SUNDAY - November 1, 2026

UNASHAMED: Romans 4:13-25 - Strong Faith

SERMON SUMMARY:

Romans 4:13–25 contrasts inheritance received through faith with righteousness pursued through the law. The law and faith cannot serve as parallel grounds for acceptance before God. When people treat obedience as a way to earn God's favor, they turn his promise into wages and begin to believe that God owes them comfort, success, health, or protection. When life disappoints those expectations, self-righteousness can harden into anger toward God. The law exposes this failure; it cannot secure the inheritance.

God's promise rests instead on grace and is received through faith. The promised gift is righteousness before a holy God, making people his sons and daughters. Grace guarantees what human effort cannot earn, and faith trusts the giver rather than claiming a debt. Abraham's example shows how such faith endures: he believed God even when human hope offered no reasonable path to the promised child. His confidence rested not on favorable odds but on God, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence what does not exist.

Abraham's circumstances were severe, and the long delay between promise and fulfillment tested his trust. Strong faith does not require pretending that suffering is small or that hardship makes no difference. Infertility, troubled marriages, financial loss, illness, children abandoning faith, addiction, loneliness, and despair can make God's promise feel distant. Yet circumstances do not have the authority to overturn God's character or determine whether his word is true.

Abraham grew strong by giving glory to God, convinced that God had power to fulfill what he promised. Joseph, Daniel, Paul, and Corrie ten Boom likewise honored God amid betrayal, captivity, danger, loss, and uncertainty. Their faith did not depend on knowing how events would turn out. It rested in God's presence and worth, even when deliverance was not yet visible. The decisive proof of God's faithfulness is found in Jesus, whose resurrection confirms the promise of righteousness for those who believe. Strong faith grows as God becomes greater in the heart than the circumstances that seem to contradict his promise.

SCRIPTURE:

Romans 4:13-25, Luke 18, Genesis 15, Genesis 41:16-17, Daniel 2, 2 Tim 4:16-17, Job 13:14

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. According to verses 13-15, what are the two things that cannot be the basis for receiving God's promise?
2. What specific, humanly impossible circumstance did Abraham face regarding the promise of a son (v. 19)?
3. Verse 20 describes two things Abraham did in response to God's promise despite his circumstances. What are they?
4. What is the ultimate proof, given in verses 24-25, that God has the power to fulfill his promises?
5. The sermon described how treating obedience as a way to earn God's favor turns his promise into wages. Why does this mindset inevitably lead to disappointment and even anger toward God when life gets hard?
6. Abraham's faith was not in "human hope," which can betray us. What is the difference between hoping in a favorable outcome and believing in God's character?
7. How can a person honestly acknowledge the severity of their suffering (like infertility, financial loss, or illness) while still refusing to let those circumstances define God's power or truthfulness?

8. Giving glory to God in the midst of delay and difficulty is presented as the way faith grows strong. How does worshiping God when the future is uncertain actually strengthen a person's trust in him?
9. In what area of your life are you most tempted to believe God owes you something because of your good behavior or obedience? What specific disappointment has revealed that belief?
10. When a deeply hoped-for outcome doesn't happen, it can feel like God's promise is distant. What is one current situation where you need to choose to trust God's character over your visible circumstances?
11. Strong faith involves giving glory to God before the promise is fulfilled. What is one practical way you can worship God this week specifically related to your area of waiting or struggle?
12. The idea was presented that our deepest need in hardship is not always immediate escape, but the presence of God. How could seeking God's presence look different from just asking him to change your circumstances?
13. Is there a "chain-smoking salad dodging octogenarian" in your life—a situation that seems deeply unfair and makes you question God's justice? How can you process that honest frustration without letting it void God's promise of righteousness for you?
14. Joseph, Daniel, and others honored God without knowing how their story would end. What is one decision you are facing where the outcome is uncertain? How can you make a choice that gives glory to God, regardless of the result?