

TRUST ME AND MULTIPLY
GENESIS 15:1-21



CONNECT

Have you ever looked up at the night sky and tried to count the stars? How far did you get?

WORD

Genesis 15:1-21 (ESV) - 15 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." ²But Abram said, "O Lord GOD, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" ³And Abram said, "Behold, you have given me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir." ⁴And behold, the word of the LORD came to him: "This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir." ⁵And 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." ⁶And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness.

WHAT

What does the Bible say?

Abraham's faith journey is far from being an unbroken string of faith victories. He struggles frequently with doubt and disbelief. In the last chapter, he won a great victory with God's help over a coalition of five kings. So, when this chapter begins, Abraham is probably feeling a little apprehensive that this coalition will be out for revenge. He is afraid that retribution is at hand and he needs some reassurance.

God appears to him in a vision and tells him not to be afraid. God promises to be a shield for him and furthermore, God promises to provide him with a great reward. Despite all of this Abraham still has some doubts about the original promise. He questions God. Although he certainly appreciates God's promise to be his shield and his reward, it seems to be ringing a little hollow in his ears. It is as if he is saying, "Yeah God, speaking of rewards, how about that son you promised me." Did Abram's question mean he doubted God? Yes. But there is a difference between a doubt that *denies* God's promise and a doubt which *desires* God's promise. Abram wants to believe and is looking to God to strengthen his faith.

God responds in an incredibly powerful way. The God who made the stars in the night sky calls on Abraham to count them if he can. He promises that his descendants will be as numerous as those stars. God not only reiterates his promise, he expands on it!

The result of this powerful illustration is one of the most powerful verses on faith in all of scripture. "Abram believed the Lord, and it was credited to him as righteousness." (vs. 6) The apostle Paul will later use this verse to show how we are saved. Our belief in God's promises brings us into a right relationship with him. People often ask, "How were people saved in the Old Testament?" The answer is, the same way as we are now. The only difference is that they looked forward to a promise that was coming in the future and we look backward to a promise that has been fulfilled. What we believe in is the same: God keeps his promises!

What follows is God's incredible covenant with Abraham. A covenant that is unlike any other in history. God promises to bless Abraham in a very specific way and he does so without asking Abraham to commit to anything in return! This covenant with Abraham is a precursor to God's covenant with us. He promises to redeem us, bless us and use us to bless others and all we have to do is trust him to do it!

Think about how comforting that is. Not only will God always keep his end of the bargain, but he will make up for when I mess up. His commitment to our families is greater than ours. The same is true for his commitment to his church and to our growth as his disciples. Where we mess up, he stays committed. No matter where you are, or how badly you've stumbled, you can get up and go onward in faith because God's commitment to you has never subsided!

SO WHAT

What is the relevance to my life?

- What really stood out to you in today's message and lesson? What would you like to discuss further with the group?
- In this chapter, the word of the Lord comes to Abraham in a vision. In the Bible, the word of the Lord comes in many different ways: by a personal appearance of God, by an audible voice, by visions or dreams, by the ministry of angels, by the working of the Spirit of God upon the mind or by the ministry of a prophet or preacher. How does the word of the Lord come to us today?

- In this passage, God promises to be Abraham's shield and his reward. God provided the perfect answer to Abraham's need. How has God been the answer to your need?
- Peter Kreeft wrote, "Trusting God's grace means trusting God's love for us rather than our love for God." How is this demonstrated in the story of God's covenant with Abraham? How is it reflected in your life?
- Multiplication Power comes from bold faith. What is God asking you to step out in faith with so that he might multiply it for the kingdom of God?

NOW WHAT How do I apply the word to my life?



How does this lesson change the way you think about trusting God? Why did God choose this moment to bring this lesson to you?



What has God laid on your heart with this lesson? How does understanding God's covenant with Abraham change your relationship with God?



What does God want you to do differently this week as a result of this lesson? What specific plan will you put in place to deepen your relationship with Jesus so that he might multiply the influence of the Kingdom of God through your act of faith?

How can we help you and hold you accountable? How can we pray for you? What can we do to show our love for you this week? Who do you know that needs to hear this lesson?

4 Who can you share it with?

