

Sermon Title: Is it His Story or Yours?

Sermon Text: Genesis 15

"After these things..." Quick summary of Genesis 12-14

Ch. 15 - "the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: 'Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be great.'" How would you respond?

- Abram's life had been protected... But was that God or chance/good fortune?
- Abram became wealthy... But was that God's provision or self-preservation?
- Abram was still a sojourner; he owned no land... Was this God sparing him from going down the path of Lot, or is God just playing games with Abram?
- Abram was still childless! His name/legacy would die with him... Is this a practice in patience, or is God simply not in control?

Do we ever struggle with such questions? Do we at times have a rock-solid faith that believes God & trusts that He will always come through, but at other times feel like we have been completely left on our own, waiting upon a God who may or may not show up? **Faith can be a struggle!**

Abram was a man of faith, but he was human too! The struggle was real for him as well! He couldn't always see from God's perspective, know God's timing, understand God's ways! **He had questions too, and that is ok.**

- He couldn't see how a land that didn't belong to him would be his own! **Vs. 8 - "O Lord God, how am I to know that I will possess it?"**
- He didn't understand how he could father a nation without an offspring! **Vs. 2 - "O Lord God, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?"**
- He didn't know "how" or "when", but when it came to the question of "if" God would be faithful. **Vs. 6 - "He (Abram) believed the Lord, and he (God) counted it to him as righteousness."**

Despite what he didn't see/know/understand, he had an **"assurance of things hoped for** (God's promises coming to fruition), **a conviction of things not seen."**

Do we have such faith in the midst of our human limitations and struggles?

Examples of our struggles with faith today:

What is your faith struggle today? _____

If you have questions, you are in good company! If you don't have all the answers, you are not alone! **If you are struggling in your faith, come and struggle with the rest of us!**

God knew Abram's struggle, so He spoke Words to him that he could cling to in the midst of the struggle - words that would strengthen his faith! **Vs. 4-5,7**

But even then it was still a struggle. **Vs. 12 - "As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell on Abram. And behold, dreadful and great darkness fell upon him."** **Have you experienced those dark nights of the soul?**

God responded to Abram's by entering into a covenant with him, a covenant in blood, by putting His own life on the line to prove His faithfulness! **Vs. 17-21**

Our situations today are different than Abram, but our God is the same, and His faithfulness in keeping His Word to us is the same! We can trust Him!

He did not walk through slabs of beef to show us His covenantal faithfulness to us, but He did hang His son between two nails, shedding His own blood to remind us that He loves us, He's making a way for us, & He is trustworthy!

What seemed impossible to Abram, was not only possible for God, but guaranteed by the One who declared the very end from the beginning!

The same is true for us today! **We serve a God of improbable possibilities**, who if He declares it, it will come to pass. But just b/c He can, & just b/c nothing/no one can thwart His plan, that doesn't mean it aligns with ours!

God promised Abram a land, but it was a land that he himself would never own. It was a promise that he would never see fulfilled with his own eyes. It would take generations to be realized, and that's hard for us to accept!

God's view is far more vast, His plan far more developed, His goodness far exceeding what we are able to comprehend. Abram got a glimpse of God's story here in Genesis 15 as it intersected his own story. We sometimes catch a glimpse of what God is doing in our story as well. **How do/will we respond?**

One last example... & a song(s) of a faithful response (While I'm Waiting)

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