

A Faithful Friend

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[0 : 0 0] If you have your Bibles, I want you to turn to Genesis chapter 15. Genesis chapter 15, the other day, or yesterday actually, as I was reading, I read numbers and I read some numbers.

And I read about Paul preparing to speak to Agrippa. And then I turned to Proverbs 18. And I read Proverbs 18, 24, a man of many companions may come to ruin, but there's a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

I posted that, and one time I posted that before on social media, and somebody asked me in the comments, is that talking about Jesus?

I said, it sure is. Now, the reality is Solomon didn't know the details of Christ when he wrote that. He didn't know what we know about him, but that's who he was speaking of.

He was talking about this friendship that we can have with the Lord. And we see that kind of friendship with the Lord in our passage today in Genesis 15.

[1 : 1 6] I want you to see this morning how that friendship with God played out for Abram and how also it plays out for us.

Now, there's a lot in this passage of Scripture. We're not going to cover it all today. I know where my cutoff point is. I want to focus on the faithful friend that we have in God.

Genesis 15, beginning in verse 1. It says, after these things, remember what these things are? Abram went to rescue Lot with 318 men.

Lot's been going on. He's fought a battle. 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. And Abram said, O Lord God, what will you give me? For I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eleazar of Damascus.

[2 : 2 3] And Abram said, Behold, you have given me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir. 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. And he brought him outside and said, Look toward heaven and number the stars, if you're able to number them.

Then he said to him, So shall your offspring be. And he believed the Lord, and God counted it to him as righteousness.

Now let me just say this. Let me just make a commercial here, okay? Although we have modern technology that is excellent, there is value, and I'm going to show you what it is. There is value in bringing a copy of God's word with you.

There is. And I want to encourage you to do that. That's not a chastisement. It's just an encouragement, okay? And one of the reasons why is because when you get to a verse like verse 6, you need to underline it.

[3 : 3 0] Because it is crucial to understand the relationship that God had with Abram and what he gave to Abram. And how that relates back to us. And every time you come across that passage, it needs to beam in your life.

He goes on and says, 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. But he said, O Lord God, how am I to know that I shall possess it?

He said to him, bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtle dove, and a young pigeon.

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.

And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away. And as the sun was going down, a deep sleet fell on Abram.

[4 : 41] And behold, dreadful and great darkness fell upon him. And 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. But I'll bring judgment on the nation that they serve. And afterward they shall come out with great possessions.

As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace. You shall be buried in a good old age. And they shall come back here in the fourth generation.

For the iniquities of the Amorites is not yet complete. When the sun had gone down, and it was dark, Behold, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces.

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, The land of the Kenites, The land of the Kenizzites, The Kamanites, The Hittites, The Perizzites, The Rephrim, The Amorites, The Canaanites, The Gerushites, The Jebusites, And the Termites.

[6 : 12] That's why you need a copy of God's Word. The covenants of the Bible are precious.

And there's a difference in the covenants and a contract. A contract can be breached. But God's covenants are kept and fulfilled by the Lord.

He's faithful. He made a covenant with Noah And promised the earth would never be destroyed by a flood again.

And he put a rainbow in the sky to mark it. He made a covenant with Moses that actually reestablished and backed up the one that we have here.

He made one with David to establish the Davidic throne which would be fulfilled through Christ. Which is also promised in the new covenant that is found in Jeremiah 31, 31-34.

[7 : 15] This covenant is the promise for the nation of Israel. And it is carried out in a profound manner. And we'll get there. But more than that, I want you to just know today three truths about God that are blessings.

I really just want you to be blessed today to know what a friend you have in the Lord.

It is quite precious, the opportunity that we have in God. God is a comforting friend.

God is a comforting friend.

God is a comforting friend. He knows there will still be battles. He knows there will still be battles. And no king that goes to war likes to lose. And this was an alliance of kings.

[8 : 45] So you knew they were coming back. There was going to be more battles. That's why this begins in verse 1 by saying, After these things.

and in the midst of that not knowing what the future would hold and not knowing what battles that Abram would continue to face and knowing that he just came through a very difficult one but yet God was with him and empowered him beyond measure in order to succeed after these things after the successes there's still things that you have to face and God responds by saying I am your shield so when you come combine that the word of the Lord came and you see the shield there it is used numerous times in scripture but this is the first time it's used Abram needed to be comforted one because he didn't know what was ahead the other thing is because he's waiting for 10 years he has waited it has been a decade since God had promised him a bunch of stuff and yet he hadn't got any of it yet he waits he's not possessed the land not not any of it he has not started a nation he did not have his promised son he didn't have anything that God had promised him and God comes to him I am so glad that when it seems like God's silent his word will come through and speak just in the nick of time I'm so glad the word came to Abram that tells me that we don't all always have to come to God let me go further than that we don't come to God he comes to us he always comes to us he may require a step of faith on our behalf but he is always the one that initiates that he didn't come to God on his own you didn't come to God on your own he came to you Romans tells us we were dead in our trespasses and sins we could not come to God thank God he met us where we were and brought us to where we are and we'll continue thank God as a shield he'll go before us you remember the disciples in the midst of the storm in the midst of the storm Jesus told them in Matthew 14 verse 27 take heart it is I it is I don't be afraid yeah yeah but what about the storm I'm going through what about that alliance of kings that we just defeated that will continue what about the fact that I haven't conquered the nation that you told me that I was going to get and I haven't taken on those properties yet what about all that what about and in the midst of that God says he brings his word and says I'm your shield in the midst of the storm Jesus said don't be afraid they didn't recognize

Jesus at first in that storm but just because they didn't recognize him does not mean that he was not there I want you to understand that even when you don't recognize the hand of God upon you even when you don't recognize his presence even when you don't recognize the movement of God around you he is there he is a shield that is spoken of again and again and this is the first time but it's spoken of again and again and again in scripture and I want you to notice how it's spoken of in Psalm 28 verse 7 it says the Lord is my strength and my shield in him my heart trust and I am helped my heart exhorts and with my song I give thanks to him in Proverbs chapter 30 verse 5 says every word of God proves true he is a shield to those who take refuge in him so I'm telling you today that God is a shield he's a protector he's a guard he's a defender he's a shelter he's a screen and I love the way Proverbs 30 verse 5 puts that every word of God puts the word of God in there as well as the shield not only is God a shield a protector a guide a defender a shelter a screen of protection but thank God his word is if you'll hide the word of the Lord in your heart and you'll live by it he'll keep you out of a bunch of mess that you would otherwise go into he protects you from that every word proves true and you can rest in the word of God when you have difficulty run to it when you get confused by the sways of the world run to it when your life gets hit by a blizzard of heartache and difficulty run to the word of God even better yet just start the day with the word of God let it be implanted in your life before the junk of the junk of the day hits you you'll be amazed but in those times of distress and in those times of hurt and in those times of difficulty you run to the word of God trust him at his word the lack of clarity in our country today is absolutely amazing you know what clears up all the mess the word of God it's clear it's clear yeah but preacher I just don't feel I don't it don't really matter what you feel it's based on the word of God period he is a comforting friend but not only that but God's a faithful friend he's faithful from the time God told him that he would not only bear a son but that a nation would come through him I want you to hear me today it was 25 years until he saw the signs of pregnancy in his wife 25 years last time I looked that's a long time we can glorify that all we want to I'm gonna tell you the truth it was tough it's tough waiting a decade and that's what he waited for to hear the word that we're reading today it's tough to wait two and a half decades for the promises of God to come through but that's what he did it's tough but holding on to the promises of God when you see no evidence of his moving that's tough but God's movement is not based on what we see

God's movement is not based on what we recognize it's based upon his faithfulness but the silence of God which I want you to understand the silence of God is not connected to his absence he is present whether you hear him or not the silence of God is broken when the word of God comes and the first thing that Abram asked him is what about that air remember what you promised me and God pointed him to the sky and he said as numerous as the stars is in the sky so will your offspring be Abraham never thought that children would call him father Abraham and would sing father Abraham had many sons and many sons had father Abraham man he didn't feel like it that day so where's my hair and God then said and and not only that I'm going to give you this land and Abram asked how will I know and God showed him and and what he described in verses 9 and 10 and 17 is a covenant it was to be a pact between two usually in front of their own people and he took these animals that God instructed him and he laid them out in a systematic fashion and typically when a covenant was made both parties would walk through those those animals that had been split and divided both parties would walk through that and they would form a bond the best way I know how to describe it is it was as if they were saying if I break this covenant with you

I'll be like one of these animals I'm dedicated to to what I'm doing it was a public event it was a lot more elaborate than just signing a piece of paper a lot more elaborate than a handshake although it meant the same thing it was just weightier but I want you to notice the difference in this covenant that God made with Abram Abram didn't walk through the split animals only God did and his presence was made known through a flaming torch it was God's way of saying I won't break my promise Abram didn't participate it was based on God entirely God makes unbreakable promises and that's the grace of God God doesn't do what he does for us based on us

[19:16] God does what he does for us based on who he is and God keeps his promises we break our promises God keeps his promises and we misuse what God has entrusted to us but thank God in response God is steady he is faithful he walks alone when no one else walks with him I want you to notice two more things about God's faithfulness one is he works on his timetable not ours now that bothers me but that's the truth verse 13 and 14 says then the Lord said to Abram get this now 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 400 years but I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve and afterward they shall come out with great possessions in other words it's going to take a long time Abram for the promises that I've made to you to be fulfilled the Egyptians will overtake them they will become slaves for 400 years that's easy to get past when you just turn the page from Genesis 50 to Exodus 1 but I got news for you

America is 246 and a little over half years old 246 years old and they were in slavery for 400 and God raised up Moses to deliver them and Abram he says I will give you the land and more descendants than you can count on my timetable the second thing about God's faithfulness is this he works even when we can't see him work now I've said this before and I'll probably say it again because we got to get this God was going to fulfill his promise but Abram wouldn't see the fullness of those promises in his lifetime but God's faithful God's faithful you do what you do for the Lord you trust the Lord you live for the Lord you honor the Lord you sacrifice yourself and your own desires and you serve the Lord and do what he'd have you do do what you do for the Lord and you trust him for the results because God is faithful he's faithful and lastly

God is a saving friend it's the best part God's a saving friend James chapter 2 verse 23 when he talks about this passage he says and the scripture was fulfilled that says Abraham Abraham believed God and it was counted to him as righteousness and he was called a friend of God now if you notice chapter 15 closely you'll see the dialogue back and forth between God and Abram it was friend to friend that's how God communicates with us too but he does it through his word when we share our burdens with the Lord in prayer and then we open up the word of God asking him to lead us just like in verse 1 it says the word of God will come he will dialogue with us through the Holy Spirit of God leading us in his word just like a friend but I want you to notice the best thing and there is so much more here

Genesis 15 verse 6 says and he believed the Lord and he counted it to him as righteousness God credited him with the righteousness it's not that Abram got it right he didn't get it all right he messed up again and again but he believed the Lord and he trusted him with things that he could not see and when he did not know how it was all going to go down he trusted God he trusted him his trust and his faith is what he needed to get him the credit that God would give him with the righteousness of God that is just like the salvation that we find in Christ as a matter of fact all of this scene prophesies to our hope in Christ the sacrificing of those animals that led to the covenant with the Lord speaks of the sacrifice of Christ that gives us opportunity the Lord working through the sacrifice alone points to the fact that our salvation is in Christ alone the promises of God being beyond what Abram could see and beyond his lifetime speaks to the eternal promises that we have in God the credit of righteousness speaks to having faith to believe in the Lord and in return the Lord bless us with the righteousness of Christ in other words he washes all of our sins away that's a friend a friend that is willing to comfort a friend that is faithful thank God a friend and a Lord that saves as I was pondering on all this yesterday thought of an old hymn that says this have we trials and temptations is there trouble anywhere we should never be discouraged take it to the Lord in prayer can we find a friend so faithful who will all our sorrows share

Jesus knows our every weakness take it to the Lord in prayer are we weak are we heavy laden cumbered with a load of care precious Savior still our refuge take it to the Lord in prayer do your friends despise and forsake you take it to the Lord in prayer in his arms he'll take and shield you you'll find a solace there friend today I don't want to chase you I don't want to correct you I don't want to try to convict you I just want to bless you to tell you you've got a wonderful friend in the Lord and he'll walk with you through the valleys that you walk through and he'll comfort you and I'll let you down and the person sitting next to you will let you down and anybody else you know will sometimes let you down but I know one that will never let you down and that's the Lord he loves you but not only that but he'll meet you where you are today and he'll change your life for all eternity if you're here today and you don't know the Lord Jesus

[26 : 48] I didn't ask you if you was a member of this church I didn't ask you if you came from a different denomination I didn't ask you if you've been in church all your life or how much your grandpa loved God if there's never been a time in your life when you surrender your life to the Lord Jesus and ask him to cleanse you of your sins to come into your life and to change you I want you to know today's the day of salvation he'll do that he is your friend he meets you where you are he'll make you what he'd have you to be and you come to him are you burdened today you come to this altar and you lay it down before him he's your friend he'll meet you here he'll walk with you he loves you dearly I don't know about you but when somebody loves you that much and is always there for you you want to do everything you can for him you know what we can do for him we can live for him we can celebrate him we can share him thank God for a friend that we have in Jesus every head bowed and every eye closed

I just want you to obey God this morning no matter what he'd have to say to you what he'd have you to do just be faithful Lord Jesus let your sweet spirit move and work in this place as only you can God have your will and your way in our midst bless us with the power of your presence God save the lost convict the saved as needed help each one of us to simply be obedient to follow you as you lead us oh God I pray in Jesus precious name Amen marvelous you you you