

Commentary on the Gospel for Wed, Mar 19th 2014

It is not by deeds or works, but by faith that we are saved. We don't have to say 'please' or 'thank you' 10,000 times, or take the trash out every Tuesday, or pay for coffee for the person behind us in the Starbucks line—we simply have to have faith. That's not to say that the Father doesn't appreciate kindness; he commands us to love each other after all. But while anyone can hold the door open for a stranger, not everyone can live a life of faith.

That is what this passage in Romans tells us. We have an inheritance waiting for us that won't be granted by deeds, but by faith. Faith is blind trust, and Paul tells us that we aren't trusting in something predictable and probable like counting on the sun setting every day. This faith is hard work—we're stretching our minds and our hearts to believe that our God is a big God. That there is a God who loves us beyond comprehension, "who gives life to the dead and calls into being what does not exist" (Romans 4:17). When you put it into perspective, that is big faith. A Christian walk is not an easy walk. Faith requires believing the improbable but not impossible.

God is working for us and not against us and when we can trust him, it doesn't go unnoticed. In fact, he calls those who have faith righteous! How amazing is that? Those who have faith are highly regarded by God. Just as Abraham had "hope against hope, that he would become the father of many nations." He believed it to be true with his heart. He trusted God with big things, and God blessed him all the more for it.

We can't put God in a box and only give him credit to change our lives in ways we think he is capable of. When we set God up to tell him how he is supposed to work in our lives and what we expect from him, we're putting limitations on his power and love for us. Whatever we ask of him, he wants to do it bigger and better. The Father of the Universe cares about our happiness and his plan is always greater than ours. When we stop telling God exactly how to orchestrate our lives and instead say to him, "God my life is yours, do with it what you will," we are tapping into the faith that changes lives. Have faith that transcends understanding, that moves mountains, as tiny as a mustard seed, that requires hoping against hope, and you will be counted as righteous.

Catie O'Malley