

Genesis, pt2: Covenant, part 1 – God’s Promise

Genesis 15:1-6

MPS God calls people to believe in Jesus by faith as the promise of His Word.

OBJ Every person can understand how to anchor their life in God’s promise by three questions.

INTRO **Have you ever had someone break a promise to you?** We have all experienced this, have we not. Broken promises create trust issues. Broken promises create relationship issues. There are many things a relationship can be built on, common goals or objectives, aligned affinities, and even mutual, personal benefit. But every relationship that matters most in life for life is built on one thing, trust. Today we see the most important promise ever made, and never broken.

READ Gen 15:1-6

After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: “Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.” ²*But Abram said, “O Lord GOD, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?”* ³*And Abram said, “Behold, you have given me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir.”* ⁴*And behold, the word of the LORD came to him: “This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir.”* ⁵*And he brought him outside and said, “Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them.”* Then he said to him, *“So shall your offspring be.”* And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness. **Genesis 15:1-6**

TRANS Today God wants to show you something radical about Himself so you can know more of the glory that He is!

God calls people to believe in Jesus by faith as the promise of His Word.

We begin by remembering what is meant by “After these things”. Abram has walked through a valley of defeat to the mountain of victory. And in both settings he demonstrates that his heart and life remain focused on the Lord. He is walking in worship, being blessed and blessing, knowing victory and practicing faithful stewardship. **Worship that holds our life centered on the Lord guards us, so failures don’t overwhelm us in defeat, and victories don’t deceive us with bloated pride.**

TRANS Hearing from God is always most clear within us when He is filling us.

God comforts Abram by commanding him to “Fear not”, because of His character and promise, “*I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.*” Fear is an ever-present reality to be properly stewarded within us, whether a threat is immediately in front of us or looming over us. God reminds Abram that He is his only sufficient comfort because He is His “*shield*”. **God directs Abram to know His character as the anchor for his hope and trust.**

God knows what threatens us, our fears, anxieties and cares. He wants us to trust Him to conquer it for us by working in us. God knows (perfectly) our strengths and weaknesses because He created us uniquely with both. But He does not see us as we see ourselves. Weaknesses are not a problem for God, but a unique distinction of personhood in His divine design of our life. Because of this, God understands (perfectly) our greatest struggles, fears and temptations. IN the person He created us to be God is working for His glory. **Trust in HIM is the foundation of our relationship, and intimacy is the strength of trust. You must know Him to trust Him; you must trust Him to grow (in intimacy) in Him.**

TRANS But discerning the motive in our requests demands a ruthless honesty. Abram is trying to “work it out”, but God tells him to “walk it out”! Follow me by faith and I will show you as I do it!

Genesis 15:2-3

Abram is not asking for a trinket, token or selfish request. He’s failed miserably and succeeded greatly. He knows God’s grace and His goodness. He now inquires to understand more deeply God’s will. **The fruit of life fueled by true worship is a desire for more of God’s heart.** Jeremiah says when we seek God with all our heart, we will find Him. ^{29:12-14a}

ILLUS Watchman Nee (19th century, Chinese theologian) explains how God ordains His will to be made known on earth.



“Each time He works He never goes ahead immediately simply because He has His will; no, He will wait, if necessary, for His people to express their agreement in prayer before He does act.^{p31} The will of God is governed by the prayers of man. ...as regards the *content* of God’s will it is entirely decided by God himself; we do not make, nor even participate in, the decision. Yet concerning the *doing* of His will it is governed by our prayer.^{p32} He looks for the cooperation of man. ^{p33} God himself does not wish to do anything independently, because He chooses to have men cooperate with Him.^{p36} The will of God is always in search of a way out. The Lord is always apprehending someone or some people to be the expression of His will. If many will rise up to do this work, He will do many things because of their prayers. ^{p40}”¹

I use these quotes to encourage us that, “yes, God wants us to know His will by doing His will. The question we must answer is this; **“Is the motive of our prayer for God’s will or our will to be done?”** We will know God’s will when we seek Him, not just “it”. **God reveals His will to His willing and wanting people.**

Genesis 15:4-5 God shows His desire to reveal His will to Abram.

God tells Abram that the member of his household will not be his heir, but that he will have a son. He takes Abram outside to number the stars to know his heirs, though he is without even a son yet. **God instructs Abram to lose himself in the wonder of His promise; then to know that He will do it.**

There is zero earthly evidence of God’s promise to Abram; Z-E-R-O! And yet, God is in no way threatened and His promise no less secure. **God’s promise is more sure than the present reality in which you live is true.** We are so addicted to the blessing of seeing and touching that we balk at what we hear. But with God’s Word, faith comes by hearing. **With God’s promise, what has NO tangible reality at this present moment is more certain and sure than all reality of the moment.**

I am confident Abram tried to count the stars many times in his thoughts, only to grow weary in counting with all that remained. Each star echoed evermore loudly the un-imaginably great and inconceivably big power in God’s promise. Abram didn’t even have a son yet, but his grandkids were un-countable because of the certainty of God’s promise he believed. **Abram was wearied by the endless wonder of God’s promise.**

Imagine this state of being as your daily reality: wearied by endless wonder in God’s promise. When God stakes the sureness and certainty of His promise on His Name and power — so can we, and so should we! Your faith will always be strongest in you when you simply take time to wonder in awe at the promise of God. **If you want an impenetrable faith, absolve yourself fully in the immeasurable glory of God’s unending promise.**

TRANS This is what Abram did.(.6) And look what it did for Abram.

Genesis 15:6 Abram believes God, and God counted his faith to him as righteousness.

This was NOT a case of “Abram knew he could do it, so he agreed to do it.” NO! Abram believed that God had power to do what He promised, so He trusted God because of His promise. **Faith in God was Abram’s righteousness!**

TRANS God is leading each one of us to this today. Paul’s account of Abram’s faith helps us know what it means to live by faith in God’s promise today.

READ Romans 4:18-25

In hope he believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, “So shall your offspring be.” ¹⁹He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah’s womb. ²⁰No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, ²¹fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. ²²That is why his faith was “counted to him as righteousness.” ²³But the words “it was counted

¹ Watchman Nee, *Let Us Pray*. (New York: Christian Fellowship Publishers, Inc., 1977), p31, 32, 33, 36, 40.



to him" were not written for his sake alone, ²⁴ but for ours also. It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, ²⁵ who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification. **Romans 4:18-25**

OBJ Three Questions to settle one's life in the anchor of God's promise.

Question #1: Do you believe God's promise; that He has the power to do what He has said? Rom 4:18-19

This question is the catalyst that either turns one to God or away from God. God has made a way in Jesus for the stain of sin to be removed from your soul; for you to be made righteous. All you must do is believe to receive His free gift.

Countless arguments can be offered to deter you. Jesus even says many of them will sound reasonable, family demands, life responsibilities, more convenient opportunities, better offers, etc. ^{Matt8:18-22} Some even claim to only be looking for one more answer or evidence for proof. Though they may sound "reasonable", none are reasons not to follow Him, only distractions and excuses. The great barrier is NOT knowledge, but lack of faith. Let me ask you, "What is your 'tipping point' for faith, that element you identified and said, "IF this, then I will believe."? How many facts must get stacked to convince you that God is worthy of your faith?" I invite you today, believe in God; He alone has the power to do what He promised.

Question #2: Are you walking by faith in God's righteousness? Rom 4:20-22

No unbelief deterred or swayed Abram. He stuck to God's promise. And every step of faith drove the promise deeper within. Abram didn't need to understand all right doctrine. God called Abram to believe in His power and trust that he would give him a son; one son. Verse Twenty tells us that every step of faith Abram took strengthened the conviction in his heart of the power of God's promise because He gave God all the glory. And that's why it was counted TO him NOT as success, but of far greater glory, AS righteousness. Righteousness is the credit we receive from God's victory through Jesus Christ!

The issue is not, "do I know His will?", but "have I trusted His promise to obey His command?" We often ask God for the "whole picture" before we step. But Abram tells us, you never need more than the Word of God to seek the will of God. What God has said is all you need, no matter how little it may seem! God is not looking for capable people, but available people who will believe Him so His will can be done by His way on earth, for His glory! God does not search for successful people; but surrendered people.

Before you offer any other excuse, let me encourage you. God is not afraid of your weakness, inabilities, failures, struggles, fears or anxieties. He knows them better than you. God's call on your life is NEVER about you, but by His power ordained to flow through you as it completely redeems you. The struggle to follow God's call is REAL because the work of God through you is re-making you. God brings the full measure of His transforming power IN you as He works THROUGH you. I urge you today, walk in obedience by faith, wherever God is calling and whatever He is commanding for you today.

Question #3: Do you know that Jesus is the fulfillment of God's promise? Rom 4:23-25

Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of God's promise! He is the anchor of our faith, the author, origin, source and sustainer of faith. It is in Him and Him alone that we have eternal life with God.

Consume your life with the promise of God in Jesus Christ: the expanse of His horizon is without end, the height of His majesty without measure, the measure of His love never ceasing, the breadth of His power without limit, the brilliance of His glory never fades. He will overwhelm you, surround and encompass you, but never crush or destroy you. He will never leave you nor forsake you. He is the same yesterday, today and forever. He is God in human flesh and "in Him" "all the fullness of God" is pleased to dwell." ^{Col1:19} Are you looking to Jesus? Is your faith in Him, and Him alone? You can trust God's promise in Jesus Christ because every answer for glory and goodness is "YES", a resounding YES in Him!

CLOSE We get hung up trying to figure life out. Jesus commands us to follow Him. Obedience brings insight and understanding that the greatest mind will never settle on by rumination or meditation. You will never know it until first you do



it. You will never do it until first you believe Him. STOP trying to “work out” God’s will in your mind and trust Him to “walk it out by faith” with your life! Follow Him in obedience by faith! He will do it!

God calls people to believe in Jesus by faith as the promise of His Word.

Today He is calling you to believe and trust in Jesus.

