

To ask why faith matters so much is like asking why we need hands on Christmas morning. Faith is the way we receive God's gifts.

## 2. Faith keeps us God-focused.

In faith, we're not simply looking away from ourselves. We're also looking to *God*. Faith is required when the promises are so big that only God could make them. Today, we need to know what Abraham knew and believed: only God could change him and his circumstances. Only God could bring salvation and redemption to an otherwise dismal situation.

No one else can do that for you today. Your spouse can't. Your employer can't. Your favourite political candidate can't. Only God can. As Martin Luther once wrote:

"You should consider that what the Lord promises Abraham . . . is altogether impossible, unbelievable, and untrue if you follow reason, because it cannot be seen. He was . . . old, [and] Sarah was . . . barren. How, I ask you, do these facts agree with this promise: "I will make of you a large nation"? Where are the descendants to come from since Abraham's marriage is childless? These huge masses of unbelief and these high mountains, which could suppress his faith completely, the holy patriarch overcomes and crosses by faith. He simply clings to this one thought: Behold, God is promising this. He will not deceive you, even though you do not see the way, the manner, or even the time of the fulfilment of this promise."

## 3. Faith makes the gospel global.

Faith eliminates any ethnic, geographic, or cultural barriers to the gospel. In Romans 4:16–17, Paul states that it's by faith "in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring—not only to the adherent of the law but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, as it is written, 'I have made you the father of many nations.'" If the promise was exclusively based on genes and ancestry, inevitably some people would be excluded. That would give Abraham's line a reason to look down their noses at the rest of the world. But when the promise is received by faith, the promise is opened to the whole world.

Faith in Christ makes us children of Abraham, heirs of the amazing covenant promises: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise" (Gal. 3:28–29). It doesn't matter where you're from. It doesn't matter what your background is. The promise is open to all.

God promises that through simple faith in the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of his Son, you will be saved. He guarantees you a place in that new Jerusalem, that fair and far-off country that Abraham looked toward (Heb. 11:10). He guarantees your rescue from this world of sin. He will not deceive you, even though you don't see the way, the manner, or even the time of the fulfilment of his promise.



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*Thus says the Lord: There is no other god besides me, a righteous God and Saviour, turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth. [Isaiah 45.21,22]*

## 18<sup>th</sup> September, 2022 – Ordinary 25

<u>Today</u>		<u>25<sup>th</sup> September</u>
Genesis 13:1-18	(p 18)	Isaiah 55
Psalms 61	(p 897)	Psalms 126
<b>Galatians 6:1-5</b>	(p 1816)	<b>Galatians 6:6-18</b>
Mark 9:33-37	(p 1569)	Matthew 10:5-16

### **Why is Faith So Important?**

Jonathan Landry Cruse – TGC, September 11, 2022

In Romans 4, Paul tells us that if we want to know how salvation works, we only need to look to Abraham. His story was recorded for our sake (vv. 23–24). How God worked with Abraham is how God works, period. And how did God work salvation for Abraham? Through faith.

As Paul writes in verse 16, "the promise comes by faith." Faith is critical in God's plan of redemption. And here are three reasons why.

#### **1. Faith keeps the promise gracious.**

That's what the text says: "It is through faith so it can be according to grace" (v. 16). Substitute any other word for "faith" and the sentence becomes absurd. If salvation is through works, charity, service, church attendance, activism, intuition, or intellect then it cannot be "according to grace." Faith—which itself is a gift from God (Eph. 2:8)—is what makes the gospel truly *good* news. God requires faith from us so the labour of the covenant of grace might remain squarely on Christ's back. He works. Faith receives. As John Stott helpfully explains:

"The fixed point is that God is gracious, and that salvation originates in his sheer grace alone. But in order that this may be so, our human response can only be faith. For grace gives and faith takes. Faith's exclusive function is humbly to receive what grace offers. Otherwise "grace would no longer be grace."

## A guide for our prayers during the week

### Monday

Our diocese and the gospel

- Bishop and Dean
- Other parishes
- Another Year of evangelism

### Tuesday

Our church and the gospel

- Children and youth
- Families
- Seniors

### Wednesday

Our community and the gospel

- Covid19
- SRE
- Youth Group

### Thursday

Our nation and the gospel

- Prime minister
- State and local government
- Religious Freedom legislation

### Friday

God's world and the gospel

- Islamisation
- War and poverty
- Barnabas Aid & Open Doors
- Compassion - Lillian

### Saturday

Ministry and the gospel

- Link missionaries – James & Steph
- Link parish – St Anne's Ryde
- Wardens and Parish Council
- Vicar

### Dates to Remember

Today	Parish Council meet.
19 September	Memorial service for the Queen St Peter's Cathedral, Armidale 6 pm
23-25 September	Synod
29 September	Street stall in Barraba
2 October	Eastern Summer Time commences Sunday services now at 9 am
8-9 October	Bible Society in Barraba
11-13 November	Youth Muster

	<b>Today</b>	<b>25 September</b>
<b>Greet</b>	Trevor	Pam
<b>Lead</b>	Daniel	Peter W
<b>Read</b>	Daniel, Pam, Alison	Peter, Lee, Greg
<b>Prayers</b>	Hamilton	Penny
<b>Counting</b>	Dean & Lee	Margaret & Lee
<b>Sunday Club</b>	Jenni & Steve	Alison & Will
<b>Morning Tea</b>	Debbie & Dale	Jenni & Sue
<b>Church Cleaning</b>		?
<b>Mowing</b>		Peter HS & Dale

### Bible Study Groups in the Parish

#### Monday morning from 10 am

Introduction to the bible. Contact Jenni Avenell for details (0475 417 979)

#### Monday nights from 6.30 pm

Mixed group. Contact Hamilton Trotter for details. (6782 1896 or 0427 821 896)

#### Tuesday nights from 7.30 pm

Mixed group. Contact Dean Blomfield for details (6782 1858 or 0447 821 850)

#### Friday morning from 10 am

Women's group. Contact Pam King for details (6782 1357 or 0429 798 738)

#### Friday morning from 10 am.

Mixed group. Contact Daniel Avenell for details (6782 1037 or 0439 735 942)

### Direct Debit Giving Information

**Account name:** Barraba Anglican Church

**BSB:** 932-000

**Account No.:** 11685 (add S3 if transferring from RAB. Omit if not)