

**YOUR UNLIMITED LINE OF CREDIT
BOOMERS AND FRIENDS 113008
ALDERWOOD COMMUNITY CHURCH
Romans 4:16-25**

Romans 4:16-25 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. ¹⁷ 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. 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.

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

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Merilee and I carry three credit cards. Each one has a credit limit. What are the implications of those credit limits?
- Visa has watched my financial behavior long enough estimate the level of risk they are willing to assume that I can borrow that much money from them and I will responsibly pay it back.
 - Key operative words here: Performance, Outcome, Risk, Security, Pay-back, Profit.
 - How does this contrast with the credit from God?

<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.**
- **James 1:9-11** The brother in humble circumstances ought to take pride in his high position. ¹⁰ But the one who is rich should take pride in his low position, because he will pass away like a wild flower. ¹¹ For the sun rises with scorching heat and withers the plant; its blossom falls and its beauty is destroyed. In the same way, the rich man will fade away even while he goes about his business.
- **THE HUMAN RESPONSE TO GOD'S PROMISES:**
 - We can waver through unbelief (**Verse 20**)
 - We can weaken in our faith (**Verse 19**)
 - We can be strengthened [PASSIVE MOOD] in our faith (**Verse 20**)
 - We can be fully persuaded about the power of God (**Verse 21**)
- **THE GENESIS STORY OF ISAAC**
Genesis 15:4-6 Then the word of the LORD came to him: "This man [the servant Eliezer] will not be your heir, but a son coming from your own body will be your heir." ⁵ 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." ⁶ Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.

Genesis 16:15 - 17:1 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. ^{NIV}

Genesis 17:1 When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him and said, "I am God Almighty; walk before me and be blameless.

Abraham's temporary 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.

Genesis 17:15-19 God also said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you are no longer to call her Sarai; her name will be Sarah. ¹⁶ I will bless her and will surely give you a son by her. I will bless her so that she will be the mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her." 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?" ¹⁸ And Abraham said to God, "If only Ishmael might live under your blessing!" ¹⁹ Then God said, "Yes, but your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him.

- **Note name changes:**

- **In Genesis 7:5.** Abram (*exalted father*) is changed to Abraham (*father of many*)
- **In Genesis 17:15,** Sarai is changed to Sarah. Both names apparently mean *princess*. The name change seems to stress that now this "princess" would be "the mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her." (**Verse 16**)

Genesis 18:10-14 Then the LORD said, "I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife will have a son." Now Sarah was listening at the entrance to the tent, which was behind him. ¹¹ Abraham and Sarah were already old and well advanced in years, and Sarah was past the age of childbearing. ¹² So Sarah laughed to herself as she thought, "After I am worn out and my master is old, will I now have this pleasure?" ¹³ Then the LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Will I really have a child, now that I am old?'" ¹⁴ Is anything too hard for the LORD? I will return to you at the appointed time next year and Sarah will have a son."

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

MY FINANCIAL INVESTMENT STATEMENTS: 26% LOSS IN THE PAST YEAR

- The DOT vs. the LINE
- **Romans 8:17-18** Now if we are children, then we are heirs-- heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. ¹⁸ I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.
- **VERSES 18-23,** 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

"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!'

'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. "'¹

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.
 - **Godet: Our sin had killed Him; our justification raised Him again....His resurrection was the proof of our justification only because it was the necessary effect of it.**²
 - **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
- 'Who's going on? I'm not arguing. I'm just telling you the sort of chap I was, see? I'm asking for nothing but my rights. You may think you can put me down because you're dressed up like that (which you weren't when you worked under me) and I'm only a poor man. But I got to have my rights same as you, see?'
 - 'Oh no. It's not so bad as that. I haven't got my rights, or I should not be here. You will not get yours either. You'll get something far better. Never fear.'
 - 'That's just what I say. I haven't got my rights. I always done my best and I never done anything wrong. And what I don't see is why I should be put under a bloody murderer like you.'
 - 'Who knows whether you will be? Only be happy and come with me.'
 - 'What do you keep on arguing for? I'm only telling you the sort of chap I am. I only want my rights. I'm not asking fro anybody's bleeding charity.'
 - 'Then do. At once. Ask for the Bleeding Charity. Everything is here for the asking and nothing can be bought.'
 - 'That may do very well for you, I daresay. If they choose to let in a bloody murderer all because he makes a poor mouth at the last moment, that's their look out. But I don't see myself going in the same boat as you, see? Why should I? I don't want charity. I'm a decent man and if I had my rights I'd have been here long ago and you can tell them I said so.'
 - The other shook his head. 'You can never do it like that,' he said. 'Your feet will never grow hard enough to walk on our grass that way. You'd be tired out before you got to the mountains. And it isn't exactly true, you know.' Mirth dance din his eyes as he said it.
 - 'What isn't true?' asked the Ghost saucily.
 - 'You weren't a decent man and you didn't do your best. We none of us were and none of us did. Lord bless you, it doesn't matter. There is no need to go into it now.'
 - 'You!' gasped the Ghost. 'You have the face to tell me I wasn't a decent chap?'⁴
- **WHAT IT MEANS TO "BELIEVE" IN A SAVING WAY** (How it differs from simply, "believe"):

¹ D. L. Moody quoted in Richard Mayhue, "Joy", *Voice*, March/April 1986, p.13.

² Exegesis notes from Leon Morris, *Roomans*,

³ Philip Yancey, "Whatis So Amazing About Grace?", *Christianity Toay* (Ocotber 6, 1997), 57.

⁴ C. S. Lewi, *The Greta Divorce* (San Francisco: Harper, 1946), 28-29.

- *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...⁵
 - This sense appears here in **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. (Cf. **John 3:16**)
 - Different nuance than...
 - *I believe in Santa Claus*—which simply means that I believe that Santa Claus exists]
 - *I believe in Tim*—which means I trust his character and abilities.
 - *I believe in America*—which means that I am optimistic about the future strength and goodness of our country.
 - **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]
 - **John 6:29** *“The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.”* [“eis” = “in” with accusative case]
 - **Cf. the same constriction in John 1:12.**
To believe “on the name” of the Word, then, means to trust the person of the Word....This is more than simple credence. It is not believing that what He says is true, but trusting Him as a person....
[Paul’s] favorite construction is to follow the verb with [eis] and the accusative (36 times). Of this W. Turner writes, “The sense must be that the believer throws himself upon his Lord in loving, self-abandoning faith and trust”....By contrast the simple dative means believing that what someone says is true. But in the last resort if one believes God one acts on that belief, so probably there is not much difference in ultimate meaning.⁶
 - **John 7:5** *even his own brothers did not believe in him.* [“eis” = “in” with accusative case]
- **Rob Bell commenting on Peter walking on the Water...**
*Jesus says, “You of little faith, why did you doubt?”
 Who does Peter lose faith in?
 Not Jesus; Jesus is doing fine.
 Peter loses faith in himself....
 God has an incredibly high view of people. God believes that people are capable of amazing things.*

⁵ Fritz Rienecker and Cleon Rogers, *Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Regency Reference Library/Zondervan, 1976, 1980), 617-618.

⁶ Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1971), 99)

*I have been told that I need to believe in Jesus. Which is a good thing. But what I am learning is that Jesus believes in me.....that God has faith in me.*⁷

- *Wendy Kaminer, a modern Jew trying to comprehend Christianity, confesses that “as an article of faith, this doctrine of salvation by grace and grace alone is remarkably unappealing to me. It take, I think, remarkable disregard for justice to idealize a God who so values belief over action. I prefer the God who looks down upon us (in a very old joke) and says, ‘I wish they’d stop worrying about whether or not I exist and start obeying my commandments.’”*⁸

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.
- **GOD’S MIRACULOUS CREATIVITY: VERSE 17**, God who gives life to the dead and calls things that **are not** as though they were. [a statement of overarching principles]
 - God gives life to the dead.
 - God can make a dead man come alive.
 - Lazarus
 - Son of the Widow of Nain
 - Jairus’ daughter
 - Resurrection of Jesus
 - Resurrection of believers
 - Application: God can enliven a man’s and a woman’s “dead” reproductive capacities [Sarah will have a baby.]
 - People in rest homes don’t have babies.
 - Sarah was 90 years old.
 - And God gave them a child, whom they named Isaac which means “laughter” because they were filled with the joy and funniness of becoming a geriatric daddy and mommy.
 - God calls things that are not as though they were
 - NIV gets it lit. right.
 - NAS = calls into being that which does not exist.
 - Idea:
 - When we cast vision for a desired outcome, it’s a HOPE.
 - When God casts vision for a desired result, it’s a REALITY.
 - Application: With God, “hope” is as good as “reality,” because it will surely come to pass in time. [Sarah will have a baby.]
 - **NOTE: Verse 18**, *Against all hope*. We usually make our belief decisions based on favorable odds. In Abraham and Sarah’s cases, the odds were ZERO PER CENT.
- *The story is told of Muhammed Ali, in his prime, flying on a passenger jet which ran into turbulence. The pilot flashed on the “fasten seatbelts” sign. “Everyone complied but Ali. Noticing this, the flight attendant approached him and requested that he observe the captain’s order, only to hear Ali... respond, ‘Superman don’t need no seatbelt.’ The flight attendant did not miss a beat and replied, ‘Superman don’t need no airplane either.’”*⁹

CONCLUSION:

- “[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?”

⁷ Rob Bell, *Velvet Elvis* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 133-134.

⁸ Philip Yancey, *The Jesus I Never Knew* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 152.

⁹ Ravi Zacharias, *Can Man Live Without God?* (Nashville: Word, 1994), 7.

“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.”¹⁰

¹⁰ David Gregory, *Dinner with a Perfect Stranger* (Colorado Springs: Waterbrook Press, 2005), 44.