

WHAT GOD HAS PROMISED GOD IS ABLE TO PERFORM

ROMANS 4:20-22 • TV-026B

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Romans 4:20-22

“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.”

We’re turning in our Bibles for the message today to the book of **Romans 4:20-22**.

I’m speaking on this subject, **Romans 4:20**; I’m speaking on this subject: **“WHAT GOD PROMISED GOD IS ABLE TO PERFORM.”**

Now, in **Romans 4:20** the Scripture says; *“Abraham staggered not at the promises of God through unbelief but he was strong in faith giving glory to God and being fully persuaded that what God had promised God was able also to perform: And therefore it was imputed unto him for righteousness.”*

Now catch this; *“And it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed unto him for righteousness but for us also if we believe on Him who raised up Jesus Christ from the dead, Abraham believed and it was imputed to him for righteousness.”* And we can have that same righteousness if we believe.

Now, the story behind this text is found in the book of **Genesis**. I wish you, when you listen to this program, would keep a pencil and paper handy because I want you to search the Scriptures to see if these things be so.

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Your salvation is important, your relationship with God is important also. And I want you to read the Word of God and see what the Lord says. I just want to help you to understand what the Scripture teaches about eternal life, about faith in Christ, about salvation.

So **Genesis 18**; that's where I want you to read later after the broadcast is over. But in **Genesis 18** the Scripture tells us that Abraham was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day. Now Abraham was well up in years. He was a 100 years old and Sarah his wife was in her early 90's.

And the Scripture says; "He was sitting there in the tent door in the heat of the day and the Lord appeared to him in human form." Now Abraham knew it was the Lord because God had spoken to him before.

And so, the Lord appeared to him and Abraham said; "Lord if you will, let me get water and wash your feet and tarry with me a little while. And let Sarah fix some bread and some butter and some milk and let me go get a calf and have it dressed and the meat fixed for you and abide with me."

And the Lord said to him, "*Let it be as you've said.*" So Sarah; she made some cakes, some bread, and got some butter and milk and the young man killed the calf and they cooked the meat and brought it.

And after they had eaten and the Lord had fellowshiped with his friend Abraham the Lord said to him, "*I will return to thee according to the time of life and Sarah thy wife shall have a son.*"

Now Sarah was listening back in the tent and when she heard that she laughed. And the Lord said, "*Why did Sarah laugh?*" She was 90 years old. "*Is anything too hard for God?*"

But Abraham didn't laugh. The Scripture says, "*Abraham staggered not at the promise of God.*" God promised this old man, 100 years old, that he would have a son by his wife who was 90 years of age, past the age of bearing children.

"But Abraham staggered not at the promise of God." Abraham had learned to believe God. And he believed that, "*God was able to perform all that He promised and it was imputed to him for righteousness.*" He believed God!

And because he believed God he was called the, "*Friend of God*" because he believed God, it was reckoned to him, charged to his account for righteousness. And his faith brought him the blessings of God.

Now this is the key note; "*Abraham believed God.*" Abraham learned to believe God. He believed God when he didn't know where God came from. You know, Abraham was found; God found him down in a place where they worshipped idols. His family, his father, and his father's people did not worship God. They didn't know God; they worshipped idols. And God found him down there. "*He found grace in the eyes of the Lord.*"

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And God called him out. He said; *“Abraham; (his name was Abram then God changed it to Abraham later). But He said, “Abram get thee out of thy father’s house and out of thy land, away from thy kindred, and go to a land that I will show thee.”*

God didn’t tell him where that land was; He just told him to leave. *“And Abraham believed God.”* And he left his home, he left his kindred, he left his folks, and he started toward this land. He didn’t know where but he believed God.

And then here God came to him and said; *“Abraham you’re going to have a son.”* He’d never had a son and Sarah had never had a child. But He said; *“Sarah’s going to bear a son that shall be your heir and in him shall all the nations be blessed.”* And Abraham believed God. He didn’t know how but he believed God.

And then when that boy was about 12, 14, or 16 years of age God came to Abraham one day and said, *“Abraham; take that son, your only son, whom you love, and take him up to Mount Moriah, (a three-day’s journey) and sacrifice him upon an altar unto me.”*

And Abraham started out. He believed God. He didn’t know why but he believed God. He didn’t know why God commanded him to do that. He didn’t know why God would give him a son and turn around and take him away. But he just trusted God; he believed God.

“Without faith, (my friends) it is impossible to please God.” It doesn’t say “without faith it’s hard to please God, it says, *“It is impossible to please God.”* We need to examine this man’s faith. He’s called the, “Father of the faithful.”

We need to examine his faith. If we would be the friend of God, if we would have the righteousness of God, if we would receive the benefits of faith; we’re going to have to learn something about faith. And I don’t know any better place to learn something about faith than studying Abraham’s faith. He believed God.

Now, if you’ll go back to **verse 17 there in Romans 4**; let’s see something about Abraham’s faith.

First of all: In **verse 17** it says this: *“He believed God who calls those things which are not as though they were.”*

That was Abraham’s God, in other words; Abraham’s God, His promises were as sure as the fulfillment of the promises. Isaiah wrote; *“God declares the end from the beginning and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying; my counsel shall stand. I’ll do all my good pleasure.”*

With Abraham’s God, a promise was as good as a fulfillment. *“He knew that God almighty called those things which are not as though they were.”* Abraham knew that a son was as good as his because he had the promise of God.

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And the promise was as good as the fulfillment. Somebody said, “The promise, was as good as the product because God said it.”

Now I can't promise that way; I may promise you I'll be with you on this telecast next Sunday and I may be in my grave. I can't fulfill those kinds of promises. But, what God promises “*God's able to perform.*” Abraham knew that.

And then look at **verse 18**; here's another definition of his faith, “*Against hope; he believed in hope.*” He walked not by sight; he walked by faith, in the natural flesh; it can't be done. That's the reason Sarah laughed. She didn't have Abraham's faith; she laughed. She said; “Shall I know pleasure again my husband being old, old as I am, impossible!”

But now wait a minute! “*Nothing is impossible with God. Is anything too hard for God?*” That's what He asked Sarah. That which is impossible with man is possible with God. If God promises a thing it's good as done.

Faith begins; (now you remember this, write this down in your heart) faith begins where human strength ends, where human ability leaves off; that's where faith takes up. You don't have any faith as long as you are resting in what you understand and resting in what you feel and resting in what you see.

That's not faith; “*Faith is the substance hoped for, the evidence of things not seen,*” the evidence of things not seen, the assurance of things not seen, and the proof of things not seen.

Why is it evidence, why is it proof? God said it; it's as good as done. “*Who against hope, (against human hope, human ability, human strength) he believed in hope.*”

Then look at **verse 19**; “*He considered not his body now dead.*” It was dead humanly speaking but it was not dead as far as God was concerned. Nature's law is, my friend, is still God's laws. Don't ever forget that.

The sun stands still at His command. It won't do anything at your command but it'll stand still in His command. The waters of the sea dry up at His command. The rock brings forth water at His command. The skies rain down bread at His command.

Nature's laws are God's laws and Abraham knew that. He didn't consider his body dead. Humanly speaking it was but God promised something else. And **verse 20** says; “*He staggered not at the promises of God through unbelief.*” It didn't seem like too much to him for God to do.

I read a story one time that blessed me. I haven't gotten over it yet. I read it several months ago. In 1871 a black boy left the south after the Civil War and headed for Philadelphia. He was 20 years old.

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He'd never seen the inside of a schoolroom. He couldn't read or write. He got a job in Philadelphia as a mortar carrier for a brick mason, a stone mason. And He began to work and the Lord saved him. God revealed Christ to his heart.

And he got interested in reading the Bible and in studying books so he started night school. He worked during the day and he'd go to night school to try to get an education. And he united with a church there, a pretty good sized black church in Philadelphia.

And later on he became their custodian. He became the janitor of the church. He was the janitor for several years. And then one day that church called that boy, that man. He was almost 50 years of age but they called him as their pastor.

And for 32 years Charles A. Tindley pastored the largest black church in the world. For 32 years he preached to 10,000 people every Lord's Day. Is anything too hard for God? And this same man C. A. Tindley wrote two of the greatest hymns that have ever been written; he wrote:

**“Nothing between my soul and my Saviour
So that His blessed face may be seen
Nothing preventing the least of His favor
Keep the way clear; let nothing between.”**

That man wrote that hymn, brilliant! And he wrote this one:

**“If the world from you withhold
Of its silver and its gold
And you have to get along
With meager fare**

**Just remember in God's Word
How He feeds the little bird
Take your burden to the Lord
And leave it there
When your youthful days are gone
And old age is stealing on
And your body bends beneath
The weight of care**

**He'll never leave you then
He'll go with you to the end
Take your burden to the Lord
And leave it there.”**

At 20 years old he couldn't read. At 20 years old he couldn't write his name. When he was 60 years old he was pastoring the biggest church in the world and writing hymns that would be sung long after he was dead.

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Abraham had that kind of faith. *“He staggered not at the promises of God.”* There’s nothing that God cannot do. Our Lord is able to do all things.

And then **verse 21** it says: *“And Abraham was fully persuaded that what God had promised God was able to perform.”* That is the faith that saves. He believed God, *“For God so loved the world that whosoever believeth on Him.”* He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever; what, believeth, not worketh, not striveth, not runneth, but believeth.

Now that’s why Abraham was called, *“The friend of God.”* That’s why Abraham received his righteousness. That’s how he received the benefits and blessings of God. He believed God. It says, *“He was fully persuaded.”*

Now I doubt myself a lot of times. I know you doubt yourself; anybody with any intelligence at all knows his infirmities and imperfections and doubts himself, but not God. And Abraham knew his weaknesses and infirmities and imperfections.

It doesn’t say he was fully persuaded that he could do all things; *“He was fully persuaded that God could do all things.”* There’s a difference. I can do nothing without Him. Without Him I can do nothing.

“When I’m weak; that’s when I’m strong.” Abraham was fully persuaded, fully convinced, fully satisfied, that what God had promised; now here’s the key, you need to get acquainted with that Bible and see what God promised. Do you see what I’m saying? See what God promised because what He promised, *“He’s able to perform.”*

That’s faith. That was Paul’s faith. Paul wrote in **2 Timothy 1:12**; *“I know whom I have believed.”* I know Him, the living God, the only God, the true God, the God of creation, the God of grace, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the God of Calvary’s cross, the God of reconciliation, the God of the Spirit of truth.

I know Him, not just any God, or some God, or a God; it’s the God. Christ said, *“This is eternal life that they might know thee the true and living God.”*

I know we want to be charitable and people are lead to believe, *“Well just so a man’s got a God and just so he’s sincere and just so it doesn’t matter if he worships Buddha or whether he worships Confucius or whether he worships Allah or whether he worships the God of the creation.”*

It does matter my friend, it does matter. *“There’s one God.”* The Scripture says; *“There’s one God, one Lord, one faith, one baptism. There’s one God and one Mediator between God and men.”*

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Our Lord Jesus said, *“This is eternal life that they might know thee, the only true God.”* It’s not enough to have a God; we’ve got to know the living God. Paul said, *“I know whom I have believed.”*

And He’s a person. He’s not a statue. *“I know whom I have believed.”* He didn’t say; “I know what I believe or I know when I believe or I know how much I believe; I know Him, *“I know whom I have believed and I’m persuaded, (fully persuaded, fully convinced; I’m confident in my soul) that He’s able.”*

That’s Abraham; *“He staggered not at the promises of God.”* That was the jest of his faith. That was the foundation of his faith. He believed, not that he was able, but that God was able, God was able. *“He believed that God was able to perform all that He said.”*

Now I want to look up about three Scriptures here and I want you to listen to them carefully, what God has promised and what He’s promised He’s able to do.

Now here’s the first one, turn to **Hebrews 7:25** and there in Paul said; *“Wherefore, He is able, He’s able.”* Notice it never says that “I’m able. You all pray that I hold out.” It is, *“God is able.”*

It’s not my strength; it’s His. It’s not my grace, it’s His. It’s not my love, it’s His. *“He is able to save to the uttermost them that come to God by Him; seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.”* Wherefore, He is able to save.

Now friends; there’s nothing wrong with the word save. I know folks make fun of it. I know they make fun of it on television programs and they make fun of it in cartoons and they make fun of it in magazines, to be saved, s-a-v-e-d.

But our Lord Jesus Christ used the word. He said; *“The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”*

To save means to; to rescue from sin, to rescue from being lost, to rescue from destruction, to rescue from death, to rescue from the charges of the law, to rescue from the clutches of the justice of God, to redeem, to forgive, to pardon. It’s a Scriptural word.

“And He’s able to save,” He’s able to rescue. He’s able to justify me before the law. The law has pronounced me guilty, guilty. I can’t change God’s law but our Lord can satisfy God’s law.

He came to clear me before the throne, the immaculate throne of God. The justice of God says, guilty. But our Lord Jesus Christ has cleared me before the throne because He took my place, He took my guilt. *“He was numbered with the transgressors and by His stripes we are healed.”*

He’s able to make me a new creature. Now I can reform outwardly but God will have to sanctify me inwardly. I can reform outwardly but God will have to make me a new creature inwardly. I can walk a certain line but He can give me the will to walk that line.

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I can live a certain kind of life but He can give me a love for that kind of life. The Lord by His Spirit, by His regenerating Spirit, by the new birth; He makes us new creatures. He gives us a new nature.

When we meet the Lord, not because of a profession or a decision, but because of a supernatural work within, a regenerating new birth, we then hate what we once loved and we love what we once hated.

And He's able to put the fruits of the Spirit within me. He's able to do that. I can't do that for you and you can't do it for me. We can pray for our children. We can witness to our children. We can talk to our friends but only God can regenerate them.

Love, joy, peace, meekness, faith, gentleness, and kindness, are the fruits of the Spirit of God. They're not products of the flesh and they cannot reproduce from a natural person's heart. They're the gift of God, the fruit of the Spirit. "*He's able to save to the uttermost, (to the uttermost extent of sin).*"

Twenty some odd years ago a man came in my study and sat down and said he wanted to talk to me, a man in his 30's. We sat there and talked a while and he said, "Preacher, do you believe that God will forgive sin?" I said, "Yes sir."

He said, "Do you believe God will forgive any sin?" I said, "Yes sir. All sin? Yes sir." He said, "Would God forgive a man who killed his wife and baby?" I said, "Yes sir, if that man repents and believes the Gospel and has faith in Christ. "*The blood of Christ; it cleanseth us from all sin. He's able to save to the uttermost.*" Somebody said, "To the guttermost."

He said, "I just got out of jail. I murdered my wife and her unborn child. I shot her with a shotgun in a rage of temper and I'm living in hell and I want to know God." Our Lord's able.

Do you stagger at the promise of God? I don't; I believe that. I believe, "*He's able to save to the uttermost*" to the extent of time; I don't care how old you are. I baptized a man a few weeks ago, 88 years of age. He came to know Christ.

"*He's able to save to the uttermost*" to the extent of Satan's power. Satan's powerful, but not as strong as our Lord. Our Lord said; "*Peter, Satan hath desired you that he might sift you as wheat.*"

Do you know we're taught to pray? When the Lord taught the disciples how to pray He said; "*Pray; deliver us from evil.*" You've said that so much; do you know what you're saying, "Deliver us from evil?"

That's, "Deliver us from the evil one." That's right; that's what He saying; deliver us from the evil one. "*Satan is a roaring lion going about to see who he may devour.*" He's the adversary. He's the accuser of the brethren; did you know that?

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And we can only be delivered from his clutches and from his power by the power that is greater than his. And that's not you; that's Christ. *"He's able to save to the uttermost"* extent of Satan's power. He's able to save. I believe that.

"He's able to save to the uttermost; (now here, watch this; here's the key) them that come to God by Him." That's the way men are saved; they come to God by Christ, that's how they are redeemed.

And then the second Scripture I want you to look at is found in **Jude 24**. There's just one chapter in this book and its **verse 24**. *"We believe that God's able to keep us from falling."*

Now it says in **Jude 24**; *"Now unto Him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before His presence, (the presence of His glory) with exceeding joy: Unto Him the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory."*

Now there are warnings throughout the Bible. There are warnings about departing from the faith. There are warnings throughout this Bible about departing from God; listen to some of them:

"Take heed brethren lest there be found in you an evil heart of unbelief, brethren. If any man draw back my soul has no pleasure in him. He that endures to the end; the same shall be saved. Christ is the Son over His house whose house we are if we continue in the faith."

But our strength is not in ourselves; our strength is not even in our faith, but our strength is in Him. *"He is able to keep you from falling."* He is able. What He has begun; *"We are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus."*

What God has begun He'll complete in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. He can keep me in the face of apostasy. Christ said; *"I'm going to give you the Spirit of truth. He'll take the things of mine and show them to you."*

These things that I'm preaching from the Word of God; those people who have the Spirit of truth, the Spirit of God is bearing witness with your heart right now that what I'm saying's so because the spirit of truth is in your heart. And He'll not lead you into error. God's able to keep you from the spirit of apostasy.

And He's able to keep you in the face of opposition. David said; *"Though my father and mother forsake me God will take me up. He's a friend that sticketh closer than a brother."*

In the face of trial Job lost everything he had. He was stripped of his family, of his wealth, of his possessions, of his home, of his friends, of his children, of everything, of his health. And he sat there sick, broken, and he said; *"Well, the Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord. And in all of this he didn't charge God with foolishness."*

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God's able to keep us in the day of prosperity and in the day of poverty. *"He is able to keep you from falling."* I've got no confidence in myself but I've got total confidence in thee.

**"Precious Lord take my hand
Lead me on and help me stand
I'm tired, I'm weak, I'm worn
Through the storm, through the night
Lead me on to the light
Take my hand precious Lord
And lead me on.**

**And when the way growth drear
Precious Lord linger near
When the life is almost gone
Hear my cry, hear my call
Hold my hand lest I fall."**

It's not a remote, it's not a remote possibility at all, "lest I fall; take my hand."

And then last of all He's able to raise my body. It says in **Philippians 3:21**; *"He's able to fashion our bodies like unto His glorious body."* Won't that be a day?

Do you ever think about death? I do. You're a fool not to. I'm going to die and this body is going back to the dust from whence it came and somebody's going to have to bring it out of the grave.

And the only one who can is my living Lord, my living Lord but *"He's able. I stagger not at that promise, He's able to fashion my body like unto His; He's able."*

Abraham believed that, do you?