

# Part Ten –

## Following In The Footsteps Of Abraham

Last time we studied the example of Abraham who became righteous before God by faith alone.

We also were shown if we were to inherit the promises made to Abraham we also had to through faith in his seed [Jesus the Messiah] have righteousness of God imputed [credited] to us.

Then we have to walk in the footsteps of that faith.

We will in this study examine those footsteps.

### 1) **Abraham accepted God’s Promise by faith alone without any evidence.**

**Genesis 15:4-6** [NIV] *“Then the word of the LORD came to him: “This man will not be your heir, but a son coming from your own body will be your heir.” He took him outside and said, “Look up at the heavens and count the stars, if indeed you can count them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.” Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.”*

No evidence given.

Sarah still remained barren.

It wasn’t until Abraham was 100 years old and Sarah 90 years old that the promise began to be fulfilled with the birth of Isaac; until then it was faith without any physical evidence.

### 2) **Abraham recognised he was incapable of producing the promised result by his own strength.**

**Genesis 17:17** [NIV] *“Abraham fell face down; he laughed and said to himself, “Will a son be born to a man a hundred years old? Will Sarah bear a child at the age of ninety?”*

### 3) **Abraham focused on the promise;** he did **not** focus on his problems.

### 4) **As a result of focusing only on the promise,** both Abraham and Sarah received supernatural strength which they could **not** produce from their own effort.

### 5) **As a result the promise was fulfilled** and God was glorified.

Now let us read this as it is filled out and applied to us in **Romans 4:13-25**

**Romans 4:13-14** [NIV] *“It was **not through law** that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith. For if those who live by law are heirs, faith has no value and the promise is worthless,”*

This promise was made to Abraham only on the basis of his faith and it would have been totally unfair and inconsistent for God to add later as a further condition *“but you have to keep the law”*, which was given 430 years later.

**Keeping a set of laws was never a condition of entering into the promise that God made to Abraham.**

**Romans 4:15** [NIV] *“because law brings wrath. And where there is no law there is no transgression.”*

Law brings in its path wrath but where there is no law there is no transgression [to step over a given line].

The law does **not** bring people closer to God.

**For example**, even when the law was given at Sinai, no man or even any animal was allowed to come near to the mountain on the penalty of death.

Many people trying to get closer to God make a number of laws for themselves and in the end get further away from God because law keeping [or our attempts to keep laws] generates pride and only **self-righteousness** and God “*resists the proud*” [1 Peter 5:5] and gives grace to the humble.

**The first sin in the history of the universe was pride.**

Lucifer [the light bringer] became Satan [the adversary of God] as a result of pride.

**Ezekiel 28:15-17** [NIV] “*You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you. Through your widespread trade you were filled with violence, and you sinned. So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God, and I expelled you, O guardian cherub, from among the fiery stones. **Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendour.** So I threw you to the earth; I made a spectacle of you before kings.*”

**Isaiah 14:12-15** [NIV] “*How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! **You said in your heart, "I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High."** But you are brought down to the grave, to the depths of the pit.*”

Too often we focus on the sins of adultery, lying, drunkenness, etc. and overlook or tolerate a whole lot of pride, which in God’s Eyes is a much more serious sin.

**Psalms 19:13** [King James] “*Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.*”

“*presumptuous*” [arrogant or proud] “*transgression*” [rebellion or trespass – to pass beyond our known duty]

**Romans 4:16** [NIV] “*Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring, not only to those who are of the law but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all.*”

No one is excluded from these promises – **promise had to be by faith so it could be by grace.**

We only obtain righteousness from God as a gift – we never can earn it.

**Romans 4:17** [NIV] “*As it is written: "I have made you a father of many nations." He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed, the God who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were.*”

[Quote **Genesis 17:17**]

**God called Abraham a father of many nations when he didn’t even have a son from his barren wife Sarah.**

God calls us righteous [on our accepting in faith the sacrifice He made through Christ] even if we do not yet see the evidence.

**God's naming anything comes before the reality; for it is on the basis of faith.**

God called me as His servant in 1963.

Was there any evidence of me being His humble servant then?

No way – the pride I expressed in my new found “*knowledge*” made me repugnant to many.

God has had to work very hard on me to mould me into something very different and still has a lot of moulding to do.

I am today His bond slave **not** by anything I have done, but by His Grace and the work of His Holy Spirit.

I have nothing to boast about.

Any good in me is what God has granted or produced in me in spite of anything I have done, and most of the time I have just made things difficult for Him.

**Romans 9:15-16** [NIV] *“For he says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.” It does not, therefore, depend on man's desire or effort, but on God's mercy.”*

Our calling it does **not** depend on man's desires or effort, but on God's Mercy.

If anyone needs the mercy of God it has been and is me.

But I do have one strong point: I know I need God's Mercy.

**Romans 4:18** [NIV] *“Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, “So shall your offspring be.”*

Abraham had hope and even when there was no hope he still continued to believe [had faith].

**Romans 4:19** [NIV] *“Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead, since he was about a hundred years old, and that Sarah's womb was also dead.”*

Faith is realistic – it tells it as it is - but this doesn't make any difference to God's Promises and His Power.

**Romans 4:20** [NIV] *“Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God,”*

Made strong by his faith.

His physical body was strengthened and Sarah's womb was made alive again.

And it wasn't just a short-term event, for Abraham went on to have other children.

Not bad going for a man who at 100 years of age.

Who said there was no hope in our old age!

Abraham did **not** waiver in his faith.

**James 1:6-8** [King James] *“But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.”*

Those who doubt will **not** receive any answer to their prayers, that is being “*double minded*” – Greek means “*two spirited*”, allowing our own human spirit to have equal credence as the Holy Spirit in us.

**Romans 4:20** [NIV] “*Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God,*”

“*Gave glory to God*” – remember [**Romans 3:23**] our sin [missing the mark] robs God of His Glory.

**How can we give back to God the glory our sin has taken from Him?**

By living a life of faith; following in the pathway of faith that Abraham trod.

**Everything hinges on God’s Grace.**

**What do we understand by grace?**

Grace begins where human ability ends.

As long as we can do it ourselves we don’t need God’s Grace.

**When we come to the point when we know we can’t accomplish the goal before us that God wants us to reach, then we move forward in faith into the realm of grace.**

Many Christians are afraid to do what God shows them He wants them to do, for they feel they are unable or unqualified to do it.

**In one sense God seldom tells us to do something we can do in our own strength or ability.**

God is always moving us out beyond our own ability, into the realm of grace by faith.

**Every time our faith is challenged we can act in one of two ways:**

- a) God, do you really want me to do this or go through this trial?
- b) Thank you God for this opportunity for my faith in you to be strengthened by receiving more of your grace.

Looking back in my own life I see that every major progressive step I’ve made in my Christian life has been the result of a challenge or a trial.

Every time God has challenged me with something I knew I could not do by myself.

I don’t say I’ve always welcomed the challenge or trial but I now accept it is the only way to “*grow in grace*” and the “*knowledge*” has followed on after.

**2 Peter 3:18** [NIV] “*But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever! Amen.*”

**Every time we run away from a challenge we are missing out on a chance to grow spiritually.**

**Hebrews 10:38-39** [NIV] “*The righteous one will live by faith, and if he shrinks back I [God] will not be pleased with him. But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe [have faith] and are saved.*”

**I feel that this world needs God more than ever before but it is becoming more and more difficult to reach people with the Word of God.**

**Matthew 24:3-14** [NIV] Tells us in vivid detail that this will be true before the end of this society comes.

**But this also tells me that to do the Work of God today is going to need more faith in what God can do through us than what we can do of our own strength.**

God expects us to accept His Challenge to preach the Good News however small and weak we may seem physically.

In faith expect **God** to produce the fruit through us.

**Zechariah 4:6** *“Not by might nor by power, but by my spirit...”*

**Isaiah 55:8-11** [NIV] *“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the LORD. “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is **my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.**”*

God’s Word will not be without fruitfulness when we look to and rely on God’s Power in our own weakness things begin to happen.

**Romans 4:22-25** [NIV] *“This is why “it was credited to him as righteousness.” The words “it was credited to him” were written **not for him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness, for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.**”*

**The key to this is identification.**

**On the cross Jesus** identified himself to the sinner by taking his place in death.

**When Jesus was buried** the whole evil inheritance of the Adamic race was terminated.

Jesus became the *“last Adam”*.

**When Jesus was resurrected he became the head of a new race of people** – the grace race.

Those who could receive the righteousness of God through faith in what God had done for them through Jesus the Messiah [Saviour].