

Resting Upon Grace – Romans 4:13-25

In this passage, we once again see another key part of the gospel. Paul is again highlighting a truth that we need to hold on to. Paul is using Abraham as a case study. Where Abraham had been put on a pedestal, set above as the father of all Israel, Paul uses Abraham as an example of how we should all follow after God.

1) The Promise and the Call (v13)

Abraham's journey with God started with a unique encounter.

Read Genesis 12:1-2

Abraham was not called to a comfortable, easy walk. He was called on a journey with God (who was not a priority in his upbringing or culture). Called out of his home, from his family, his country, everything familiar; Abraham would risk his welfare, offend those he loved, to lead his household. To where? He did not know and there were lots of unanswered questions, but he trusted the God that called Him.

God has called each of us on a journey. There is an invitation to join this journey, which is often the stumbling block. Abraham took a remarkable adventure because he accepted the invitation and we have the same invitation to join a remarkable journey. Not with all the answers, but trusting Him who calls and prepared to say 'yes'.

Q. Where is God calling you to step out? What is holding you back?

2) The Promise May Rest on Grace (v16)

God's promise to Abraham was born, nurtured and delivered entirely by the grace of God, the continuous and bountiful kindness of God that overwhelms all opposition, whether trespass, transgression, or the prospect of the impossible. God's promises are fulfilled solely by His supernatural kindness. The miraculous birth of Isaac reminds us that God is the one who fulfils these promises. Abraham had commands to fulfil, he had responsibilities to uphold – he didn't simply become a slacker, but his life's calling was a trust exercise, requiring him to have a high view of the faithfulness of God, the power of God, the favour of God.

Q. What temptations do we have to make promises work ourselves? How does God's grace impact our actions?

3) Father of a Multitude (v17a)

Abraham had spent 75 years with the name Abram – exalted father. A tough name for someone who had no children. A constant reminder of what he had not achieved. Now, God changed his name to Abraham – father of a multitude. Why would God choose such a name? – Because He knew what Abraham was to become.

We are saved/we are spotless/we are righteous /we are not condemned/we are citizens of Heaven. We have not seen these fully realised yet, but God sees them fully realised and we can stand firm in these promises of God.

Q. What truths has God spoken over you that you need to hold onto?

4) He Calls Into Existence the Things That Do Not Exist (v17b)

Abraham knew that God creates from nothing, he knew therefore that even a dead womb wasn't beyond his power, for all things are possible with God. Nothing is beyond the power of God. You and I exist, because He called us forth. Nothing is impossible for the God who can create out of nothing.

Q. How does this creating God encourage us when facing 'impossible situations'?

5) Believed Against Hope (v18)

We can be tempted to believe the lies. This is my situation and I'm stuck here. Abraham believed despite all evidence being to the contrary. 'You will overcome', 'not a slave to sin', 'rejoice in all things' – we are required to believe when everything else says that it is impossible. Faith rests on grace. Faith rests on His power.

Q. What is the breakthrough that you need in your life?

6) He grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God (v20)

Abraham knew what it was like to feel left behind. When everyone else had the blessings he had no heir, no legacy. During the wait, he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God. Abraham underwent a severe test of faith, which revealed a heart devoted to God. Our trials are God given opportunities to glorify God as the genuineness of our faith is revealed; not to gain righteousness but to show how a person who has already been declared 'righteous' lives when all other hope is gone!

Q. How does Abraham's story encourage us to focus on God during our trials and the wait?