

DESIDERATA¹
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BIG IDEA: WE'VE GOT A BOMBPROOF SOURCE OF WEALTH!

Romans 4:16-25

CONTRASTING MARKETPLACE CREDIT WITH HEAVENLY CREDIT:

<u>ISSUE</u>	<u>WORKS</u>	<u>GRACE</u>
Qualification	Worthiness	Unworthiness
Outcome	Loan	Free Gift
Risk Assessment	Credit & Income Reports	None
Security	Down payment, Job History	None
Pay-back	Obligatory	None
Profit	Interest charged	None

1. REAL WEALTH IS SOURCED IN A HEAVENLY PROMISE.

VERSE 16, *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.*

- **WE ARE BORN INTO WEALTH (BY CONVERSION)—WE ARE HEIRS—OFFSPRING OF ABRAHAM.**
- **THE PROMISE OF ISAAC: Genesis 15:6**, *Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.*
- **THE INCIDENT OF ISHMAEL: Genesis 16:15-16**, *So Hagar bore Abram a son, and Abram gave the name Ishmael to the son she had borne. ¹⁶ Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore him Ishmael. **EXPLAINING ABRAHAM'S LAPSE OF FAITH:[MORRIS]** But, recognizing the difficulties as she did, Abraham came to a firm faith, as is shown by his circumcising all the males of his household before Isaac was conceived (Gen. 17:21-27). [He was 99 years old when circumcised] We must not overlook the fact that many years passed between the giving of the promise (Gen. 15:5) and its fulfillment (Gen. 21:2). Abraham must have been sorely tried by the delay, as he saw Sarah and himself growing old and beyond the human capacity of producing a child. Paul is referring to the settled attitude that endured all this, not to Abraham's initial reaction. The unbelief was momentary, the faith constant.*
- **THE INCREDULITY: Genesis 17:17**, *Abraham fell facedown; 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?"*
- **THE FULFILLMENT: Genesis 21:1-5** *Now the LORD was gracious to Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did for Sarah what he had promised. ² Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the very time God had promised him. ³ Abraham gave the name Isaac to the son Sarah bore him. ⁴ When his son Isaac was eight days old, Abraham circumcised him, as God commanded him. ⁵ Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him.*

2. REAL WEALTH IS SAFE FROM MARKET FLUCTUATIONS

- **VERSES 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.*
- *"In the second century, they brought martyr before a king, and the king wanted him to recant and give up Christ, but the man spurned the thought. The king said: If you don't do it, I will banish you.'
The man smiled and answered: `You can't banish me from Christ. He says He will never leave me nor forsake me.'
The king got angry, and said: "Well, I will confiscate your property and take it all from you.'
And the man replied: `My treasures are laid up on high: you cannot get them.' The king became still more angry, and said: 'I will kill you!'"*

¹ *Desideratum: Something considered necessary or highly desirable.*

*‘Why?’ the man answered, ‘I have been dead forty years; I have been dead with Christ; dead to the world. My life is hid with Christ in God, and you cannot touch it.’*²

3. REAL WEALTH IS BASED ON THE RIGHT INVESTMENT “INSTRUMENT”

- **VERSES 24-25**, 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. **YANCEY**: Mozart’s *Requiem* contains a wonderful line that has become my prayer, one I pray with increasing confidence: “Remember, merciful Jesu, That I am the cause of your journey.” I think he remembers.³
- **WHAT IT MEANS TO “BELIEVE” IN A SAVING WAY**
 - *I believe Jesus*—Meaning, I believe that what he **says** is **true**. This sense appears here in **Romans 4:17**, God, **in** [the NIV “in” is not in the Greek text] **whom he believed**, and in **Romans 4:18**, Abraham in hope **believed** [i.e., he believed **God’s promise** to him]
 - *I believe about Jesus*—Meaning, I believe the **reports about** Jesus.
 - *I believe on Jesus*—Meaning, I am placing the weight of my **trust** on Jesus’ claims, achievements, and promises. I am **depending** on him for my spiritual destiny.
 - **Acts 16:31** “**Believe in** [Lit, “on” = **the Lord Jesus**, and you will be saved... [”epi” = “on” with accusative case]
 - **1 Timothy 1:16** *But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would **believe on him** and receive eternal life. [”epi” = “on” with the dative case to mean “to repose one’s trust upon” and suggests more of the state whereas the acc. Emphasizes more the initial act of faith...⁴ (Cf. **Romans 4:24**, us who **believe in him** who raised Jesus our Lord.*
 - *I believe in Jesus*—I am entering into a **existential, participative relationship** with Jesus. Different nuance than *I believe in Santa Claus*—which simply means that I believe that Santa Claus **exists**. **John 3:16** “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever **believes in him** shall not perish but have eternal life.” [“eis” = “in” with accusative case]

4. REAL WEALTH MAKES EVERYONE A “RAGS TO RICHES” STORY

- **VERSE 17**, the God who gives **life to the dead** and calls things that **are not** as though they were.
- When we cast vision for a desired outcome, it’s a **HOPE**; with God it’s a **REALITY**.
- **Verse 18**, *Against all hope*. We usually make our belief decisions based on favorable odds. In Abraham and Sarah’s cases, the odds were, humanly, **ZERO PER CENT**.
- “[God is] *not interested in people trying to perform well enough for him. They can’t. He created people to have a relationship with him, to enjoy his love. But humanity rejected God and severed that relationship. His program is putting it back together.*”

He paused, took a bite, then gestured his fork toward me. “Let me ask you this. When Sara is seven and she does something wrong, how many dishes will she have to wash before she can sit in your lap and have you hug her again?”

“None.”

“How many A’s will she have to make in school?”

“That’s ridiculous.”

“Why?”

“She won’t have to do anything. She’s my daughter.”

“Exactly.”

I looked down and sampled some more of my salad, letting that sink in. Finally my gaze turned upward. “You’re saying that we can’t do anything to earn God’s acceptance.”⁵

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² D. L. Moody quoted in Richard Mayhue, “Joy”, *Voice*, March/April 1986, p.13.

³ Philip Yancey, “What’s So Amazing About Grace?”, *Christianity Today* (October 6, 1997), 57.

⁴ Fritz Rienecker and Cleon Rogers, *Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Regency Reference Library/Zondervan, 1976, 1980), 617-618.

⁵ David Gregory, *Dinner with a Perfect Stranger* (Colorado Springs: Waterbrook Press, 2005), 44.

