

Faith (Abraham was fully persuaded)

Hans R. Waldvogel:

Selected Verses:

Romans 4:16-21. Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all, 17(As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. 18Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. 19And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb: 20He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; 21And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.

Hebrews 11:6. But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

Opening:

Everything hangs on that one item: if we believe. When the man came with the lunatic son, he said, "Lord, if you can, do something for us. Help us." Jesus said, "If you can believe." "If you can believe. All things are possible to him that believeth." And that shows what faith really is, and how imperatively necessary faith is. We cannot be saved any other way but by believing God.

"If we believe," why "all these things are added to us." And here is the great example of Abraham. And here is the principle of faith set forth in a wonderful word. I met a man who was sick, and people had told him, "Well, all you have to do is believe that you're well." That's sort of a Christian Science, you know: if you happen to stumble when you're on top of the Empire State Building, and you fall, all you do is flap your arms, and say, "cuckoo," and you'll land softly. And yet that's the way that people talk. And this man said, "How can I believe when I'm sick?" I said, "That isn't faith."

Faith, the Bible says: "Abraham was fully persuaded." "Fully persuaded." He didn't doubt. Everything spoke doubt to him. The devil said, "Hath God said?" But Abraham knew what God had said. That settled it forever. That settled it. What God said was ausschlaggebend, as we say in German. That settled it forever.

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Selected Quotes:

Oh, but everybody came around and tried to make [Abraham] doubt. They brought him bottles of aspirin tablets, and they brought him salves, and they told him about clinics and about doctors and about baths and so on and so on. That didn't give him any faith. "What did God say? In spite of all hell, in spite of all appearances, in spite of all the feelings I have. What did God say? That's going to happen, praise God!" And he was fully persuaded that what God had promised!

Well, did God promise? Yes, but we have a thousand question marks: is He able? Is He able in this condition? "Now, my wife Sarah!" She nagged him, she laughed at him, she made a fool out of him. God was still able, thank God! And Abraham gave God the glory by saying, when the devil said, "God is lying, or God forgot, or God can't." He gave God the glory by being fully persuaded that what God had promised is as well as finished, no matter how long he was tested.

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The Bible says Abraham didn't see anything, didn't feel anything, but "God swore by Himself." That was the wonderful thing. That's how firmly God established His word to Abraham. And all Abraham had to know was that, "God said it, and God swore by Himself. God gave me the guarantee that it shall be so." And so after he had patiently endured! Why did he have to endure? Why did he have to be patient? Because there was a whole hell to be defeated, and only faith defeats hell. Faith wears down the devil, drives him into the pit.

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But with Abraham, it was the opposite: the longer the test lasted, the stronger his faith became. Why? Because he had respect unto the promise. He occupied himself with the promise: â€œWhat did God say?â€• Beloved, thatâ€™s what brings faith into your soul and my soul: to â€œmeditate therein day and night.â€• This word creates faith. â€œThe words that I speak unto you are Spirit and are life.â€• â€œLord, to whom shall we go, Thou hast words of eternal life.â€•

Oh, what fools we are when we prefer the words of menâ€™no matter how holy they are, and the words of the devilâ€™no matter how plausible they are, or our own feelings, to the word of God.

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His honor is at stake. It doesnâ€™t matter whether I live or dieâ€™an atom in Godâ€™s universe. But it does matter whether Godâ€™s name is glorified in me. Thatâ€™s why he says, â€œWe glory in tribulation also, because tribulation worketh patience.â€• You gotta stick to it. â€œAnd patience worketh experience.â€• Thatâ€™s where you find out how absolutely true God is. And hereâ€™s the secret of faith: to be â€œfully persuaded that what God hath promised, He was able also to perform.â€• That makes God to be active. That makes me a masterpiece of heaven.

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Thatâ€™s what God gives me His word for. â€œThe exceeding great and precious promisesâ€• are given to us that they might â€œbe fulfilled in us.â€• Why do we have the Baptism in the Holy Ghost? because weâ€™ insisted on it. Why do we get healed when weâ€™re sick? because we insist on it: God said it; nothing else can satisfy my soul but the will of God to be done. And thatâ€™s where we fail. We get used to our sicknesses, we tolerate them. We get used to our sins and our bondages, and we tolerate them instead of recognizing that â€œwhat God has promised He will perform.â€• Thatâ€™s salvation.

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Oh, how many people are in the graves today that would be alive and serving God if they had been â€œfully persuaded,â€• if they had honored God!

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Now, the Bible says that â€œAbraham believed Him who is able to raise the dead, and call the things that be not as though they were.â€• Now, if you and I had a God like that, thatâ€™s a pretty wonderful God who is â€œable to raise the dead, and to call the things that be not as though they were.â€• And if that God had made promise to you, wouldnâ€™t you believe Him? Why, of course you would! Youâ€™d bank on His promise. But whatâ€™s the matter with our god? Thatâ€™s what Iâ€™d like to know.â€•

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A woman told me that in the early days of Pentecost, she never remembered a single case where people didnâ€™t get healed when they came for healing. That was wonderful. Thatâ€™s how they took the truth of God. But she says, â€œWe never dared talk ill one of another.â€• Oh. That belongs to it.

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What did God say? Heâ€™s not like we. We say, â€œYes, Iâ€™m going to do that,â€• and then we donâ€™t do it. But when God speaks, He puts the power of creation in His word. Itâ€™s â€œBread that comes down from heaven that a man may eat thereof and not die. And we ought to really meditate in this New Testament, and claim not only His commandments to be fulfilled in us, but His gracious promises.

Illustrations:

Comments on books. â€œIt either breathes life, or it breathes sickness and stagnation.â€• (from 5:53)

Examples of words of promise. â€œMy presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.â€• â€œCommit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass.â€• (from 6:57)

The story of a sickness in the early years of his ministry. (from 9:09)

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A life or death trial of Martha Wing Robinson. It was necessary for that woman to stand her ground. It's necessary for you and for me to stand our ground. We ought to learn this lesson, that without faith it is impossible to please God. And faith is not feeling; faith is being fully persuaded that what God has promised, He knows how to perform. (from 12:11)

The story of a bum knee. Wally came home from high school. When I told her, she said, That's incurable. We learned that in high school. And it was getting worse. And the worse it got, the more I laughed. I knew I was fully persuaded that God would make that OK, no matter what the doctor said. (from 19:46)