

Faith That Breaks Bondage: Lessons from Abraham

Introduction: Thrust Into Family

When I first met my beloved wife, she already had three children. I had never been married before, and I had no children of my own. So, in my late 30s moving into my 40s, I suddenly found myself thrust into family life.

This was not a bad thing—but it required adjustment. I had to learn very quickly how to be a good father. I don't like using the words "stepfather" or "stepkids," because they imply we are only joined by law, not by love. Instead, I chose to see it this way: *these are my kids, and I am their father.*

Later, when we had our first grandbabies, it felt like becoming a father all over again. I told Rebecca that when I first met her youngest, he was already five years old. Now, with grandbabies, I was finally experiencing the baby phase. It was as though the Lord gave me a fresh beginning.

Parenting Lessons and Spiritual Parallels

One of the first things I learned from my wife—then my girlfriend, later my fiancée—was this: good parenting is not just about telling children what not to do. Instead, it's about guiding them toward what they should do.

Of course, there are moments when you must say, "Don't do that" or "Stop going there." But if every command is a prohibition, it produces in a child the urge to test the very boundaries you are forbidding.

The same principle applies in ministry.

I counsel Christians who struggle with sexual bondage. There are many. During the 1990s and early 2000s, the purity culture movement arose with good intentions, but often with poor methods. Much of it mirrored a Romans 7 approach: *don't do this, don't do that.*

Now, of course, we must teach believers to avoid sin. But an overemphasis on prohibitions awakens fleshly cravings. As Paul wrote: "*For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do*" (Romans 7:19). The law reveals sin, but it cannot free us from it.

So I tell the people I counsel: *You are not your sin. You are a child of God.* Focus not on the "do nots," but on your identity in Christ. Fix your eyes on what He calls you to do, and who He has declared you to be.

The Foundation of Faith

This brings us to Romans chapter 4. Let's read beginning in verse 16:

“Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all. (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.” (Romans 4:16–22)

Let's pray.

Dear Heavenly Father, we thank You for Your Word. We thank You for Your Son, who makes us new creatures—sons and daughters through our elder Brother, Jesus Christ. It is in His name we pray. Amen.

The Context of Romans

Before we unpack this passage, let's recall the flow of Paul's argument in Romans:

- **Romans 1:** God's wrath against unrighteousness. Humanity has rejected Him, turning to idolatry and immorality. Both Gentiles and Jews are without excuse.
- **Romans 2:** God's impartial judgment. Jews had the law. Gentiles had creation and conscience. Yet all are judged by the same standard.
- **Romans 3:** All have sinned. No one is justified by the law, but by faith in Christ. The law reveals sin but cannot remove it.
- **Romans 4:** Abraham is the example of justification by faith. He was declared righteous not by works, not by circumcision, but because he believed God.

That brings us to the text before us.

Abraham's Journey of Faith

Paul outlines Abraham's faith as a process, step by step. This process also shows us how to move from bondage to victory.

1. Faith Begins With God's Word

Abraham didn't create faith out of nothing. It began when God spoke: "*I have made thee a father of many nations*" (v. 17). Faith starts not with self-talk but with God's Word.

2. Faith Acknowledges Reality Without Denial

Abraham did not pretend Sarah's womb was fertile, nor that his body was strong. He saw the impossibility but refused to let it dictate the outcome. True faith doesn't deny problems; it trusts God despite them.

3. Faith Refuses to Stagger in Unbelief

Abraham "staggered not at the promise of God" (v. 20). Unbelief hesitates, delays, or turns away. Faith obeys, even when fear whispers otherwise.

4. Faith Strengthens Through Worship

Abraham grew strong in faith, giving glory to God. Worship fuels faith. Instead of glorifying the trial, he glorified the God who overcomes trials.

5. Faith Ends Fully Persuaded

Abraham was "fully persuaded" that what God had promised, He was able to perform (v. 21). This persuasion wasn't self-hype—it was confidence in God's unchanging character.

Applying Abraham's Faith

Each of us faces situations that feel impossible:

- Financial struggles.
- Relationship crises.
- Temptations that feel unbreakable.
- Doubts about the future.

Like Abraham, we are called not to deny these realities, but to stand on God's promises in the midst of them. Scripture must shape our identity and our response.

When doubts arise, meditate on His Word. Surround yourself with believers who live by faith. Walk in the Spirit and bear the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22–23). Let faith click in your heart —not because you’ve hyped yourself up, but because God has spoken, and you believe Him.

Conclusion: Freedom in Christ

Abraham was declared righteous before circumcision and centuries before the law. He simply believed God. That same gift is ours today.

We are saved not by works, rituals, or law—but by faith in Jesus Christ. The moment you believe, your old self is crucified, and you are made new. Yes, trials will come. Yes, temptations remain. But the Spirit within you gives power to walk in victory.

You are not your bondage. You are not your sin. You are a child of God, able to reflect Christ even in a hostile world.

Closing Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father, we thank You for Abraham’s faith, and how it points us to righteousness by belief in You. We thank You for Jesus Christ, who obeyed unto the cross, shed His blood, died, and rose again the third day. We rejoice that through Him we are reconciled to You and called Your children. Strengthen us by Your Spirit to walk in victory, not in fear. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.