

10.12.25

Genesis

Chapter 15 - God's Unseen Guarantees Beyond Calculations (vs. 4-6)

Genesis 15:4-6: Then behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, “This man will not be your heir; but one who will come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir.” And He took him outside and said, “Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them.” And He said to him, “So shall your descendants be.” Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.

Well, to say that we grossly underestimate God, His love, and His promises toward us is really an understatement. God is so great, isn't He? And His promises are, too. I suppose some of it has to do with the fact that, as the Psalmist says in Psalm 103, we're but dust, and perhaps it's hard for dust to imagine that the God of the universe

would even care remotely for him. In Psalm 8, we read that the psalmist goes out and he looks at the heavens, and he looks at the stars and he looks at the moon, and he says, "What is man that You would even give a thought towards him?" It's hard to comprehend that God would be involved in our lives and let alone that He would care that we exist, but beyond that, as Jeremiah 33 would say, that He would want to show us great and mighty things, and do those great and mighty things for us. Those are what are called promises. I was thinking of this last week, nobody told God that He had to give me a promise. He just does it. And the fact that He just does it out of His goodness is telling me that the promise wasn't merited in any way; it was just His goodness that did it.

Unfortunately, not only do we put God in a box, but we put His love for us in a box, and we put the promises that He gives us in a box. We forget who He is.

Isaiah 40 kind of puts things in perspective. I've oftentimes thought about it as you want to have a picture of God and His greatness.

If you look with me in Isaiah 40, it reads this way,

(Isaiah 40:15) “Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket,

And are regarded as a speck of dust on the scales;
Behold, He lifts up the islands like fine dust.”

And then it reads in verse 17,

(Isaiah 40:17) “All the nations are as nothing before Him,
They are regarded by Him as less than nothing and
meaningless.”

Those are the great masses of people that we're afraid of.

Then it says in verse 25,

(Isaiah 40:25) “To whom then will you liken Me
That I would be his equal?” says the Holy One.

(Isaiah 40:26) Lift up your eyes on high
And see who has created these stars...”

The heavens have a way of putting things in perspective, don't they? And it is the glory of God that is being manifested.

If you think about that wonderful Psalm 19, The heavens declare His glory. The firmament shows forth His handiwork.

Moses will write in Exodus 33:13, "Let me know Thy ways that I might know Thee, so that I might find favor in Thy sight. I pray Thee, show me Thy glory." And certainly, the glory of God clearly surrounds us. Great and mighty things He desires to show us. But we put Him in a box. We say, "Well, you know, from my perspective, I don't see how He can do that," or from our limited way of thinking.

I oftentimes think about the passage in Luke 5 where Jesus is there by the seashore and Peter is cleaning his nets from fishing all night. Jesus turns and He says, "Why don't you put them out there again? Put those nets out there again." And it's hard to believe that God would actually be giving a guarantee that something good would come out of this. And so, immediately, Peter begins to calculate in his own mind, "Well, let's see, the way things basically work, the patterns that I'm used to, and the prowess that I have, fundamentally says that this isn't going to work out. If you look at the laws of nature, fundamentally, fish aren't going to be biting during the day. We did it during the night. They weren't biting then. They weren't coming into the nets. We weren't able to

bring them in, draw them in. It's not going to work now.” In fact, the way that Peter puts it in the passage is, “We worked hard all night and caught nothing.” What Peter's just done is he's basically limited God by virtue of what he can see, whether it be the powers of the laws of nature or the patterns that he's used to.

There is a passage that is found in John 6 in which Jesus is surrounded by multitudes. Multitudes, one thing you don't want is a lot of them being hungry, and at this juncture they are. He turns to Philip and He goes, “So, where are we going to find the money to feed these people? Where are we going to be able to buy bread for these people?” And Philip immediately goes into calculation, right? 200 denarii. And we put God in a box by virtue of what we possess. We say, “Well, we only have this, so that's not going to be enough to do what You tell me You need to do.” And so, we limit Him. We put Him in a box. The walls begin to build around the promises of God, and we begin to see them in a diminished state rather than in the grandeur in which they are.

In John 11, Lazarus dies. He's a beloved, Lazarus. Mary and Martha. Martha comes running to Jesus, and she goes, "If You would just have been here earlier, we could have saved him." In a box, the promises of God, He turns to her and says, "I'm the resurrection and the life. Do you believe this?" She goes, "Oh, yeah, I believe that someday we're going to be resurrected." You ever had those promises of God, and you go, "You know, those promises, I understand how they worked back then. You know, in Moses' time, He parts waters and those are the kind of things that He does in the lives of those people in that time. And maybe in the future it's going to happen, but not today. Not today." And we begin to limit the graciousness of God, the promises of God. It's very easy for us to do because we are finite in who we are, and thus we are finite in our thinking. We begin to marginalize who God is, and before long, we rule out the ability of God to actually fulfill the very promises that He said that He would do for us. So, we step back, we step away from those promises, and we don't embrace them, and thus we live a life that is in darkness.

We've oftentimes quoted the passage a number of times as we've been looking at the promises of God in the Old Testament in 2 Corinthians 4. The chapter ends this way, basically saying, we don't look at things that are seen, we look at things that are not seen. We sometimes actually translate that, "we look at the invisible," but actually that would probably not be true. This text is not saying that God's promises are invisible. It's just saying that you don't see them. And what we're dealing with within this particular passage are the promises that are God's that are clearly visible to us. I was thinking about my Grandfather Elliott, and by virtue of him valuing Scripture, and I would watch him just hug on to the Bible and just, as he would read it with great feeling, I began to see the value of Scripture. My own father, if you were to walk with him in his yard in North Carolina, would begin to show you the different trees that he planted and the different flowers in his garden. And as he would walk through, he would point out certain things, and he would say, "Look how this flower shows you how much God loves you." Now, the fact is, those flowers have been around for a long time. I just didn't see that they were

pictures of God's love for me. There are things all around us that are clearly visible, but we don't see them. I guess that's why it says there in 2 Corinthians 4 that the god of this world has blinded the minds. Now, the question is, who has he blinded the minds of? And the text actually goes on to describe. He's blinded the minds of the unbelieving. That's a very interesting statement. We oftentimes say that seeing is believing, but it actually is just antithetical to that; believing is seeing. For when you begin to believe, then your eyes are opened, and you begin to see the wonderment of God.

I don't think any place says it better than 2 Kings 6, in which you have an interesting scenario with the Syrians. They are pretty ticked off at Elisha because he's been subverting all their plans. They're getting ready to pounce on Israel at any given moment. And he comes with prophecy and warns them. And so, the king of Syria goes, "We've got to get this guy." So, what he does is he actually finds out where Elisha is and his attendant, and they surround the city. They come at night and with his many horses and many chariots. Little Elisha, and they

feel like they have to have all these. "I guess this guy's a prophet. I mean, God's on his side, so we need more army." So, I guess maybe because of the fact that God was on his side. So, they surround this city just for Elisha. The attendant wakes up to see and to find that they are literally surrounded by this massive army of Syrians ready to pounce on them. And he turns to his master and says, "Master, what shall we do?" Elisha turns to the Lord and he said, "Lord, open his eyes. For those that are with us are greater than those that are with them." And his eyes are opened, and Scripture says that he saw chariots of fire and horses and many angelic beings surrounding the army. I've often wondered, "I wonder if Elijah was in that group," because we know that he actually went into heaven on the chariot of fire. So, he had gone before. What a wonderful picture that is. Because what it's revealing to us is that there are things that are there; we just don't see them. And the way that we see things actually causes a hindrance. God has given us so many promises, and they're there, they're real. You're not seeing them because of the fact that you're not believing, you're not trusting in God.

God has given a great promise to Abram, and in this passage, it is this promise that He turns, and He wants to convey to Abram. Abram begins to think in terms of what he can do to make this promise actually work. And God is revealing to him, “I’ll make it work,” as Ephesians will say, “far beyond what you could ask or think.”

If you turn with me in Genesis 15:4, we’ll begin by reading this wonderful text in which God takes Abram out of the realm of the box, out of the walls that he has and into the realm of God.

Genesis 15:4 begins by saying,

“Then behold, the word of the LORD came to him...”

The “behold” is a demonstrative in the passage, making a great emphasis here. It’s calling our attention. It could literally grab us by the collar and say, “You’ve got to see this.”

Now, I want you to back up.

If you look with me in Genesis 15:1, it reads,

“After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision...”

Now, in both cases, you have the phrase, “the word of the LORD came.” These are the only two places in the Book of Genesis that phrase is used. If you were to transliterate from the Old Testament, the Hebrew, into the Septuagint, which is the Greek, you would actually find that the word that is used is the word “*logos*,” which is the same word that's used in John 1 of the description of Jesus Christ, “The Word became flesh,” the *logos* became flesh, “and dwelt among us.” Behold, at first, in Chapter 1, he saw the *logos*. You know, you think of “Word” as hearing. He saw the Word, and it was in this state that he saw the vision, and God begins to demonstrate a personal relationship. When you look at Melchizedek in the chapter before, he refers to the great *El Elyon*, the strongest strong one. But in this text, it is the word “*Yahweh*,” the personal God of Abram. Scripture tells us that Abram was a friend of God, and so we have this personal, in-touch relationship. God tells him within the text that He is His shield, and He is His great reward, if he would believe this. So, behold, now the Word of the LORD comes to him, and we have a personage as such. This Word becomes visible and talks

with Abram. He came to him saying, "You've been thinking about how things are going to happen by virtue of your strategy, by virtue of your methods, but it's not going to happen the way that you think. You thought that maybe when I gave you a promise that you were going to have a great nation, that it was going to come through the one man that was born in your group here as a servant, and you were going to somehow make Eleazar your heir." The term that he uses for "heir" seems to actually literally be defined as "son of possession," that he was going to be the son of possession. Abraham says, "Well, it has to be because I can't have any children. Because of Sarah, it's not going to happen. Of course, obviously, we're too old at this juncture. So, this is what You must mean." And God says, "No, not at all." It interests me that He actually felt like He had to come. I think there's some things you just have to say face to face to people. You can't just send a note. You can't just e-mail. You have to actually visit them and say, "No, let me tell you what I meant."

So, He gets very specific in the passage, and He says, "The one that you thought, Eliezer," which by the way, I kind of

get the feeling that Abram probably named him, because his name means “God has helped me.” So, his perception probably was, “This is how God was going to help me.” And we do that. God gives us these promises, and then we kind of work out a way that we can help Him fix it, or we can help Him do it. And we go, “This is the way He's going to do it; this is what He's done.” And I could just see God in heavens going, “I did not mean that at all. That's not what I had in mind.”

(Genesis 15:4) “Then behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, “This man will not be your heir...”

You couldn't get any clearer than that.

In case he was still in the realm of ambiguity, He goes on and states this,

“... but one who will come forth from your own body...”

“*Mē'ê*,” your own internal organs. That's pretty specific, isn't it? Now, Abram will actually come to the point of believing this, but he doesn't fully comprehend it yet because he now has got to figure out that it's going to come through Sarah's internal organs. But he has yet to

believe that. But he's going to believe at this juncture that God is going to do that.

“... but one who will come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir.””

Great, great text. I don't think it's a mistake that the word “steward,” or, in the passage, “heir” in verse 2, actually sounds like “Messiah”. “*Mešeq*” is the word; “*Māšîaḥ*” is Messiah, which is pretty interesting. So, the promises of God are clear within the passage.

Verse 5 then takes us into a whole different realm, and it's fundamentally God taking Abram out of his tight perceptions, these walls and these boundaries, and taking him outside. And it's a great picture. It's like God going, “Why don't you step outside, Abram? I mean, you're so stuck in your little walls. You've got to come outside and see what I have for you.”

So, the way it reads in verse 5 is,

(Genesis 15:5) “And He took him outside and...”

And the way that the passage is in the “Hiphil,” it actually seems to convey that He actually let him out, “Come on out.” That would have been a great picture, wouldn't it?

So, He let him outside and He says,

“Now look toward the heavens...”

That's an interesting statement.

If you look in Genesis here, Genesis 15:7, we're reminded that Abram came from Ur of the Chaldeans. If you were to take the word “Chaldeans,” “*kaśdîmâ*,” you would actually deal with a word that in Latin, “Chaldeus,” means astrologers. They were known to be astrologers. Whether you look at Daniel 5:7 or Isaiah 47:13, the Chaldeans were known astrologers. They looked to the heavens all the time. In Ur of the Chaldeans specifically, they worshiped the god of the moon. They call it Sin. It's kind of spelled in your Bibles, S-I-N. We think of it as sin, but this is the word Sin, or Nanna, that particular god they worshipped. And of course, the emphasis is that they looked at the skies, they worshipped the things of the skies.

You look at in particular in Isaiah 47:13, they actually are called star gazers. It is why the wise men that come from the east were given a star, because that's where they're looking. They're looking at the stars for advice. They would actually devise their prophecy and predict by the moon the things that were going to happen.

To tell Abram to look at the skies would almost be redundant, because for 75 years of his life, that's all the Chaldeans did, was look at the stars. It amazes me how we can look at something year after year after year. We can dissect it. We can go into it in many different variances and yet come out with a wrong conclusion. We have people all the time and we build these magnificent telescopes; some we send out to space. I always chuckle because people are looking for this sense of, "We're going to find out why we're here." So, they're going to go in the deep space to try to find that. Of course, the further they go, the more lost they get and the more they don't understand. They begin to throw out numbers and calculate things like billions and trillions and whatever. I've oftentimes told Connie, "It's amazing to me how one

guy says like 50 billion years and another guy says 100 billion years. How could you be that far off?" But you know that they're just speculating. You know it's just the way that they're thinking. What are they doing? They're looking at the stars. Why? I don't think they know why, fully. They just believe and are looking for some kind of answer. But it seems like the more that they look, the less that they know. The way that it's put in 2 Timothy, ever learning, never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Today, this day, in this passage, Abram's going to look at the stars, and he'll never look at them the same way again. The stars will be a picture of those that are his children, and God will say, "Calculate this." You know how we have a tendency to calculate in our little box? God goes, "Let's calculate forever. Let's calculate eternity. Let's calculate beyond what you could ask or think. Let's calculate outside your box. Let's start numbering." We limit God. We perceive Him as like us in some ways. But who would you liken God to? And so, His promises are given to us. When He gives us a promise, we conceive

that “I know how God's going to handle this.” You have no idea. But I can tell you this, until you **start believing, you'll never see**. And this is a wonderful passage because at this moment, Abraham believes.

It is the same verse that is used in Romans 4,
(Romans 4:3) “... AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS
RIGHTEOUSNESS.”

The best way that I can put the phrase, if you look in verse 6, it says,

(Genesis 15:6) “Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.”

“Righteousness,” in the simplest form of explanation, would be “right with God”. At the moment that he believed, he was now right with God. That's a great passage, isn't it? Which is telling us what God has been looking for all along, “I want you to trust Me. I want you to believe that what I say is true, and I want you to take that step in faith. Because when you do, you're going to see things that you never saw before.” It wasn't that they were invisible all along. You just didn't see it because the

god of this world has blinded your eyes to these things. And the way that he blinds our eyes is that we think in terms of a box. We think in terms of, "Well, I don't think I could do that." And we think in terms of, this isn't the way things naturally happen. And we think in terms of patterns. And we think in terms of, "I don't have enough to make that happen." And we think in terms of, "I don't think it'll happen in my day." And the god of this world has blinded our eyes because we're unwilling to trust Him.

The passage reads, "Then he believed," watch the text very carefully, not specifically in the promise, but in the God Who made the promise. God says, "I'm your shield. I'm your reward. Do you believe?" And Abraham goes, "I believe You. I don't understand how this can happen. I don't understand all these things. I don't need to. I believe You." And our faith is not about the comprehension of what God does. If, in fact, you comprehend those things, you'd be omniscient, you'd be omnipresent. But in order for us to understand, we come to understand that God loves us. And by this, we

understand that the worlds were made out of nothing, Hebrews 11 says, by faith. What do you mean by faith? By faith, if God says He made it out of nothing, He made it out of nothing. Because I trust Him. There's no One that I trust more. To not trust in Him is to not only marginalize who He is, but in many ways to insult Him. When you say, "I just can't believe that"; when you say, "I just can't claim that promise," you are insulting the God of the universe because the one thing He asks of you, "Trust Me."

I was thinking about all the promises that God gives, and certainly there are so many of them that it would be hard for us to calculate those promises. But when you consider, as Paul will say in 2 Corinthians and go on to say, that God's strength is made perfect in my weakness, it's hard for me to conceive that could be possible, that actually one of the greatest moments that could ever happen in my life is when I'm at my weakest. Is that pretty hard to claim? And yet Scripture says that if you'll believe this, see? The prayer of Moses was, "I pray that I might see Your glory." How do you see the glory of God? How do you see God working in your life? I mean, how

are all these things made evident to you? Faith literally opens your eyes to what has been there all along. His love has been there all along. I mean, doesn't it say the heavens are declaring the glory of God? Doesn't it say that these things have all along been shouting at you, and yet you just didn't see it? It's because you didn't believe.

Malachi talks about the fact that God has some wonderful things in store for you. So, "Bring in the whole tithe," He says, "and see if I don't open the windows of heaven." Now, you can start calculating if you want, of what you have and what you don't have and how this is possible and how it isn't possible. But God says, "Trust Me." If you'll let go of these things and jump all in, see what happens.

I like the way that it's put in Psalm 34:8,

"O taste and see that the LORD is good;

How blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!"

In John 1:46, the cry of one of the disciples was, "Could anything good come out of Nazareth?" And the other one turns and he says, "Come and see." You actually have to come in order to see, and you actually have to make an

effort in order for your eyes to be open. "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you." "I just don't see how that's going to happen." Why don't you start by seeking first the kingdom of God? I mean, just literally seek first the kingdom of God in everything. Then what will happen is you'll see how He takes care of you; you'll see how windows of heaven begin to open up; you'll see how things will be taken care of that you've been working on for years. But because today you decided to step outside and see God for who He truly is, with no limitations and no boundaries, today, you'll see Him work; you'll see something that you've never seen before.

I was thinking about the problems that we have, and have you ever just cast all your cares upon God and believed that He actually cared for you? Have you ever seen God fix your problems? There are a lot of people that have never seen that, and they'll tell you, "I just don't see how that's going to work." And we'll say to them, "We see it all the time." It's right there in front of you. You don't see it? You don't see God taking care of you? You don't see God

delivering you from evil? You don't see God protecting you? You don't see God providing for your needs? You've never seen God do that? And unfortunately, so many people have never seen things that have been visible all along. But because the god of this world has blinded the minds and they decided they would not believe Him. We're not asking you to believe the miracles. We're asking you to believe the One who performs the miracles, and we're asking you to claim the promises that He gives you. He's asking you to step outside of the boundaries that you have, out of the mindset that you have, the walls and the barriers that you've made, and He's actually leading you by the hand and He says, "Okay, I want you to see something that you've never seen before." I mean, can you imagine, I mean, we look at these stars and we go, "Okay, we're nothing." I look at those stars, I go, "Okay, I'm nothing." And God goes, "You're not seeing the stars. The reason I put the stars up there was to show you how great I loved you." That's what they've been up there for all along. They weren't up there for you to dissect and to try to figure out how they function. Look to the heavens. This is the God who loves you. Not one good

thing will He spare. If you could count the end of these things, there would be an end to your blessings. So, that's why there's no end to the universe. I mean, I could have thought of a lot cheaper examples, but God doesn't work that way, and the things that He does for us is because He loves us.

In Hebrews 13, it talks about come outside the city, in a place in which there's reproach, obviously the world is laughing at us. But the text actually says that's where He suffered and that's where He wants you to come, because the world and the city and all the things that they proclaim are saying all the things that are really antithetical to God. We've got to walk away from it. We've got to stop listening to them. We've got to listen to God and remind ourselves that God is glorious; there's nobody like Him.

We were reading in Isaiah 6 again. What a wonderful passage that is. And if you've ever read into that text, you are reminded of the greatness of God, because here He is, the picture of God, as Isaiah sees Him sitting in the heavens. And His robe, His train, is just flowing through. I

mean, some of the nebulae, you can almost see the robe flowing, but what a magnificent picture of God just over all of the universe. And then you see the flaming ones, seraphim, they're called, actually defined probably more accurately in Psalm as lightning bolts. And as they shoot across as lightning bolts, every one of them is saying, "There's no One like Him, there's no One like Him." And they never stop saying that. And Isaiah goes, "I had no idea." Glory of God, the greatness of God. And the great theme of the Book of Isaiah is, "You don't know what I'm like. You can't compare Me with anything. Everything next to Me is like nothing, less than nothing." If you get a proper perspective of God and His glory, that's a good start. And then you begin to open up Scripture, like Paul will say in Ephesians 1, and he says, "God, open their eyes. Open the eyes of their heart that they might see all the wonderful things that You have for them. That they might see Your love, that they might see Your grace, that they might see. Open their eyes."

It's been there all along. All creation has been shouting it. The message of God has been stating it. You just haven't

seen it because you don't believe it. This is something you have to experience. This is something you have to step out on. Some of us are afraid to jump in. We're afraid to trust Him wholly. Scripture says, when you do, God will say, "Now, you're right with Me." The moment that you receive His grace, the moment that you say, "I believe you." And that's why that John 3:16 is so powerful, isn't it? You must believe that God so loved you, the God of the universe so loved you that He gave His only Son, that you would not perish but that you could have everlasting life. Do you believe this? "I am the resurrection of the life. Even if you die, you will live. Do you believe this? Do you believe that everything that I do, I'm doing this out of love and not one good thing am I going to withhold from you?" Do you believe this? As you begin to embrace the promises of God, eyes will get open, and you'll see things that you've never seen before. We're challenging you to do this as Abraham was taken outside of his box and shown the greatness of God.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we come before You today, and we ask that You would speak to our hearts, that we would cease seeing You in a diminished state, that we'd see You for who You are. You spoke, and it was done; You declared it and it stood fast. We believe that nothing is too hard for You. And we believe that if, in fact, as You tell us, You love us, well, it must be true, because we believe You.

Ladies and gentlemen, the one thing that God wants you to do is believe in Him. Those that believe in Him will not be disappointed. But you have to believe in Him, and you've got to go all in on this. There's no such thing as a partial faith. James will say you can't even doubt. Don't expect that anything will come from God, because the one who doesn't believe in Him is unstable. You want to see some things? Start trusting Him.