

Hoping in God

Scripture Reading — Romans 4:18-25

[Abraham] did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God . . . being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. — Romans 4:20-21

In hope, Abraham believed “against all hope.” That’s quite a tribute. In fact, it almost sounds as if Abraham’s hope “without weakening in his faith” earned him the righteousness he got. I admire that; I appreciate that Abraham is a part of the “cloud of witnesses” we can read about in Hebrews 11. He inspires me to want to strengthen my hope and faith.

But if determination to have stronger hope and faith is all I get from this passage, I wouldn’t be hearing what God is saying. The strength of our hope and faith does not start with us; it starts with what we hope for and what we have faith in. *That’s* what Paul is explaining here.

God made a promise, and God keeps his promises. This is the God who raised Jesus, our Lord, from the dead. Having delivered Jesus to death for our sins, God raised Jesus to life for our justification. My faith and my hope didn’t make that happen; God did. My faith and hope simply embrace what God promised and did.

Even Abraham didn’t always understand. His wife hadn’t borne a child, so he tried helping God to fulfill his promise by having a child with his wife’s servant (Genesis 16). But God didn’t need Abraham’s help, and God doesn’t need our help. He is God, and our hope is in him, not in the power of our hope.

Prayer

Father, help us to put our hope in your power and love. Strengthen our faith to embrace your promises. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

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