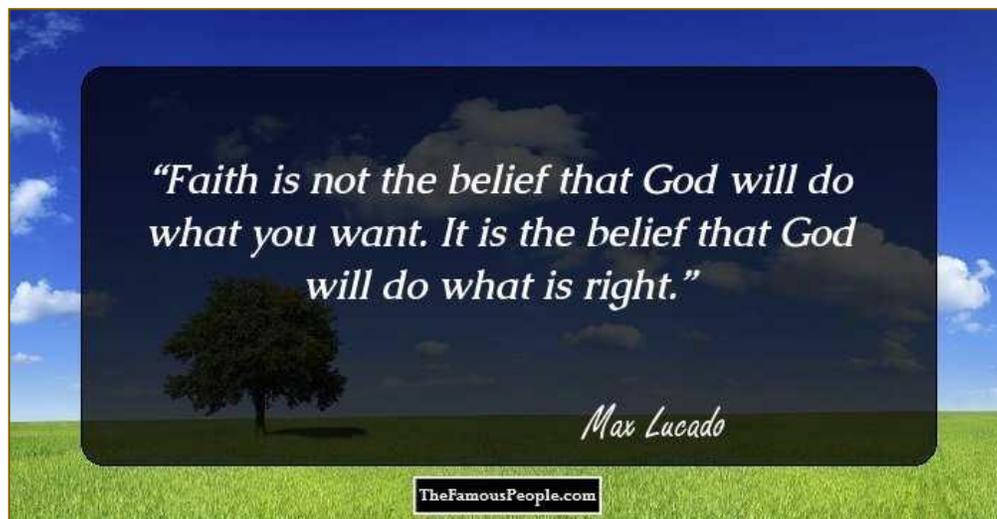


# The Exchange of Faith

Man has always thought there needed to be an exchange of something for righteousness. Even if righteousness is a gift, the person must be at the right place, at the right time, and have some quality that qualifies him as a recipient. What is it that qualifies a person to receive a favor? Many have hit upon the idea that it must be some feat or work or sacrifice or special incantation that releases the gift. So, every religious system from pagan idolatry to sorcery to eastern religions to Christianity has some “combination lock” whose numbers have to line up in order to open up the blessings. We search for the right words to say, the right act to perform, the right key to turn, the right ritual to observe, and the right sacrament to implement to get God to give us salvation, protection, assurance and perhaps even love. We look for the key that opens the floodgates. Read what Paul writes in Romans 4. He focuses on Abraham as the poster child for getting righteousness, receiving that 90-degree-angle position that allows him into the presence of God, where grace is found. Paul eliminates the two commonly proposed combinations accepted by the Jews, i.e., circumcision and keeping the Law of Moses. They thought these two to be the right combination for getting them on the inside. But Paul points out that Abraham’s righteousness was “reckoned to him” before he was circumcised and long before the Law of Moses was given. Try again. On what basis are we IN? Over and over in this pivotal chapter the answer is “faith.” It seems to me that this profound truth of how we enter is also profound for how we walk. Why would I enter by faith and walk by works? If faith unlocks the BIG DOOR, then why would I not trust faith to unlock all the smaller doors I enter daily? There is only one key on our keyring, and that is all we need.



# Reflection and Discussion



Is it difficult or easy for you to accept a gift?

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How did this idea of exchange get embedded in our minds?

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Why do some look for the right combination to unlock God's blessings?

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Read Romans 4. What is Paul's major argument? What are two wrong combinations?

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How can opening the BIG DOOR be as simple as faith? If it gets me in the BIG DOOR, why won't it help me live inside the house?

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Memory Verse: Rom.5:1

“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ...”