

# Episode 121

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*So the promise is received by faith. It is given as a free gift. And we are all certain to receive it, whether or not we live according to the law of Moses, if we have faith like Abraham's. For Abraham is the father of all who believe. That is what the Scriptures mean when God told him, "I have made you the father of many nations." This happened because Abraham believed in the God who brings the dead back to life and who creates new things out of nothing.*

- Romans 4.16-17

There are some seriously heavy-weight words used in this chapter to describe Abraham. Paul's gift as a wordsmith creaks beneath the brobdingnagian behemoth that he calls the father of our faith. Move aside Moses, here comes the gold standard of godliness.

Here's a man who never wavered in his faith. In fact, Paul says that the more you threw at him the tougher he became. When his nephew was taken captive along with all the surrounding cities, Abraham gathered a few mates and rescued him from five kings who tucked their tails and ran. Talk about the father of our faith! In the midst of famine, he worked the system and came out more prosperous than before, being driven out of the land because his camels took up all the parking spaces. Talk about the father of our faith! And when his wife was taken into the king's harem, he didn't have to do a thing. God himself came down and pulled a Liam Neeson on him, and before he knew it, Abraham had his wife back, plus more riches than he could carry. Talk about the father of our faith!

No. Not true. But when we read through Romans chapter 4, we so quickly default to a TV Evangelist's version of who Abraham was, and what the gold standard of Christianity is, that it hangs over us like an impossible standard to live by.

So, look again at this chapter through fresh eyes. Paul hinges the entire chapter on a statement that the NLT translates: "Abraham believed in the God who brings the dead back to life and who creates new things out of nothing." That is all, and that is it.

Abraham believed in the God who brings the dead back to life. Maybe you're there right now. Perhaps your dreams have died, the hope of becoming a parent, or getting married, or staying married, the salvation of a spouse, a business that has liquidated, a divorce that has torn through your family and friendship circles, the silence that screams at the end of your prayers, the returning of cancer, or the wandering of a child.

There's a verse in Ephesians that says, "and having done all, to stand." So that's what Abraham did, and he set the example of what to do when all around us falls apart. Having done all, he stood there empty-handed and broken-hearted before the God who brings the dead back to life and who creates new things out of nothing.

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