

UNSHAKABLE HOPE! ROMANS 4:21

Faith Over Fear in the Promises of God

DR. DARRYL T. CANADY

RODMAN STREET CHURCH | 12.14.25

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Title: Unshakable Hope: Faith Over Fear in the Promises of God

Sermon Summary: This sermon explores the tension between faith and fear through the life of Abraham, the father of faith. Drawing from Romans 4:21, we explore what it means to be fully persuaded that God has the power to do what He has promised. The sermon unpacks five critical elements of unshakable hope: the problems we face, the person of God, the promises He makes, the performance of those promises, and the praise we offer in response. The message emphasizes that genuine faith requires believing God's promises even when circumstances appear impossible.

Using Abraham's journey as the foundation, the pastor teaches that problems necessitate miracles, and God's promises remain steadfast regardless of natural limitations. The sermon challenges believers to shift from knowing about God to truly knowing God through personal experience, to glance at problems while gluing themselves to God's promises, and to praise God before seeing the manifestation of His promises. It is making the shift from believing God can, to believing God will. The central theme revolves around developing unshakable hope by trusting in God's character and His ability to perform what He has promised, even when everything appears hopeless.

What makes this message so compelling is its honesty about Abraham's journey—he wasn't always strong in faith, yet God remembered his faith and forgot his faults. We're reminded that problems don't negate promises; they necessitate miracles. When Abraham faced the biological impossibility of having a child at 100 years old, he had to choose between two impossibilities: either it was impossible for him to have a son naturally, or it was impossible for God to lie. This is where we all find ourselves at various points—caught between what we see with our natural eyes and what God has spoken over our lives. Through modern illustrations and biblical truth, we discover that faith isn't just hearing about God—it's hearing from God. And when we truly hear Him, we can praise Him before we see the manifestation, just as Abraham did.

Chapters

Chapter 1: The Problem That Necessitates the Miracle

We learn that problems in our lives are necessary for miracles to occur, and we must glance at our problems while gluing ourselves to God's promises.

Chapter 2: The Person Behind the Promise

We must shift from knowing about God to knowing God personally through experience, because faith requires understanding the character and nature of God.

Chapter 3: The Promise That Produces Faith

We cannot have faith without a promise from God, and we must hear directly from God rather than just hearing about Him.

Chapter 4: The Performance and the Praise

We must trust that God will perform what He has promised and give Him praise before we see the manifestation of His promises.

Key Points:

- The tension between faith and fear exists in every believer's life, but faith says "even if" while fear says "what if"
- Problems are necessary because they create the opportunity for miracles and demonstrate God's power
- Abraham faced two impossibilities: having a son naturally at 100 years old, and the impossibility of God lying
- Believers must glance at their problems but glue themselves to God's promises
- Faith requires shifting from knowing about God to personally knowing God through relationship and experience
- There can be no faith without a promise; faith is simply believing what God said
- God will perform what He has promised because His character guarantees His word
- Praise should begin before the promise is fulfilled, not after
- Abraham gave glory to God before Isaac was born, demonstrating faith in action
- Believers must be obedient to God's Word even when they don't understand the process

Scripture Reference:

- Romans 4:21 - "Being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised"
- Romans 4:17-20 - The account of Abraham's faith despite his and Sarah's old age
- Hebrews 11 - Abraham in the hall of fame of faith
- Philippians 3:10 - Paul's desire to know God
- Romans 10:14 - How can they believe without hearing

Stories:

- Abraham and Sarah receiving the promise of a son at ages 99 and 89, when their bodies were "as good as dead"
- The story of Lazarus being raised from the dead after four days in the grave
- The pastor's son, Major, taking a simulated driving class but not knowing how to actually drive when given the opportunity
- William Henry Barnes, a church member who was given 48 hours to live by doctors but lived 12 more years
- Travis Hunter's journey from being the number one high school player staying in a one-bedroom hotel with his family to winning the Heisman Trophy, demonstrating that it's not where you came from but where you're going
- Personal testimony about the pastor's grandfather's authority and obedience in the family

Scripture References from the Sermon

Directly Cited or Referenced:

1. **Romans 4:21** - "Being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised"
2. **Romans 4:18** - "Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed"
3. **Romans 4:19** - "Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was good as dead"
4. **Romans 4:20** - "Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God"
5. **Romans 4:17** - "As it is written I have made you a father of many nations"
6. **Hebrews 11** - Abraham in the "hall of fame" of faith
7. **Hebrews 11:8** - "By faith, Abraham obeyed"
8. **Philippians 3:10** - "That I may know him"
9. **Romans 10:14** - "How can they call on the one who they have not believed in?"
10. **1 Corinthians 3:6** - "I have planted Apollo's water, but God is the one that gives the increase"
11. **Psalms 23:4** - "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil"
12. **Isaiah 54:17** - "No weapon formed against you shall prosper"
13. **John 16:33** - "In this world you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer because I have already overcome the world"

14. **Romans 8:37** - "You are more than a conqueror through him who loves you"
15. **Psalms 30:5** - "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning"
16. **Philippians 4:6-7** - Peace that surpasses all understanding
17. **Malachi 3:10** - "Prove me, test me in this, and give me my tenth and see if I will not throw open the floodgate of heaven"
18. **James 4:2** - "You have not because you ask not"

Alluded to or Thematically Referenced:

19. **Genesis 12-22** - The story of Abraham (general references throughout)
20. **John 11** - The story of Lazarus being raised from the dead
21. **Genesis 1** - Creation account ("Let there be light")
22. **Matthew 7:7** - Ask, seek, knock principle
23. **Psalms 34:1** - "I will bless the Lord at all times"
24. **Genesis 17:5** - Abraham's name change and promise of many nations

Themes Without Specific Citations (Suggested Verses):

- **Faith vs. Fear:** 2 Timothy 1:7, Isaiah 41:10
- **God's Faithfulness:** Lamentations 3:22-23, 2 Thessalonians 3:3
- **Knowing God:** Jeremiah 9:23-24, Hosea 6:3
- **God's Promises:** 2 Corinthians 1:20, Joshua 21:45
- **Praise and Worship:** Psalm 150, Psalm 100

QUOTES:

If you believe as Abraham believed, you will receive as Abraham received. We are the seed of Abraham.

The problem is what necessitates the miracle. If you never had any problems, then you wouldn't need any miracles.

You got to glance at your problem and glue yourself to the promise. Some of us get caught up on the fact that the weapon is being formed rather than the fact that it shall not prosper.

We must shift from knowing about God to knowing God. The only way you're going to get to know Him is to go through some things with Him.

There can never be faith without a promise. Faith is simply believing what God said in spite of what the earthly doctor report says.

God is not obligated to answer a prayer that has not been prayed. You have not because you ask not.

It's not where you came from, but it's where you are going. Many of us are guilty of looking at the water that's filling up the boat, rather than the lifeguard who said that you're gonna make it to the other side.

When you praise God, he'll turn your weakness into strength, your burdens into blessing, your test and trial into testimony. In the midst of your storm, he'll say, peace be still.

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5-Day Devotional: Unshakable Hope in God's Promises

Day 1: When Faith Faces Impossibility

Reading: Romans 4:18-21

Devotional: Abraham faced two impossibilities: having a son at 100 years old and the impossibility that God could lie. When natural circumstances scream "impossible," faith whispers "God is able." Like Abraham, you may be staring at situations that defy human logic—financial struggles, broken relationships, health challenges. The question is not whether your situation is possible, but whether God is faithful. Abraham chose to glance at his problems but glue himself to God's promises. Today, shift your focus from what you cannot do to what God has promised to do. Write down one promise from Scripture that speaks to your situation and declare it over your circumstances, regardless of what you see.

Reflection Question: What impossible situation are you facing that requires you to trust God's character over your circumstances?

Day 2: From Knowing About God to Knowing God

Reading: Philippians 3:7-11

Devotional: There is a profound difference between knowing about God and knowing God personally. You can take a driving class without ever getting behind the wheel. Similarly, you can know facts about God without experiencing His faithfulness through life's trials. Paul's greatest ambition was "that I may know Him." This knowledge comes not from textbooks but from walking through valleys with Him, praising Him in storms, and watching Him make ways where there seemed to be none. The trials you face are not meant to destroy your faith but to deepen your relationship with the One who holds you. Every problem is an invitation to know God more intimately. Spend time today not asking God for things, but simply being in His presence, getting to know His character.

Reflection Question: How has going through difficult times helped you know God more personally rather than just knowing about Him?

Day 3: The Power of God's Promises

Reading: 2 Peter 1:3-4; Hebrews 10:23

Devotional: Faith cannot exist without a promise. Abraham's faith was anchored not in positive thinking but in God's specific Word to him. God has given you "great and precious promises" that serve as the foundation for your faith. You cannot hold God accountable to promises you do not know. This requires time in His Word, allowing Scripture to speak directly into your situation. God's promises are not wishful thinking—they are guarantees backed by His unchanging character. When the doctor gives a report, remember the Great Physician has the final word. When your bank

account looks empty, remember He owns the cattle on a thousand hills. Today, search Scripture for a promise that addresses your current need. Write it down, memorize it, and speak it aloud daily.

Reflection Question: What specific promise from God's Word can you stand on today, and how will you remind yourself of it throughout the week?

Day 4: Praising Before You See It

Reading: Romans 4:20; Habakkuk 3:17-19

Devotional: Abraham gave God glory before Isaac was born. This is the essence of faith—praising God for what He has promised before you see the manifestation. Many believers wait for the breakthrough before they begin to worship, but God calls us to praise Him in the process. Your praise is not based on your circumstances but on His character. Habakkuk declared he would rejoice in the Lord even when the fig tree did not blossom and there were no grapes on the vines. This kind of praise confuses the enemy and releases heaven's power. When you praise God in your darkest hour, you declare that your hope is not in what you see but in who He is. Today, set aside time to worship God specifically for who He is, not just for what you need Him to do.

Reflection Question: What would it look like for you to give God genuine praise in your current situation before you see any change?

Day 5: It's Not Where You're From, But Where You're Going

Reading: Jeremiah 29:11; Philippians 3:13-14

Devotional: Your past does not determine your future when God is writing your story. You may have come from brokenness, failure, disappointment, or difficult circumstances, but God specializes in redemptive endings. Abraham's body was "as good as dead," yet God called him the father of many nations before Isaac was born. God sees you not as you are but as you will be when His promise is fulfilled. Stop rehearsing where you have been and start declaring where God is taking you. The obstacles in your path are not roadblocks but setups for God to display His glory. Every setback is a setup for a comeback. Today, release your past to God—the mistakes, the pain, the disappointments—and ask Him to give you a vision of the future He has prepared for you. Walk forward in unshakable hope.

Reflection Question: What from your past are you allowing to limit your future, and how can you surrender it to God today?

Closing Prayer: Father, thank You for being a God of unshakable promises. Help me to shift from knowing about You to truly knowing You. Strengthen my faith to believe Your Word even when circumstances say otherwise. Teach me to praise You before I see the breakthrough, trusting that You are faithful to perform what You have promised. I release my past and embrace the future You have prepared for me. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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Small Group Guide: Unshakable Hope

Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

Begin by asking God to open hearts and minds to His Word, and to help group members apply the truths discussed to their daily lives.

Ice Breaker (10 minutes)

Question: Share a time when you had to believe something would work out even when it looked impossible. What happened?

Key Scripture

Romans 4:21 - "Being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised."

Sermon Summary (5 minutes)

This sermon explores Abraham's faith journey, highlighting five key elements: the problems we face, the person of God, His promises, His performance, and our praise. Pastor Canady emphasized that faith isn't the absence of problems but believing God's promises despite the problems.

Discussion Questions

1. The Problems (10-15 minutes)

- The pastor said, "The problem is what necessitates the miracle." How does this perspective change the way you view your current challenges?

- Abraham faced the impossibility of having a child at 100 years old. What "impossible" situation are you facing that requires God's intervention?
- How do you typically respond when problems arise: Do you focus on the problem or on God's promises?

Key Quote: *"You got to glance at your problem and glue yourself to his promise."*

2. The Person (10-15 minutes)

- What's the difference between knowing *about* God and knowing God personally?
- The sermon shared the story of the pastor's son, Major, knowing about driving but not knowing how to drive. How does this illustration apply to your faith journey?
- How have trials and difficulties helped you know God better rather than just knowing about Him?

Key Quote: *"You got to shift from knowing about God to knowing God."*

3. The Promise (10-15 minutes)

- Pastor Canady said, "There can never be faith without a promise." What specific promises from God's Word are you holding onto right now?
- How does knowing God's character help you trust His promises?
- Share a time when God fulfilled a promise in your life, even when circumstances looked hopeless.

Key Quote: *"Faith is simply believing what God said."*

4. The Performance & Praise (10-15 minutes)

- Abraham praised God before he saw the fulfillment. Why is it important to praise God before we see the answer?
- The Travis Hunter story illustrated that "it's not where you came from, but where you are going." How does this encourage you in your current season?
- What prevents you from praising God in the midst of your struggles?

Key Quote: *"Praise is what I do when I want to be close to you."*

Key Takeaways

1. **Faith and fear coexist** - We all vacillate between fear and faith, but God remembers our faith and forgets our faults.
 2. **God's promises require our belief** - We must believe what God says even when circumstances contradict His promises.
 3. **Problems don't disqualify promises** - The presence of problems doesn't mean God's promises are void; they create opportunities for miracles.
 4. **Praise precedes performance** - We praise God for who He is and what He promised before we see the manifestation.
 5. **Obedience accompanies faith** - True faith results in obedience to God's word, even when we don't understand.
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Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge:

Choose ONE of the following to practice this week:

1. **Identify Your Promise** - Find a specific Bible promise that addresses your current situation. Write it down and read it daily.
2. **Shift Your Focus** - When you find yourself dwelling on a problem, intentionally redirect your thoughts to God's character and promises. Keep a journal of when you do this.
3. **Praise in Advance** - Begin thanking God for the answer to your prayer before you see it manifest. Set aside 10 minutes daily for this practice.
4. **Know God Better** - Commit to spending time with God daily, not just reading about Him but talking to Him and listening for His voice.
5. **Share Your Testimony** - Tell someone this week about a time God kept His promise to you, even when it looked impossible.

Prayer Points (10-15 minutes)

- Pray for faith to believe God's promises despite current circumstances
 - Pray for group members facing "impossible" situations
 - Thank God for His faithfulness in the past
 - Ask God to help each person shift from fear to faith
 - Pray for the courage to praise God before seeing the answer
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Closing Prayer

Group Leader: Close by thanking God that He is bigger than any problem we face and that His promises are sure. Pray that each person would develop unshakable hope rooted in who God is.

Recommended Follow-Up

- Memorize Romans 4:21 as a group
 - Share testimonies next week of how God showed up in your situations
 - Consider reading the book "Unshakable Hope" together as a group study
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Leader's Note

Be sensitive to group members who may be struggling with their faith. Create a safe space where doubt can be expressed honestly while pointing people back to God's character and promises. Remember: God remembers our faith and forgets our faults.

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How can we shift from merely knowing about God to truly knowing God through personal experience, and what role do trials play in deepening that relationship?
2. In what ways do you find yourself focusing on your problems rather than God's promises, and how can you practically 'glance at your problems and glue yourself to His promises'?

3. Abraham faced two impossibilities: having a son naturally and God being able to lie. What seemingly impossible situations in your life require you to trust God's character over your circumstances?
4. The sermon emphasizes that 'the problem necessitates the miracle.' How does this perspective change the way you view current challenges or setbacks in your life?
5. What does it mean to praise God before seeing the fulfillment of His promise, and how might premature praise demonstrate faith in ways that waiting cannot?
6. How does Abraham's example of being 'fully persuaded' challenge your own level of conviction about God's ability to perform what He has promised?
7. The pastor mentions that God forgets Abraham's faults but remembers his faith. How does this truth about God's character affect your willingness to step out in faith despite past failures?
8. In what areas of your life are you waiting for God to move from 'A to Z' before you start praising Him, and what would it look like to trust Him in the middle of the process?
9. How does the story of Travis Hunter illustrate that 'it's not where you came from, but where you are going,' and how can this principle apply to your spiritual journey?
10. What specific promise from God's Word are you currently holding onto, and how can you strengthen your faith to believe God will perform what He has promised?