



Series: Beyond Babel - week 4
Sermon Title: From Fear To Faith
Date: 7/21/2024

Genesis 15

The opportunity for fear seems to be all around us, yet God tells us not to live in fear. Throughout the Bible, we read, "Do not be afraid". Yet there are times when we take our eyes off God and put them on our problems.

Big Idea: If your faith fails, remember the God you serve

A FAITH THAT IS SHAKEN

Genesis 15:1

Abram was known as a man of faith and walked through every door that God opened. Yet, here we see something has this man of faith rattled. Something was causing his faith to fail.

In chapter 14, we read that 4 kings from the North attacked 5 kings from the South and took the plunder and hostages, including Abram's nephew Lot. One hostage escaped and told Abram what happened. Abram gathered 318 of his trained servants and attacked and defeated the 4 kings, rescued Lot and the others, and recovered all of the possessions.

On his way back, the king of Sodom came out to meet him and offered Abram a reward, but Abram refused. It's after this great victory that fear began to set in for Abram as he thought about the "what if" scenarios. After all, he made some pretty powerful enemies in that battle, possibly including the king of Sodom after their last conversation –

His faith was failing until he remembered the God he served. Like Abram, no matter how mature your faith is, there may come a day when your faith is rattled. When you take your eyes off God, you serve and focus on your problem – as if it's greater than God.

That brings us to the second and most powerful aspect of this story -

THE GOD WHO COMFORTS

This is where God reveals Himself and moves Abram from the "what if" category to the "even if" category. God knew exactly what was going on with Abram, and He gave him a message of reassurance. **Genesis 15:1**

That is God's nature. He is the protector of His people. **Psalms 28:7**

God is your shield and your protector, too. No matter what you are going through, God is aware. **2 Thessalonians 3:3**

Abram had been waiting 10 years since God made the verbal promise to make him into a great nation, and Abram was beginning to question if it would happen. Then Abram questioned God about the promise. **Genesis 15:2-3**

God is not afraid of our fears, nor does He have doubts about us when we have doubts about Him. I think of Jesus' own disciple – Thomas, who had doubts about the resurrected Jesus. **John 20:26b-27**

Abram brought his doubt to God (**Genesis 15:5-8**). God responded by making a contract (**Genesis 15:9-11**). In Abram's day, they didn't sign papers; they made a blood covenant. They would slaughter and cut the animals in half and arrange the animals on both sides. Both parties would walk in between the carcasses as a visual way of saying if I back out of this agreement, may what happened to these animals happen to me.

God then does something unexpected – He puts Abram to sleep. Then, he tells him that his descendants would be enslaved for 400 years before they were freed to take possession of the promised land.

Difficulty often precedes fulfillment (**John 16:33**). Then we read that God did something unusual **Genesis 15:17-21**. In this covenant, there are not 2 active parties! God alone in the form of a smoking firepot and torch passes between the pieces. He alone makes the promise. God going through alone is God saying, "Abram, I am going to go through for both of us so that if I fail or if you fail, I will take the responsibility for both of us."

This is the gospel. God said I will take upon myself the curse of the covenant. I will bless you – even if it means that I will have to die. God says I will own this covenant for both of us. And hundreds of years later, that is what happened on a cross on Calvary. And once again, darkness set in. **Mark 15:33**

Abram had the promise of descendants and land – that was his reward. Eternal life in Jesus – that is your reward. The same God that made a blood covenant with Abram made a blood covenant with you. That when you trust in Jesus for your salvation, you will become His child and will be His forever. The God who gave Himself entirely so you can be in a relationship with Him and will under no circumstances break His covenant.

Discussion Questions:

- **What about the sermon stuck with you this week? What part challenged your thinking?**
- **Why does it seem more natural to focus on our problems rather than trust God?**
- **What are some "what if" fears that you have been living with that you need to turn over to God?**
- **What are some ways that we know God speaks to us?**
- **How important is it that God keeps His word with Abram? How does that impact salvation?**