

The Joy of God's Promises (Mike Kaye, CE Elder)

Genesis 15:6 *Abram believed the LORD, and it was credited to him as righteousness.*

Today's sermon is based upon Genesis 15:5 and Matthew 28:16-20. The first was God's promise to Abram that despite Sarai's and his old age he would yet have offspring too numerous to count. The second reading declares the Great Commission--Jesus' command to His disciples--and to us!

What happens in Genesis 15 after the promise of verse 5 is of massive importance to each person who believes in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior! Surely, the first few times I ever read verse 6, I probably only noted that it was a nice statement and being credited with righteousness was something good for Abram. But in reality, that little statement bridges the gap from the time of Abram's vision to Jesus on the cross and to us today--first in our gaining eternal life thru faith in Christ and second, as a consequence, having joy deep in our souls that must light a fire in our hearts to carry out Jesus' command in the Great Commission to **"GO!"** We are to witness near and far (local, regional, etc.), as Jesus declared in Acts 1:8: "you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

With Abram's belief, God views Him as in complete relationship, aligned with His purposes in past, present and future all at once. It was not as if Abram was perfect -- he would still initiate human "good idea" actions that displayed lack of consideration of God's promise and protection. He would fearfully lie about Sarai as his wife and he would agree to father a child (Ishmael) through Sarai's servant Hagar rather than wait for God's timing to provide an heir.

Abram's belief and trust was like our belief in Jesus. God credited/imputed righteousness to Abram just as we are saved by grace alone, thru faith alone, in Christ alone--works not required. Like Abram, that does not make us perfect, but gives us the promise of life eternal because like him, we are justified--deemed aligned with God's purpose past, present and future all at once. It's not like we were declared innocent of our sins; it's like the charges were dismissed before we were ever brought to trial.

The rest of Genesis 15 describes how God then made a "blood" covenant with Abram. In such, the two parties would cut sacrificial animals in half and walk together between the halves. The symbolism was that whoever violated the covenant would emulate the sacrifices and pay for the transgression in blood to death. But God put Abram into a deep sleep and He alone passed thru the sacrifices! God knew (from before Creation) that Abram's physical and spiritual (per Galatians 3:7) descendants would sin and violate the covenant but only God committed to pay the price in blood--which He did with Jesus taking our place on the cross.

Only Jesus--fully human and fully divine--could pay our penalty for violating the covenant. Have you felt joy today that He has paid **your** price? Please meditate on that when you get home. And feel such joy in your heart over God's promises that you have to tell someone.

Afraid you're too late? You're still very welcome to try one of these:

- **Sunday, 9 am: Sermon topic of the day;** Cher Kaye
- **Sunday, 9 am: Book of Romans;** Melissa Vande Mark
- **Monday, 2:30 pm; Book of Revelation;** Mike Kaye