

# sermon study guide

*Sermon Summary (see next page for discussion questions)*

## “Romans” Part 9: The Faith of Abraham

January 15/16, 2022

Dr. Henry Schorr

The overarching theme of Romans is the gospel of Jesus Christ, or how to become a friend of God. Abraham was God’s friend, declared righteous by his faith in God rather than by anything he had done. God yearns for us to have that same faith relationship with Him. Faith is necessary (Hebrews 11:6). It is a spiritual muscle that needs to be exercised to grow strong, and like physical exercise, many of us prefer to avoid it. How does God, our spiritual personal trainer, grow our faith?

1. **By giving us a calling** (Genesis 12:1-4) God called Abraham to step out of his comfort zone when he was 75. It was a risky step into the unknown; there is no retirement age in God’s Kingdom. Has God called you to step out into a faith-building adventure with Him? Have you been listening? Are you hesitant?
2. **By asking us to make the first move** (Joshua 3:14-16, Luke 6:38a) The priests needed to step into the flood-swollen Jordan River before God demonstrated His promise to Israel. Abraham stepped out (Genesis 12:4). Has God called you to something life-changing for you and your family? If so, have you confirmed this call through trusted friends, family, and church leaders (Acts 13:1-4)? Once you are certain this is of the Lord, take the first step.
3. **By allowing difficulties and delays** (Genesis 17:4-5) Abraham was given a calling and promise at age 75. God reiterated it at 99 long after Abraham had first stepped out in faith. God didn’t suggest Abraham missed anything. Still, Abraham had doubted – in uncertainty, not unbelief (Romans 4:20). Abraham and Sarah took matters into their own hands (Genesis 16), though ever these choices come with consequences – for Abraham and for us. Still, Abraham did not give up. God redeemed his detours and can do so with ours. How do you handle the waiting rooms of life?

How did Abraham’s faith remain strong? From Romans 4:17-21 we see that:

1. **Abraham’s faith was in God rather than in his own ability** (Romans 4:17) We all have faith in something, or someone, and the quality of our faith depends upon the object in which we are placing our trust. Abraham’s faith and trust was not in his own ability or a positive attitude, but in the person of his heavenly Father (4:3). Abraham was fully persuaded (4:21) that God’s resurrection power could give life to Sarah’s womb, knowing that God could bring something out of nothing (4:17).
2. **Abraham’s focus was on God’s promise rather than his problem** (Romans 4:19) Faith acknowledges the problem. Abraham recognized the problem but focused on the promises of the Problem Solver (4:18). Like with Abraham, God may create a situation in which He alone is the solution. There our faith muscle is best exercised, where God meets with us, strengthens us, walks through the trial with us, and will fulfill His promise in His time. Take care to place your faith in His promises rather than what we may like to be His promises.

Deuteronomy 32:11 describes how a mother eagle will ruffle her nest to urge her eaglets to try to fly, who otherwise may have become too comfortable in the nest. Should they not take wing and fall out of control she will catch them. This is a picture of God, stirring us out of our comfort zones to step out where God is leading. It can be scary but look to Him (Psalm 56:3). Is God urging you to answer His call?

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Discussion Questions

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### IN - PURSUE RELATIONSHIP

1. When was a time you placed your faith in something and it failed to deliver?
2. When considering the will of God are you the kind of person who just goes for it, talks to others, or seeks confirmation in other ways?

### UP - PURSUE GOD

Read Genesis 12:1-5

3. What were some of the obstacles Abraham faced in following God's call? Skim through Genesis 12 through 17. List the calls of God, where Abraham obeyed, when he failed, and where God aided Abraham and reiterated His promise to him. What does this tell you about God?

Read Romans 4:18-25

4. How did Abraham continue in faith despite obstacles and challenges? How would you describe the difference between 'uncertainty' and 'unbelief'?

### OUT - PURSUE MISSION

5. How has God called you out of your comfort zone in the past? How did this grow your faith?
6. How is God now prompting you to 'step out of the nest in faith'? Have you done so and may now be in the waiting room? From this message what are your next moves?

***For Personal Reflection/Prayer:***

***Where in your life do you need the God who can call things into existence that do not exist? Take some time to commit your situation to the Lord, "fully persuaded that God has power to do what he had promised" (Romans 4:21).***

### THE WORD (NIV)

#### Genesis 12:1-5

The Lord had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you.

2 "I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you;

I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing.

3 I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

4 So Abram went, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Harran. 5 He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated and the people they had acquired in Harran, and they set out for the land of Canaan, and they arrived there.

#### Romans 4:18-25

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." 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. 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. 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. 25 He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.