

Romans 4:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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:

Analysis

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: Paul details the obstacles to faith that Abraham overcame. The phrase *mē asthenēsas tē pistei* (μὴ ἀσθενήσας τῇ πίστει, "not being weak in faith") uses the aorist participle, emphasizing decisive action rather than gradual process. Abraham did not grow weak when he *katenošen* (κατενόησεν, "considered/perceived") the facts: his body *nenekrōmenon* (νενεκρωμένον, perfect passive participle, "having been deadened/made dead") at about 100 years, and the *nekrōsin tēs mētrās Sarras* (νέκρωσιν τῆς μήτρας Σάρρας, "deadness of Sarah's womb").

Faith is not pretending obstacles don't exist but trusting God despite them. Abraham fully recognized the biological impossibility—Paul uses the language of death (*nekros*, *νεκρός*) twice, echoing v. 17's God who gives life to the dead. The point is crucial: faith doesn't require ignorance or denial of reality, but trust that God's promise is more real than present circumstances. This anticipates Christian faith: we acknowledge sin's deadness yet believe God justifies the ungodly (v. 5). We see Christ crucified yet believe He is risen (v. 24-25).

Historical Context

Genesis 17:17 records Abraham's initial laughter of incredulity when told he'd have a son at 100. Yet Genesis 15:6 says he believed and it was counted as righteousness. Paul focuses on the settled faith that persisted through doubt, showing that justifying faith is directional trust in God's promise, not perfect freedom from questions or struggles. This pastoral insight offers hope for believers who wrestle with doubt.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How is Abraham's honest acknowledgment of obstacles different from weak faith, and what does this teach about biblical faith?
2. Why does Paul use death-language ('dead body,' 'deadness of womb') to describe Abraham and Sarah's condition?
3. In what situations do you confuse 'considering the obstacles' with 'weak faith,' and how does Abraham's example correct this?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	μὴ	ἀσθενήσας	τῇ	πίστει	οὐ	κατενόησεν	τὸ
And	being not	weak	G3588	in faith	not	he considered	G3588
G2532	G3361	G770		G4102	G3756	G2657	
ἐαυτοῦ	σῶμα	ἡδη	νενεκρωμένον	ἐκατονταετής	πον		
his own	body	now	dead	an hundred years old	about		
G1438	G4983	G2235	G3499	G1541	G4225		
ὑπάρχων	καὶ	τὴν	νέκρωσιν	τῇς	μήτρας	Σάρρας	
when he was	And	G3588	the deadness	G3588	womb	of Sara's	
G5225	G2532		G3500		G3388	G4564	

Additional Cross-References

Genesis 17:17 (Parallel theme): Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear?

Matthew 14:31 (Faith): And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?

Matthew 8:26 (Faith): And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm.

Matthew 6:30 (Faith): Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?