

When Dave asked me to preach, he gave me freedom to pick any passage I wanted. Genesis 15 is one of my favorite chapters in all of the Bible, so I thought it would be a good place for us to spend some time this morning.

I. Backstory

- A Gen 15:1 “After these things...” causes us to remind ourselves who Abe is
- Gen 12—God commands Abram to start walking east and Abram goes.
- Gen 13—story of Abram and Lot
- Gen 14—Lot is enslaved and rescues him

II. Covenant Making

- V 1-5 Abram questions not just plan of God or promises of God but presence of God.
 - questioning God Himself
 - God begins to prove His faithfulness to Abram**
- V 9-10 gives Abram list of animals
- Dave’s preached before so some of you know what’s happening, others look freaked out**
- What’s all about? Great question. Don’t call PETA. There is a reason for it.**
- Common way to make a covenant
- More than a promise
- blood oath where swear on your life you will be faithful to the covenant
- make a covenant, you keep it.

- walk between the animals

- weddings most obvious example of covenant
- maybe start doing this for weddings
 - I think we should start doing this for weddings. Have bride & groom walk down aisle between slaughtered animals**
 - if groom leaves her at alter, he will be torn apart**

- serious ceremony
- V 12-16 God prophecies Israel enslaved in Egypt
- We know it as exodus story
- Remember Genesis written by Moses and given to Israelites
- Biggest struggle—God left us, abandoned us
- Then they read this prophecy, learning God ordained this
- What comfort!!!
- Yes life is hard but God knew it would happen so He’s in control and will continue to be faithful**
- True of any struggle your going through
- next section God tells how he will be faithful**

- V 12 “a deep sleep fell on Abram and a dreadfull and great darkness fell upon him.”

- symbolizes death and maybe, in spiritual sense, Abram going from death to life
- V 17 “**When the sun had gone down and it was dark, behold, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces.**”
- God made covenant with Abram
- smoking fire pot & flaming torch symbolize God
 - How did God protect Israel by day? A cloud over their heads**
 - How did God protect Israel by night? A flaming torch in the sky.**

- Covenants always made by 2 people
- one person walked through the animals
- this covenant all about our salvation and no part we play in that.

--Commanded to rest.

--Every other religion = work for grace and earn salvation. God commands us to trust and rest

--Jesus makes same argument in John 3. Can not cause ourselves to be born again.

--Nothing to do with God sustaining our salvation

--nothing to do with God glorifying us on that day

--Truth God gives us. Even before Jesus, God made sure everyone knew cannot earn salvation.

--Problem is someone needs to be punished for sin

--God ordained it so sin must be punished. Cannot act as if it never happened

--So 2,000 years after Abram God came to earth and lived for righteousness

--Then on cross torn apart like the animals

--Jesus took curse of the covenant on our behalf even though we did not promise anything

--Yet we still have trouble trusting Him.

--Abram not only doubting plan of God or promise of God but presence of God

--You doubting presence of God?

--Where is God is sickness, financial trouble, family problems?

--Room this size, probably some who are troubled still believing they have to work for love

--**God saved us, awesome. Thank God. Now that we are saved, who does God promise to be for us?**

III Verse 1

--**"Fear not, Abram, [because] I am your shield; your reward shall be very great."**

--Normal for non-Christians to fear death, future

--why palm readings and tarot cards are popular.

--**Remember the wiggi board craze?**

--God does not say **"Fear not, abram"** because that's empty

--How is God our shield? Does not protect us from troubles or evil.

--Protects our salvation, our hope and peace in Him

--lyric in song **"He will hold me fast"**

--**I could never keep my hold through lifes fearful path;
for my love is often cold; He must hold me fast."**

--second part of verse

--what is Abraham's reward?

--If everything good in life taken away, can I still enjoy God and be satisfied?

--another song lyric, this one from **"all I have is Christ."**

--**"hallelujah all I have is Christ."**

--**"hallelujah"** shout of joy and praise

--**"all I have"** typically used in negative sense, do not have enough

--**"all I have is Christ"** is enough, He is enough

--God does not promise anything to us except Himself. Is that enough for us?

--and he reveals himself to us through the Bible.

--beautiful things about Scripture.

--Genesis written 3500 years ago. Tells of Abram struggling with faithfulness in God and salvation.

--Anyone struggle with that today?

--God knew sin of man constant and temptations the same

--wrote book of Genesis for us as much as for Israel

--My favorite is yet to come

--I think Verse 6 explains the process of justification in a most glorious way.

III Verse 6

--**“and he believed the Lord and He counted it to him as righteousness.”**

--**“And Abram believed the Lord and God counted it to Abram as righteousness.**

--What is righteousness?

--Life lived to standard God commanded

--None of us can do that but Jesus did

--Last Sunday Dave said, because of sin of Adam, humans are sinful imperfection cant lead to perfection

--sinfulness cannot lead to godliness

--**Jesus has righteousness through perfect obedience to law He is able to give us his righteousness**

--first syllable

--standing behind Christ, hidden in Him **Colossians 3:3**

--to people in room who have not accepted Christ as both sacrifice and righteousness,

--you will meet God one day. **How can you answer for your sinfulness?**

--Romans 4, Gal 3, and James 2.

--Lets go to Romans 4 to see how Paul uses this verse. 4:1-5 (Drink water)

What then shall we say was gained by Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh? 2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. 3 For what does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness.” 4 Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. 5 And to the one who does not work but believes in[a] him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness

--Paul spent first 3 chapters of Romans saying we cannot earn God’s love

--ch 1 **“Gentile, you cannot work for your salvation.”**

--ch 2 **“Jew, you cannot obey the law perfectly.”**

--ch 3, **in case you missed it, no one, Jew or Gentile, is righteous and all have fallen short**

--**V 2 reminds us that we are a prideful people**

--if there is something to boast on, we will do it.

--salvation in Christ alone gives us no opportunity to boast, except to boast in the Lord.

--**moving to V 4**

--If Friday was pay day and I did not have a check, I would be a little upset.

--I worked for that money, I deserve that money.

--the grace of God is a gift, something we could never work for.

--**if I was sitting in that pew and listening to this sermon, I would say I know the gospel, I believe the gospel, I study the gospel, I even preach the gospel, but, if I was honest with myself, there is a sinful part of me that still believes I have something to earn, something to work for, something to prove.**

--If your like me, let us ask the Holy Spirit to humble us to the level to where we know **“it is the free gift of the Father.”**

--the only hope of righteousness is the life of Christ.

--the only place to find the forgiveness of sin is the death of Christ.

--the only way to be promised eternal life is the resurrection of Christ.

--Lastly read quote from Dr. Martin Lloyd Jones, pastor in England during mid 1900's

“The man who is concerned most of all about his public appearance before men is never much concerned about his private attitude before God. You have a great and a good name, bouquets are thrown to you during your life and flowers uncountable will be placed upon your grave. You are proud of yourself and satisfied with yourself. Men and women think highly of you, you are praised as a ‘good sort’ and a ‘good fellow’ for your good nature is known by all. What a farce! What deceit! What if you were found out? What would they think of you if every act and every thought of yours were suddenly placed before them? What if they could but enter your heart and mind for just one day and find out what is taking place there? What if they knew your secret life as well as your public life? As long as you are content to go on fooling others about yourself, you will never face yourself, and until you face yourself honestly you will never feel the need of Jesus Christ our Lord as your personal Savior.”

--My hope today each of us carve out time **to honestly face ourselves and the Lord,**

--even do it during our communion time

--admitting our need of Him

--Maybe for first time, maybe done it for a long time

--asking His help for Him to be our reward, shield, righteousness, and salvation

Pray

God we have this knowledge in our minds. Pray that you soak it into our souls. Cause us to understand the depths of your love. Help our unbelief. For the glory of Christ we pray. Amen.

Benediction: Looking forward to the church picnic tonight at 5:00. Hope to see you there. Now for our benediction... 2 Pet. 3:18 – May we grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.