



Sermon Notes

Genesis 15:1-21 "BELIEVING"

A faith that has not been challenged by doubts is a naive faith that will be defenseless against tragedy & sneering skeptics. A dose of doubt can either strengthen or weaken your faith. The Bible neither condones nor condemns, but challenges our doubts.

The Inevitability of Doubting

Verses 1-8

- 1) Doubt will always be to some level in everyone's life. Psalms; John the Baptist Jn1:29, 34, Luke 7:20-28; Doubting Thomas Jn20:24-28
- 2) The opposite of faith is NOT Doubt, but unbelief.
- 3) Doubt is asking honest questions, unbelief is refusing to hear the answers. John 3:19; Matt. 16:1-4
- 4) Christianity is coming to God with all of my questions doubts & fears. Jer. 29:13; Matt. 7:7-11; Heb. 11:6

The Invincibility of Believing:

Verses 9-21 Abraham lived in an oral (storytelling) culture. They made contracts by acting them out. Cutting an animal in half and walking between the pieces in essence was saying if I don't fulfill my vow according to this contract may I be cut up like this animal (Jer34:18).

- 1) My faith will always be opposed therefore; I must fight the good fight of faith. V11Birds of prey; Matt.13:4,19; 1Tim.6:12; 2Tim4:7
- 2) God's eternal plan is more comprehensive than my finite mind can understand therefore; I must walk by faith not by sight. vv13-16; Isa55:8-9; 1Cor13:12; 2Cor. 5:7
- 3) It's not the strength but the object of my faith that saves me therefore; I must fix my eyes on Jesus. Vv1, 6; Rom1:16-17; Heb12:3
- 4) Faith is truth entering the head, igniting the heart & outworking through the hands therefore; I can expect it to eventually change everything about me. Hebrews 11:1, 6; James2:26
- 5) My faith is in God's promise to unconditionally bless me because; He has unequivocally earned my trust with His blood. vv17-18; Isa53:8; Mark15:33-34; Heb6:13-20; Rom. 8:31-32

Growing Notes

1) When do you most often have bouts with doubt? What do you typically do with your doubts? Why do you think the Bible neither condones nor condemns, but challenges our doubts? How can a dose of doubt either strengthen or weaken your faith?

2) Read Genesis 15:1-21. What stands out to you from this text? In Genesis 14 Abraham rescued Lot and now he is afraid of retaliation. How does God comfort Him (V1) and what is Abram's response (vv2-3)? How does God respond to Abram's doubt (vv4-5)? How is verse 6 the bedrock of Christianity (Rom4:1-5:1)? Does Abram ever doubt again after his believing in v6? (Note v8)

3) Why do you think a measure of doubt will always be with us (Psalms; John the Baptist John 1:29, 34, Luke 7:20-28; Doubting Thomas John 20:24-28)? If doubt isn't the opposite of faith than what is? What is the difference between doubt and unbelief (John 3:19; Matt16:1-4)? Struggling with God over the issues of life does not show a lack of faith. That is faith! Explain. (Jer29:13; Matt7:7-11; Heb11:6)

4) Review the last five points on the sermon notes. Which one(s) are most helpful to you? We doubt because we don't trust God (vv2-3) and we don't trust ourselves (v8). It is utterly stunning how God deals with Abram's doubt. God cuts a covenant (Jer34:18) with Abram & in essence is saying I'll be torn apart if I fail and I'll be torn apart if you fail. How is this a picture of the Cross? If trust must be earned then didn't God unequivocally earn ours with the Cross (Heb6:13-20; Rom8:31-32)? If God didn't withhold His very own Son, will He withhold anything we need? Pray.