

“Faith Over Fear: Battling Unbelief”

INTRO: Jumping into series in earnest today: “Faith Over Fear”; a series set on encouraging each of us to choose faith, no matter what.

- Fear is something that all of us struggle with.
- Fear is an enemy of God
- Fear can be a good thing - like being afraid to cross a busy highway or touch a hot stove
- But Fear is not a good thing when gets in the way of embracing God’s plans; God’s fear often used by the enemy to keep us from living into God’s plans and promises for our live
- Fear leads to unbelief
- God promises in **Isaiah 41:10** So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

Continuing to look at Abram / Abraham

- Talked last week about how when Abram got this incredible, yet ambiguous, calling on His life, Abram went...He chose to ‘go’ without the ‘know’
 - of course he did, he’s Abraham, of course HE went! but at that time, Abraham wasn’t Abraham - he was Abram - **Exalted Father.**
 - At that point in Abram’s story, Abram is just a guy with a decision to make - to obey God, or not; too seek the Father’s blessing, or not; To believe, or not; to risk, or not; To choose Faith over Fear, or not -
 - Abram chose Faith and set out; as he continues his journey, he again and again is placed at a **fork in the road** with a decision to make between faith and fear; belief and unbelief

Genesis 15: 1-6 New International Version (NIV)

1 After this, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision:

“Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward.”

2 But Abram said, “Sovereign Lord, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?” **3** And Abram said, “You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir.”

4 Then the word of the Lord came to him: “This man will not be your heir, but a son who is your own flesh and blood will be your heir.” **5** He took him outside and said, “Look up at the sky and count the stars—if indeed you can count them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.”

6 Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness.

Tension:

- God has promises for our lives revealed in various ways - biblical promises in Scripture; prophetic word over their lives
- We have reality of what we see and how our lives are going
- Often the 2 don't line up, so easy to have unbelief - and we all struggle with unbelief
- BUT despite our human circumstances the Lord is still who He is and He does what He says He is going to do, but we have to believe Him for it and cooperate

Romans 4:18-24

18 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.”

- Re-Cap Promise made in Genesis 15:1-5
 - Genesis 15:5 “Look up at the sky and count the stars—if indeed you can count them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.”
 - Last week Gen 12 ‘The call’= I will make you into a great nation, bless you, make your name great, you will be a blessing, all people on earth will be blessed through you.
- Abraham believed
 - In his heart
 - Not only that He ‘could’, but that he would, there is a difference

19 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.

- Again, Abraham has a decision to make, and again, Abram chooses faith
- Quite remarkable, especially given the magnitude of the promise made, and that promise is made into some “Hopeless Human Circumstances”
 - Old
 - Barren
- **Circumstances / Material evidence that would make belief difficult**
- FORK IN THE ROAD - decision on which road to take Battle against unbelief

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- The more we take path of unbelief, further we get away from God's will for our lives
- Life is a series of forks - don't get far from God in one decision, don't get close to God in one decision
- Realists believe what is visible - that the material world rules over the supernatural;
- Christians can be realists too - we just choose to put our faith in a Superior Reality (of God)
- God has promises for our lives - and God is not deterred by our "Hopeless Human Circumstances"; we see in Genesis, either is Abram...and in this instance he did not waver...

20 Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, 21 being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised.

- I love this verse
- Known for years that Abraham was the 'father of faith', and that he had tremendous faith, after all he left everything that he knew to follow the Lord, he was willing to sacrifice his only son (teaser for later in the series), trusted the Lord in everything
- So Abraham and faith= Yes of course
- Never realized he battled unbelief, a little silly looking at it now as he was a human, but this verse says that "no unbelief made him waver" (ESV)
 - Not that he didn't have unbelief but that it didn't make him waver
 - Maybe I'm weird and crazy (haha), but that gives me comfort
 - Sometimes we look at the 'heroes' of the Bible, after all Abraham is listed in the Hall of Faith in Hebrews 11 and we think that they are these superhuman people that were able to do all these things for the Lord
 - Fact is they were ordinary people that served an extraordinary God= JUST LIKE YOU AND ME
- So faith is **NOT** the absence of unbelief and doubt, it's the presence of belief
- believing despite unbelief and doubt, just like Abraham
- Unbelief is anchored in what is visible or reasonable apart from God (Bill Johnson)

- Faith is believing that God can and WILL do what he says he will do despite the limitations of the natural world

Riding the First Elevators Required Act of Faith

You have undoubtedly been on an elevator that bears his name. Otis elevators have been the industry standard for more than 150 years. While Elisha Otis did not invent the elevator, he did devise the braking system that ensured its safety. At the time, most elevators were little more than open platforms, and they'd come apart and people would be seriously injured if the cable broke. And without a trustworthy braking system, elevators were earthbound and building heights were limited to a mere six stories. With it, the sky was the limit. The braking system for elevators made modern skyscrapers possible.

But initially Elisha Otis had trouble selling his elevators, until 1854 when he concocted a creative sales pitch at the Crystal Palace Exhibition in Manhattan. Every hour at the exposition, the World's Fair of its day, Otis stepped into his machine. He gave the order to an assistant who cut the rope. The crowd held its breath. The brake kicked in, the elevator stopped and Otis announced: "All safe, gentlemen. All safe." With this demonstration, Otis quickly sold his first three elevators for \$300 apiece. Today, New York City alone has about 70,000 elevators, and it's estimated that the equivalent of the world's population travels on an Otis elevator, escalator, or moving walkway every three days.

- Unbelief would Otis standing outside the elevator, Belief was standing on the platform trusting, Us parallel

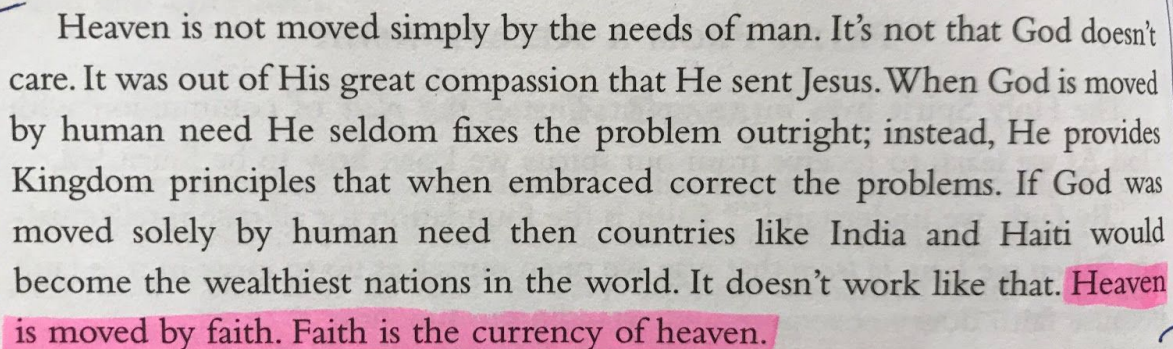
22 This is why "it was credited to him as righteousness." **23** The words "it was credited to him" were written not for him alone, **24** but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead.

- TOO MUCH ON THIS PART? DRIFTING AWAY FROM THEME?
- AcCredited (Reckoned) to him as righteousness
 - Same true for us
- The Lord reckoned it to him as righteousness
 - flush out the term righteous [a robe placed on us that God only recognizes as Jesus']
 - Mentioned 6 times in Romans passage; 'righteousness was imputed to Abraham apart from human merit'
 - Salvation through Faith alone; only righteous through Jesus' righteousness; new covenant - BIG promise is Jesus - we can't DIY when it comes to salvation - this video shows how it goes if we try:

"Getting In" on God's Goodness

There are two ways the Bible says you can get to heaven. Plan A is to earn it. That's the performance plan. And to earn it you only have to do this: never sin and always do what's right for the entire time that you live. Just be perfect.

Since none of us qualify for Plan A, God came up with Plan B, which is this: You trust Jesus Christ when he says, "I am the way, the truth and the life." He was the only perfect person who ever lived, because he was God. He came so we could know what God is like. And by trusting and establishing a relationship with him, you get in on his goodness.



Heaven is not moved simply by the needs of man. It's not that God doesn't care. It was out of His great compassion that He sent Jesus. When God is moved by human need He seldom fixes the problem outright; instead, He provides Kingdom principles that when embraced correct the problems. If God was moved solely by human need then countries like India and Haiti would become the wealthiest nations in the world. It doesn't work like that. Heaven is moved by faith. Faith is the currency of heaven.

Closing

Into what "Hopeless Human Circumstances" do you need to believe in and apply God's promises? Said another way, "In what situation do you need breakthrough?" **At a**

Crossroads - choose Faith or Fear? Belief or Unbelief?

Before Star Word - answer that question...

Promise- Abraham's descendents outnumber the stars in the sky - we are his descendants grafted in (adopted), now talking about the promise and choosing stars

How do star words speak into the promise - 'prophetic Word' - prophecy is for edification

Brent: 2018 Word: Time

Prophecy needs tested (if word doesn't fit, don't try to make it fit - Scripture; Holy

Spirit; Experience; Wise Friend

- Instructions
 - Only get 1
 - Can't give it back
 - Take time to write down the situation on your handout
 - Really pray into it, search scripture etc. over the next year