 6:30, we are told about people who are of little faith because of their concern for material things. It doesn't say that they don't have faith. They're just of little faith.

In the storm on the Sea of Galilee, in Matthew 8:26, Jesus didn't tell the disciples they didn't have faith. He just said to them, "O, you of little faith." They were not strong. Man of faith.

In Matthew 14:31, that was Peter's problem. The Lord said, "O, you of little faith." Peter had faith, but it was little.

Matthew 16:8 point that the disciples who were concerned for their food. They were not people who didn't have faith – they just had little faith.

1. **Give Glory to God**

Next, Abraham gave glory to God. That characterized his faith. Giving glory to God is an expression of an opinion of confidence in God. Abraham's confidence in God's word was an expression of praise and of gratitude toward God. That's what "to give glory to God" means. It means to give an opinion of praise. Abraham, in other words, did not have an attitude of wait-and-see before thanking God. That's an insult to God.

However, it is sometimes presumptuous for us to decide what God should do, and what God is going to do. And then we thank Him ahead of time for it. Now, maybe the Lord has made it very clear to you that He's going to do something, and you go ahead and thank Him ahead of time. But sometimes it's just pure presumption on our part that we're going to have something, and we're going to give Him the glory ahead of time.

But Abraham knew very definitely what God was going to do for him, and he very definitely gave glory to God.

1. **God is Able to Perform**

Another thing that characterized Abraham's faith was that he was convinced that God was able to produce. That's what we looked at in this session – that He was able to perform. Abraham had complete confidence in God's ability to give him a son, even though he and his wife were sexually dead. There was no unknown factor that could come into the picture that could keep God from doing what He had promised to do. He was convinced that God was able to do His part.

1. **God Knows the Future**

Now, many times, you and I, on a human level, express an intention to do something, and then something happens, and our circumstances change, and we can't do what our heart wants to do. But that never happens with God. God knows everything from start to finish. Therefore, it is great to know that you're dealing with somebody who knows all the future.

Wouldn't it be nice for you ladies if your husband really knew all the future? Wouldn't it be nice if your husband knew everything that was going to come in your lives? Therefore, every decision he made was in view of the fact that he knew where everything was going? Most of the time, you're quite sure he does know where he's going, let alone that he knows where everything else is going. But that would be great to have someone around that knew the future. Well, you've got someone in God. That's exactly what he's ready to do for you, as he did for Abraham.

In our day, in the way that He leads us today, you can have just as definite leading in your life, and just as definitely leading in the steps that you take as Abraham did. And you can act with the full confidence that God is able to produce what He is leading you to do.

So, Abraham's life was an attitude of mind which was the result of the fact that he had his mind set on the doctrine of the promise. A life of faith is an attitude of mind in daily expression. It is not an emotional high.

So, once more, putting it all together, don't fall into the trap of false faith, which is denial of reality; an attitude or presumption; and, ignorant credulity. On the other hand, true faith (following in the pattern of Abraham) is that it is not weak. It develops. It is not troubled by your inward circumstances. It is not troubled by your outward circumstances. It does not waver in unbelief, back and forth, with constant doubts. It is strong in faith. It not only grows, but it comes to the place where it has real muscle. It gives glory to God; that is, it expresses gratitude (thanksgiving). And it is convinced that God is able to come through. There is no shadow of a doubt whatsoever that He can come through.

If we can reproduce (in our experience), these qualities of Abraham faith, you too will be an unusual person of faith. And perhaps you and I may bear the honored title, as Abraham did – that we become friends of God. God could look upon this man, because of his faith, and say, "Abraham, I just want to tell you one thing. You're my friend, and I love you for it."

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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[**Back to the Bible Questions index**](http://www.christiandataresources.com/allarticles.htm)