**April 13, 2003 Northwest Bible Church Worship Service Alan Conner**

**Rom. 4:17-22
The Nature of Abraham’s Faith**

INTRO
One more key issue remains to be tackled here in this chapter and this is WHAT IS THE NATURE OF THE FAITH THAT JUSTIFIES?

A. God’s promise to Abraham.

The promise is specifically that God would make him "A father of many nations" (v. 17), and that as numerous as the stars "so shall your descendants be" (v. 18). Abraham believed and it was credited to him as righteousness (v. 22).

B. The Character of Abraham’s God (v. 17).

Abraham’s faith was God-centered.

1) Faith in a God of resurrection. "who gives life to the dead.".
2) Faith in a God of creation. "calls into being that which does not exist."

Your concept of God will have a great impact on your faith.

C. The Character of Abraham’s faith (vv. 18-21).

1) Hopeless faith (v. 18-19). "against hope" (v. 18),

a) A lengthy trial for Abraham’s faith.

b) A contemplative faith (v. 19). Here Abraham contemplated his physical dilemma. Dilemma #1 – his body was as good as dead. Dilemma #2 – his wife’s body was in the same shape, her womb was dead, no hope for children there either.

Conclusion: it is hopeless from the human perspective. God promised me children but there is no way we can have children.
The first part of Abraham’s faith was – "against hope" in himself.

2) Hopeful faith (vv. 18-21). "in hope" = "hoping in God while having no hope in man."

a) Not a weak or wavering faith (v. 19-20).

b) But a strong and fully assured faith (vv. 20-21).

What sustained Abraham’s faith in spite of the dire situation he was in was a vision of the God who can do the impossible, not a confidence that he was able to bring it to pass.

"giving glory to God" – by acknowledging God’s power to carry out his promise. His concept of God as a God of resurrection strengthened his faith.

3) Honored faith (v. 22).
Abraham’s initial faith was honored with the gift of righteousness, and his persevering faith over 25 years was honored with a gift of a child.

CONCLUSION

"In hope against hope" – hoping in God while putting no hope in yourself, it is this kind of faith that is an honored faith and which receives the blessing.

May God so empty our faith in self, and enrich our faith in Him.