

**Feb 7<sup>th</sup> 2010**

Questions for triplets:

**Question** .... Am I going to be busy this year with religious things, going through the motions, or a man of faith.

Q. Think of man of faith? Abraham! What's Abraham's life to teach us?

Romans 4:1 "What did Abraham discover in this matter?" V1  
Read13 - 25 VERSE 20

### **1. How do we see the promises of God come to us? V13 = Faith**

You know when there is faith around, you can feel it and see it in people. I know people/my life/in whose company I imbibe faith

#### **What is Faith?**

**Images Bible uses:** Seeing and Hearing:

##### **Seeing.**

- Jesus describes Faith as seeing. Sees what? what happens in God's kingdom. "*Seek first the kingdom of heaven*"
- Jesus only did what he *saw* his father doing.
- Paul describes faith "*set your mind on things above, not on things on earth*"

Scripture encourages to turn our attention to what we cannot see but which is more real, the realm that outlasts this natural realm, the invisible, eternal

##### **Hearing.**

- Jesus often preceded his teaching with "*Whoever has ears to hear, let him hear*" Ears of the heart.

#### **Hard of hearing and poor sight..... = hard heart**

We are saved by grace, through faith. That's how we get into relationship BUT it is meant to be how we live it day by day as well

#### **v13 FAITH**

- not by meeting a **required standard**, *the law*
- not **hard work**, *if only I put in the hours*,
- not being a **particular person**, *it's alright for Chris cos it happens for them but not me*
- not **who you know**, *I'm not a luvvy or a favourite or am not in the inner circle or clique*
- not just **certain ages** i.e just the young or just the old,
- not those who **know lots**,

NO! v16 Rather those who are in faith, so that it may be by grace

**I find that very encouraging...it qualifies me!!**

**It's by grace, I don't deserve it, ...blown it, having a bad day..doesn't matter!**

**It's accessed by faith**

And it says the sky is the limit. If it was by hard work, or meeting the standard, certain wonderful things could be accomplished, but not the impossible.

### **2. Faith starts with God making a promise**

**v17.** Abraham has a clear promise, to become the father of many nations, as numerous as stars and grains of sand....

Notice it doesn't start with optimism or positive thinking, or being very certain about something

- Ab was an old man, about 100 yrs old, wife is barren...Conclusion Impossible!
- **Q. Why God use this?** Why not a young couple, that would have been big enough! Answer: So that the true nature of faith is clearly seen
- Looking at the raw materials, ability to meet standard, ability to work harder, ability to know vitality of youth in the bedroom, = doesn't look good!
- Ever since the garden of Eden, Satan has spread the lie, that sows doubt in our minds, "*Did God say that you should not eat of the tree?*"
- Faith breaks the lie, "*Yes God did speak and He will*" That's how it is accomplished. Faith proves the faithfulness of God and breaks the lie of doubt
- God chose a situation so impossible such that it would be clearly seen that faith in God's ability to act is what accomplishes things.
- **Are you looking at the promises of God or have you let them fall to ground?**

### **3. Faith rests on God's word alone**

Q. What do we need to spark faith? **For God to speak.**

#### **e.g. 1**

The faith of the Centurian in Matt 8:8 is marked by Jesus  
He was astonished "*I tell you the truth, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith*"

Why? "*I do not deserve you to come to my house, just say the word and my servant will be healed*"

#### **e.g.2**

Peter fishing all night, Jesus turns up, Carpenter vs Fisherman!!  
"*Put out into deep water and let down the nets*" "*Master, we've been out all night and not caught a sprat, but becous you say so, I will*"

#### **e.g.3**

Peter walking on water, learnt by now that all he needs is one word  
"*Lord if it's you, tell me to come to you on the water*"

A word from God is where it starts

**Rmns 4V17** "*the God who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were*"

**i.e. in creation**, this is what happened. Called into being out of the void, nothing, what didn't exist he called into existence

**Hebrews 11:3** "*By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible*"

**If God has spoken, then that is the bottom line**

**Application:** So:

- What is it in your life that you have allowed circumstances to crowd out God's promise?
- I know the plans I have for you..... Go to God and ask?
- What do we conclude?

It's not the final word! It is not what our faith is based on!

So Sarah's barrenness was not a barrier

AS one commentator puts it: "*Faith acts on what is not revealed to the senses*" "*WE live by faith!*"

**Q. What are you looking at at the moment when you should be looking at the word of God?**

Q. Is there a choice that you need to make today?

### **4. Faith is not afraid to confront contrary evidence.**

V18 and 19

"..he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead..and that Sarah was..." and then said, but God has spoken and so that is where I place my hope.

- Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became father ...
- Faith is not into denial!
- Faith is rather into placing our hope in someone/somewhere else.
- Not positive thinking or optimism but confidence in God
- Story: Rock Climbing/solo/put your confidence in something

### **Application:**

- Do you know how hard hearted my friends are towards God?
- Do you know what my personal circumstances are like?

Abraham faced the facts, but didn't waver

*"Faith apprehends as real fact what is not revealed to the senses"*

**My senses cry out** ...face the fact Chris, how will you get this situation to change?

**My spirit cries out**...face the larger fact, God has spoken, see his promise, see his calling

This is how Biblical things work

- Joshua facing Jericho Joshua Ch5
- It was "*tightly shut up*", walled city, senses cry out...impossible
- But Joshua sees the Captain of Army of the Lord...Possible!
- Yes the walls of Jericho are still there, but I see something else now, something that is more important to grasp, God is among us, He has spoken

## **5. Faith can be grown**

**V20 Abraham "was strengthened in his faith"**

**How?**

a) **Deal with unbelief v20** "he did not waver through unbelief"

**First, there was unbelief! Abraham, yes**

Lies, Satans tactics

John 8:44

**v21** "being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised"

**How? First: be real with the doubt or cynicism.**

- **There is the silent**....Doubts and nagging worry  
Express it in appropriate setting. Get real with it. Recognise it for what it is. Talk it out. Don't sit on it. It will only grow. Don't push it down, it will only creep out in another context.

- **And there is the expressed.** Cynicism.

"Most possibility thinking is not killed by one roaring lion but by several quacking ducks"

by Generational lines, cynicism, we learn it from parents

Point it out in private

**Second: be strengthened and fully persuaded.** V21

Q. What persuades you? ...don't leave it to circumstances..that's not faith  
Spiritual D's?

- Reading Bible..Rmns 10:17
- Being with faith people
- **Worship**....learning to be sensitive to His presence and leading ie SEEING and HEARING!
- Example of other faith people...books, tapes,
- Prayer and journalling.... Do we pray like a widow or like a bride!
- Talking about things.....
- Worship

- Ask for it!!!

**Be fully persuaded**....God does not miscalculate

You are Simon Peter and on you I will build my Church...oops I didn't realise how prone you are to failure...sorry ...

No God does not say "I never took your weaknesses into account"

**Why is this important?**

The needs of the world are huge...Oh the church, small, insignificant  
Hang on.. "Of the increase of His gov there will be no end"

**Busy religious person or man or woman of faith?**

**Questions:**

1. **As you look back over your life so far, what are the times when you have walked in faith (ie responding to what you have seen or heard God say/do) and when have you not? Do you want to live by faith more?**
2. **What are the promises/words/pictures that God has already given you but you have allowed to get lost? What would it look like this week for you to pick them up again and believe God?**
3. **What stops you from living by faith most and what do you need to be doing this week to strengthen you faith like Abraham?**