When You Doubt Your Ever After February 10, 2019

*Genesis 15:1-21 Series: Walk into God’s Blessings*

God’s dealing with Abraham teaches us to trust in His faithfulness not our own. God never asks us to split the bill of salvation, but He does want us to trust him.

Intro: Painful experiences fuel campus atheism.

1. When circumstances make you doubt, glory in God’s ability.
2. God’s promises are great, but …

v. 1 *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.”*

1. Our circumstances can make God’s promises hard to believe.

v. 3 *And Abram said, “Behold, you have given me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir.”*

1. God answers our doubts with His majesty.

v. 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.”*

There is no “can’t” in the vocabulary of a God who flings stars into place.

* When do God’s promises feel empty to you?
* How do you think Abraham felt as he was led outside of his tent and asked to try and count the stars?
* When our circumstances overwhelm us, what are some ways that we can glory in God and His ability?
1. When circumstances make you doubt, trust in God’s grace.
2. Abraham models what true faith is.

v. 6 *And he believed the LORD*

He trusted the God who guided him.

He believed in the Lord when it meant leaving the gods of his ancestors.

His trust was in a powerful, unpredictable God of promises.

1. Our standing with God is determined by faith.

v. 6 *And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness.*

“Righteousness” here is right standing with God.

To “count” someone as righteous implies that the person is not righteous on their own.

Romans 3:22-23 *the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*

1. God doesn’t ask us to split the bill for our salvation.

The ritual in vv. 9-11 and v. 17 is the answer to Abraham’s doubts about the promise in v. 8.

People would often seal contracts by walking in between butchered animals as if to say, ‘This is what will happen to me if I don’t keep my part of the bargain.’

God is the only one who passes through the carcasses. He takes upon Himself all the penalties of the covenant.

* How is the faith that Abraham demonstrates different than how people often characterize believing in God?
* Why does God care so much about faith? Why doesn’t He just count our sincere efforts to do good as righteousness instead?
* What are some ways that we can act like we have to split the bill for salvation with God?
1. When circumstances make you doubt, rest in God’s plan.
2. God’s goodness doesn’t guarantee sunny skies.

v. 11 *birds of prey came down on the carcasses*

v. 12 *dreadful and great darkness fell upon him*

1. God’s schedule isn’t just marked out in days or weeks.

v. 13 *Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years.*

v. 14 *But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions.*

1. God’s plan for us is woven into His plan for others.

v. 16 *And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.*

* Why do difficult circumstances make us doubt God?
* How do you think Abraham felt when he heard God’s 400-year-plan? Why do you think God usually only reveals His plan for our lives one step at a time?
* Why is it important to remember the connection between God’s plan for us and His plan for other people?
* Where do you most need prayer in applying this message to your life?

When the smoking pot and the flaming torch passed through the carcasses, God was showing Abraham and us, that He bears all the weight of the relationship. He pays the price. He makes the sacrifice. And what he showed Abraham in form, he demonstrated at the cross in reality. Jesus is the lamb who was slain for our sins.

Study ahead: Next week, we’ll study Genesis 16:1-16.

Notes