

Faith Conquering Fear (Genesis 15:1-21)

Series: E-100

November 2, 2014 Pastor Bill Bump

Many scholars believe that what took place in the Old Testament is a picture for believers today of what takes place spiritually in their own growth in faith.

Genesis 15:1-6 (NIV) After this, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: “Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward.”

²But Abram said, “Sovereign LORD, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?” ³And Abram said, “You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir.”

⁴Then the word of the LORD came to him: “This man will not be your heir, but a son who is your own flesh and blood will be your heir.” ⁵He took him outside and said, “Look up at the sky and count the stars—if indeed you can count them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.”

⁶Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.

This passage illustrates for us what is commonly called “the law of first occurrences.” This refers to the first time a word or phrase is used in the Bible.

There are four such words or phrases in this passage, and each teaches us an important truth:

1. “The word of the Lord came”

The recurrence of this phrase many times in Scripture emphasizes the God-breathed character of the Bible.

2. “Do not be afraid” or “Do not fear”

This phrase reveals what is going on in Abram’s heart.

Several things might have caused this fear, but deep down in Abram’s heart was a gnawing fear that he had somehow misunderstood the promise of God.

Abram tossed and turned in a mounting spiral of fear and doubt and loneliness.

God says He is the sufficient answer to all our fear.

Hebrews 13:5b-6 (NIV) ... God has said, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.” So we say with confidence, “The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?”

3. “I am your shield”

God says that He is our practical defense against any force that would destroy us.

We would lose most of our fears if we believed this truth.

God also says that He will be our “very great reward.”

God is to be our deepest treasure.

Abram shares his deepest fear.

Genesis 15:2-3 (NIV) ²But Abram said, “Sovereign LORD, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?” ³And Abram said, “You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir.”

God responds by repeating His promise.

Genesis 15:4-5 (NIV) ⁴Then the word of the LORD came to him: “This man will not be your heir, but a son who is your own flesh and blood will be your heir.” ⁵He took him outside and said, “Look up at the sky and count the stars—if indeed you can count them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.”

Galatians 3:7 (NIV) Understand, then, that those who have faith are children of Abraham.

4. “Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness.”

This phrase is talked about again and again in the New Testament.

In 2014, God declares us righteous because of our faith.

Conclusion

What made Abram’s faith so strong?

He did not look at the difficulty so much as he looked at the One who had made the promise.

His eye was not resting on the problems, but on the promise.

God still reckons righteousness to the person who believes.