

Don't forget the Promises - April 13, 2022

In his sermon, "Cutting the Deal", Pastor Doug taught about a covenant between God and Abram found in Genesis 15:1-21. Verse 1 says:

"After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, saying,

"Do not be afraid, Abram,
I am your shield;
Your reward [for obedience] shall be very great."

Can we go back a few chapters and see what "things" preceded this verse? Here is the first time the Bible records God speaking to Abram:

Genesis 12:1-3 (Amp)

Now [in Haran] the Lord had said to Abram,

"Go away from your country,
And from your relatives
And from your father's house,
To the land which I will show you;

2

And [a]I will make you a great nation,
And I will bless you [abundantly],
And make your name great (exalted, distinguished);
And you shall be a blessing [a source of great good to others];

3

And I will bless (do good for, benefit) those who bless you,
And I will curse [that is, subject to My wrath and judgment] the one who curses (despises, dishonors, has contempt for) you.
And in you all the families (nations) of the earth will be blessed."

Abram was 75 years old. He immediately obeys, leaves Haran with his household, and goes to Canaan and the Lord confirms that he is in the land that was promised to him Abram builds two alters along the way to worship the Lord, one near Shechem and the other near Bethel, He will honor the Lord who spoke to him.

Then as this chapter continues, we see a shift. Severe and oppressive famine comes to the land. Abram leaves the land God promised to his descendants and goes to Egypt to find food. While their household is there, Abram pretends that his beautiful wife Sarai is his sister. This half-truth was spread because he feared he would be murdered. After all, Abram and Sarai had the same father. But in the promises God spoke to Abram, verse 3 says, "that God will curse the one who curses (despises, dishonors, has contempt for) you." Pharaoh falls under that curse and he ends up driving Abram out of Egypt.

God holds up His word even when Abram falls short.

God holds up His word even when we fall short.

Please take some time and read Genesis chapters 12-15 in one sitting. We observe Abram during the famine, war, the kidnapping of his nephew Lot, and his beloved wife remaining childless, all while waiting on God's promise to make him a great nation. We also see Abram worship the Lord outside Shechem, in the eastern hills outside Bethel, among the great trees of Mamre at Hebron, and as he received a blessing from the King of Salem, Melchizedek. All of this happened before Genesis 15.

After all this, Abram meets with God and performs the covenant with God that Pastor spoke about on Sunday. Abram tried to figure out how God was going to fulfill His promise to him. Human thinking and manipulation will not push God to move faster. Dear family, we can't lean on our own understanding as we journey through life. His ways are higher than our ways. As Abram waited and worshipped the one true God, the Almighty confirmed over and over again His promise to Abram. We know the end of the story, God gave Abraham his son Isaac. It took 25 years to happen. And even now his family is growing, too numerous to count.

God confirms, again and again, His promises to us through the Holy Spirit, the Word of God, and the Body of Christ. Do we believe what God has promised to us? Could you take a moment and read all of John 16? Jesus says to His disciples in verse 33:
33 I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have [perfect] peace. In the world you have tribulation and distress and suffering, but be courageous [be confident, be undaunted, be filled with joy]; I have overcome the world." [My conquest is accomplished, My victory abiding.]

Jesus promised us the Holy Spirit. He also promised we will see trouble, but that we could take courage as He has overcome! As believers and followers of Jesus, we know that the Holy Spirit is with us and in us. He desires to fill us to overflowing! As His people, we must be confident, undaunted, and filled with joy. Filled with hope and faith even during times of physical and spiritual famine, wars, family upheavals, and health issues. We must draw closer and closer to Him who gave Himself for us. He is with us, and He is trustworthy, Every promise will come to pass, in His time and in His way.

Your sister in Jesus,
Liz