

Peace with God – Abrahamic Covenant

Preached by: Matthew S. Black

Text: Genesis 15

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Series: Genesis

Introduction: Open your Bible to Genesis 15. The title of tonight's message is "Peace with God". God says to Abraham tonight and to us "Fear not!" 365 times in the Bible God tells us in form or fashion that we are not to fear. Apparently we don't listen very well, so we need to hear it often.

Fear can keep you up at night. Sometimes it is the silly, irrational fear that creeps up on us when the lights go out.

Nothing in this world ought to bring us fear.

Probably, the call to follow Christ is the most fearful thing of all. We are to be "crucified with Christ". That means we are dead to what we, the world, or anyone else wants. We are to be "alive to God". That means we are alive to do whatever God wants us to do. We are dead to sin and the world and alive to God.

Abram received a similar call. **Genesis 15:1**, "After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: "Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great."

You have two choices every day and every minute of your life: FEAR or FAITH!

Isaiah 26:3, "You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you."

So, naturally, Abram wants to know what God will give him since he has nothing to fear.

Genesis 15:2-6, "But Abram said, "O Lord GOD, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" 3 And Abram said, "Behold, you have given me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir." 4 And behold, the word of the LORD came to him: "This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir." 5 And he brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." 6 And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness."

God tells Abram not to fear. God is with Abraham. I want to give you four reasons why you can trust that God is with you too.

Abram was overwhelmed with the immense promise God gave Him. He had faith, but He needed God to increase his faith.

Are you in need tonight of more faith? Is your faith weak at times? Do you need God to help you? You say, "I believe, but help my unbelief". The oft cry of the Lord's disciples was, "Lord, Increase our faith" (Lu 17:5).

We know God's promises, but so often we fear. I want to show you four pathways that bring us to perfect peace in Christ.

I. Peace through the **Picture** of Christ (vs. 7-11). God's **design** in giving you the Bible is that you would see **Christ**.

purpose

Genesis 15:7-11, "And he said to him, 'I am the LORD who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess.'" 8 But he said, 'O Lord GOD, how am I to know that I shall possess it?'" 9 He said to him, 'Bring me a heifer [cow] three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon.'" 10 And he brought him all these, cut them in half, and laid each half over against the other. But he did not cut the birds in half. 11 And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

God swears to Abraham with an oath, a covenant that He will receive the land.

What was the sacrifice in the ancient covenant. It wasn't just Israel who sacrificed in a covenant. This was the way of the land. This was a picture of what would happen if one did not fulfill the covenant. God uses it to point us to the Gospel in both the Old and New Testaments.

The covenantal sacrifice points to both the Old and New Covenants. The Old says we are guilty and we should pay. The New says God is merciful, and Christ does pay with His own life.

Application: Look for Christ in the Bible, and you will find yourself near to God. He is the Lamb of God that we see in all the sacrifices. Where ever you "love" or "wisdom" in the Bible you can substitute the name of Christ. Christ is the wisdom of God. He is the essence of love. Don't look for moralism or religiosity. Look for Christ.

Jesus said to the Pharisees in **John 5:39** that they had the Bible but they missed Christ. Listen, He said, "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me."

Are you reading the Scriptures and constantly seeing the picture of Christ throughout? Without regular Bible reading, you will stagnate. You will not grow.

Application: Some of you are changing. It's awful. You are changing in the wrong way! The Word of God will change you in the right way. There is no such thing as neutral in the Christian life. You are either growing in Christ or backsliding!

Transition: Now there's something else that will draw us near to Christ.

II. Peace through the **Prophecy** of His Word (vs. 12-16). God's **direction** in giving you the Bible is that you would live your life by it.

So often we rear because we don't know what to do, where to go, or what to think. We could often bypass those questions by reading God's Word. *We often trust people and wishful thinking more than we trust God's Word.*

Context: Abraham struggled with life. He at times lied and tried to manipulate life instead of trusting in God. He had to learn to trust God.

So God gives Abraham a prophecy. Abraham would live, but once his family entered Egypt, it would four generations that would come out again.

And that's exactly what happened. Once Jacob entered Egypt, it was four generations—when Moses and Aaron, Jacob's great, great grandsons would deliver Israel. Look at this amazing prophecy.

Genesis 15:12-16, “As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell on Abram. And behold, dreadful and great darkness fell upon him. 13 Then the LORD said to Abram, “Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years. 14 But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions. 15 As for yourself, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age. 16 And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.””

Application: Abraham needed to prepare his family to live by the Bible so they would not be in bondage to fear. They would go into slavery. They would suffer. But it's ok. God's steering the ship. **You need to know that God is steering the ship.**

- **Romans 8:28** And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

This is something God promised would happen, and it did happen. Can God's Word be trusted? What's another prophecy of God's Word that hasn't happened but will soon happen? The coming of Christ. Are you ready?

Listen, God's Word is true. You can trust it. You can bank your life on it. You have nothing to fear if you are in Christ. God's Word will come to pass.

- **Eph. 1:11**, God says that He "works all things after the counsel of His own will".
- **Pro. 3:5-6**, "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. 6 In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths".

Application: Our problem is often not that we don't know or read God's Word. It's that we don't trust it!

III. Peace through the **Presence** of God (vs. 17). Our **devotion** for God should flow out of His love for us.

Verse 17, "When the sun had gone down and it was dark, behold, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces."

- **1Jo 4:19**, "We love because he first loved us."
- He says, "I will never leave you nor forsake you" (**Heb. 13:5**).
- **Heb. 12:29**, "...our God is a consuming fire".
- Jesus says, "Lo I am with you always even to the end of the age" (**Mat. 28:20**).

Difficult and terrible things happen to us and those around us: death, illness, rejection, failure, old age. If we don't keep our eyes on the Lord we WILL be caught up in fear of some kind.

- There may be only occasional bouts with these kinds of fears.
- Or they can become quite possessive.
- Certain fears are even healthy. It's quite normal to be wary of poisonous snakes or drunk drivers.

Others may be irrational fears that take control of us:

- Fear of heights
- Fear of flying
- Fear of open places
- Fear of strangers

Isaiah 41:10, "fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

1 Samuel 12:24, “Only fear the LORD and serve him faithfully with all your heart. For consider what great things he has done for you.”

What else will keep us from fear?

IV. Peace through the **Promise** of God (vs. 18-21). **God’s declarations will never fail.**

Abram had no deed to this land. All he had was the promise of God locked in his heart.

Genesis 15:18-21, “On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, “To your offspring I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates, 19 the land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, 20 the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, 21 the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites and the Jebusites.””

Gal. 3:27-29, “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to promise.”

Heb. 9:15, “Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant.”

Eph. 3:4-6, “When you read this, you can perceive **my insight into the mystery of Christ**, 5 which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations **as it has now been revealed** to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. 6 This mystery is that the Gentiles are **fellow heirs, members of the same body**, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.” Fellow heirs with WHO? With those who were reconciled to God in Israel.

Eph. 2:12-13, “remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.”

Conclusion: Our hope is in Christ! He promises never to leave us! Finding peace comes by trusting God.