

From Creation to New Creation

Genesis 15:1-21

"Fear Not, I Am Your Shield"— July 17, 2022



Introduction

Ephesians 2:4 tells us that God is rich in mercy because of His great love for us. Sometimes you hear truths like that and it seems too good to be true. We struggle to believe it.

Other times truths about God are hard to believe because of the circumstances in which we find ourselves. Our experiences seem to contradict His promises. We ask, "Where is God now?" Pain and suffering can leave us doubting God's love for us. We wonder if God sees and cares. We wonder if He is as good as He says He is.

Have you been through a trial that has caused you to doubt God's promises or His love? Trouble that leads to fear can happen at any age. You look at the world and it seems so far from what it is supposed to be. It tempts us to fear. What do we do with the fear that tempts us to wonder if God is good? We need an "even if" faith?

Sermon Outline

1. Trust the person of God. Vs. 1-6
2. Hope in the promise of God. Vs. 7-21

Read & Discuss

1) Read vs. 1-6

In Chapter 14, Abram had a great victory. Sometimes we are most tempted to fear right after we have won a great victory. Abram may have been tempted to do just that. God reminded Abram that He is Abram's shield. A shield protects - it stops the fiery darts aimed at us.

If trusting God is the reason that the arrows came at first, we may be tempted to not trust and wonder if God is out for our good. Remember, God is not shooting the arrows at you. He is for you. It takes faith to trust. God knows what we are going through and with what we are threatened. Is there a circumstance in your life now that causes you to feel the way Abram may have felt? True and lasting refuge is found in the presence of God NOT the absence of trials.

The tension in Abram's heart is not due to unbelief. It is there because of his belief. He doesn't understand how it will work out. His circumstances and God's promises don't seem to match. So he goes to God in prayer with exactly what is on his heart, and it is a messy prayer. God is not bothered by messy prayers. He invites them. He doesn't delight in fake religion. He is big enough to handle it. (Ps 62:8) When was the last time you poured out your aching heart to God in a "messy prayer?"

Do you ever feel that God is miles away from you? Abram was wrestling to put the pieces together, and God's word takes the initiative (vs. 4). God is not distant to us. God took on flesh in the person of Jesus to come to us. He stands at the door and knocks that we might open and dine with Him. Pour out your heart to Him.

What was the result of Abram's belief? He is counted or considered righteous. It wasn't that he was righteous or deserved it. Faith is an instrument by which righteousness came. What makes Christianity unique is the object of our faith. When your heart is fearful, in what or whom do you trust?

2) Read vs. 7 - 21

How can God declare Abram righteous?

So that Abram will have certainty that God will fulfill His promise, God covenants with Abram. Abram would have been familiar with gathering the animals for a covenant. Both parties would have walked through this to "cut a covenant," staking their life on the terms of the covenant as a guarantee to keep the covenant. Abram may have been fearful about how he would ever keep his end of the covenant? Would his failure cause him to end up like one of the animals?

In writing this, Moses included the details of the smoking fire pot and the flaming torch which would have been familiar to the Israelites. God led them with a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. He met them at Mt. Sinai in a cloud of smoke. They would know that this was God. God caused Abram to sleep so that He would be the only one to walk through the blood. By doing so, God is showing how committed He is to His promise. God is promising to keep both sides of the covenant.

God will keep His promise. You may have to wait. It may seem that God will not come through. But to those who have faith - He guarantees it with His life. God is sovereign. He is in control of all of human history. God is working out everything in agreement with the purpose of His will. ([Daniel 4:35](#)) Have there been times of waiting in your life? Did you or do you now experience times when you think God won't come through or answer your persistent prayers? Are you tempted to think that if you were just more "spiritual" or served God better that life would be better and the waiting would end?

The Apostle Paul wrote to the Christians in Rome and Galatia because they were stuck thinking that they had to perform good works. He was reminding them that that is not how it works. We are not made right with God by what we do. We are made righteous by the work of Jesus. The world operates on how well we perform, but this is not how God operates. So much of our fear comes from how well we perform. We never will be good enough.

Freedom from fear - the dark, exhausting place of trying to do good - comes from the cross of Jesus. Trust in the completed work of Jesus. God promises to forgive, cleanse, make new, and set free. We can trust God to be our shield.

Additional Reading: *Romans 4; Galatians 3*

Prayer of Response

1) After hearing God's Word, what sin do I need to *confess*? From what do I need to *repent*?

2) How should my life be lived this week based on what I have heard? What should I *understand, believe, desire, or do*?

Spend time praying together in response to God's word asking for His help and greater faith to follow Him in the week to com.

If you missed the sermon on Sunday or would like to listen again, visit our website at <https://fbcum.org/sermons-new/>

*Next week's sermon text: we turn to Genesis 16:1-16 "Wavering Faith"
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