

# Real Heroes

- James 2
- Who do you think of when you think of “Heroes of the Bible?”
  - David in the battle against Goliath?
  - Daniel in the Lion’s Den?
  - Sampson with the Jaw Bone of an Ass?
- We look to people who are strong
  - People who have survived against great odds
  - Battled overwhelming forces and won...
- We look to people who have performed great acts
- This weekend we’ve looked at Abraham
- A man made famous not by a great act...
  - But, by a simple act of Faith
- A REAL Hero
  - That we can relate to...
  - That we can set as an example in our lives

- The act that set the stage for our discussions this weekend was the simple act of believing in God

- Romans 4:18-22

- 18) Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be.
- 19) And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb:
- 20) He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;
- 21) And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.
- 22) And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.

- Abraham had the faith to believe what God had promised him...

- The Promise of a son...

- Genesis 15:4-6

- 4) And, behold, the word of the LORD *came* unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir.
- 5) And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.
- 6) And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

- Paul continued in Romans to explain to us that the idea of having your faith imputed to you for righteousness isn't unique to Abraham

- We also have that same principle applied to us...

- What do we have to believe in order to have it imputed to us for righteousness?

- That God gave his only son to die on our behalf...

- For the remission of our sins

- That we are "justified" by the blood of Christ, and "made right" with God

- And the hardest part...

- That this gift is given to us regardless of our actions...

- Even if we perform great acts of righteousness, we can not earn salvation...
  - And even if we fail and sin, we do not lose God's gift of mercy and grace
- We can place our self outside of God's mercy by being unrepentant and denying His grace...
  - But, if we focus our lives on following our Lord, and continuing in good works, we will be blessed with the free gift of eternal life
- We have received a pardon that has released us from the prison of death...
  - But, we are not out on some kind of "*Probation*"...
  - It's not that if we are caught sinning the judge will put us back into Prison...
- We have received a **very special** kind of pardon that forgives us our sins forever...
- But...
  - if you decide that you don't like life on the "straight and narrow"
  - And decide that you enjoyed your old life back in prison better
    - You can go back into prison...
    - And if you make that choice the pardon has no further power over you
- But, if you appreciate the gift you are given, and are so moved by this great gift that you dedicate your life to helping others...
  - You no longer have a to fear the judge...
- In his life, Abraham understood and believed in this same principle
  - Abraham saw the salvation of God
  - He understood it
  - He had faith in it
- That is what motivated Abraham to action
  - That is what drove him to do the great things that are recorded about him
- James speaks to that relationship between works and faith in James 2

- James 2:14-26

14) What *doth it* profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?

- James 2:14-26 MESSAGE

14) Dear friends, do you think you'll get anywhere with God if you learn all the right words but never do anything? Does merely talking about faith indicate that a person really has it?

- The faith in this belief that we proclaim to have...

- That God raised Jesus from the dead, and through his death forgives our sins

- This faith MUST have some sort of effect on us...

- It must motivate us to some action...

- James 2:15-17

15) If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food,

16) And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what *doth it* profit?

17) Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

- Faith, without works, is dead...

- Faith in God's ability to extend his mercy to us and justify us in His sight...

- ... without Actions that are prompted and motivated out of appreciation for that great gift...

- ... is dead!

- We have to act!

- We have to produce something good out of our lives...

- We can't just expect God to remove all of the Bad from our lives, and like what He sees...

- We actually have to have made something good out of our lives, so that when He removes the evil... There is some good that remains!

- You see it wasn't SOLELY Abraham's believing God that saved him...

- He ACTED upon it!

- The promise of a son was what Abraham believed...

- Romans 4:20-21

- 20) He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;

- 21) And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.

- Abraham believed it so strongly

- He was so *"fully persuaded that, what God had promised, He was able also to perform..."* that Abraham was able to act upon those beliefs...

- Hebrews 11:17-19

- 17) By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son,

- 18) Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called:

- 19) Accounting that God *was* able to raise *him* up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.

- Hebrews 11:17-19 NIV

- 17) By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had received the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son,

- 18) even though God had said to him, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned."

- 19) Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death.

- Abraham had faith that God would provide a son...

- He had provided a son once even though Sarah's womb was dead

- He would do so again, even if Isaac was dead...

- He acted upon his faith...

- As we read about in James 2:

- James 2:21-26

- 21) Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?
- 22) Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?
- 23) And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.
- 24) Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.

- James 2:21-26 NIV

- 21) Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar?
- 22) You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did.
- 23) And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called God's friend.
- 24) You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone.

- Not by faith alone...

- God wants us to do something with our lives...

- Not worrying about sin

- He's taken care of that for us
- But, doing something good and productive...

- ***Something useful...***

- James 2:26

- 26) For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

- God has given us this life for this purpose...

- We have been made alive
- We were dead in our sins
  - He gave us a New Life

- Specifically for the purpose of serving Him with Good Works...
- It is the Useful not the Great that God wants from us...
  - He isn't calling on us to slay dragons and defeat armies...
  - He has chosen us for our weakness to show forth His strength...
- He simply wants us to find useful, helpful, encouraging, uplifting things to do for people to reflect some of the love that He has shown us...
- That is what a Real Hero does...

- **The Useful... Not the Great...**

- Let's look at Ephesians 2 to close...

- Ephesians 2:1

1) And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

- We used to follow the sinful ways of this world, and walk according to it's path...

- But, we have been saved from that, and now we walk with God...

- Ephesians 2:4-5

4) But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,

5) Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

- Ephesians 2:4-5 NIV

4) But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy,

5) made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in our sins - it is by grace you have been saved.

- Ephesians 2:6-7

6) And hath raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus:

7) That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

- Ephesians 2:6-7 NIV

- 6) And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus,
- 7) in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

- Ephesians 2:8

- 8) For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God:

- We meet here this morning to remember that Gift...

- God loves us so much that He gave us this gift...

- God gave us His only son...

- To die upon the cross, so that we might live

- Jesus is like Abraham...

- A Real Hero
- An example for us in our own personal lives

- Jesus didn't win any great battles

- Jesus didn't lead his people to a great victory

- But, he believed God's Promise

- He was faithful and knew that God would raise him from the dead...

- And, he asks us to do the same...

- Because we are created anew with Christ Jesus

- Ephesians 2:10

- 10) For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

- We are created anew unto good works...

- Let us fill our lives with good...