

Genesis 15

God's covenant gives certainty...

What things make you most uncertain?

Is assurance something you really value? Why?

Read Genesis 15.1

What do you think it means that God is a 'shield' and a 'reward'?

Do you expect God says the same thing to you today?

Read Luke chapter 24.36-49

How does Jesus speaking to his disciples parallel God speaking to Abram?

Do you think Jesus' promise of forgiveness and his Spirit applies to you?

Read Genesis 15.2-3

Why is Abram uncertain?

What is the time marker in the story? (v12)

Read Genesis 15.4-6

It seems God tells Abram to count the stars in daytime sky. Abram would be confident they are there even though he can't see them. What's the message to Abram?

How would that help Abram's uncertainty?

Read Romans 4.3, 17b-25

Discuss the parallels between Abraham and the Christian journey of faith:

What is Christian certainty built on?

Are you certain of the resurrection even though it's not visible now?

Read Genesis 15.7-21

The covenant ritual is notoriously difficult. I think some obvious points are these:

vv 9-10 covenant making involves broken bodies and bloodshed.

v 12 anticipates the future of Israel when Abraham is truly 'asleep'.

vv 13-16 anticipate Israel's future up to the Exodus, and reflect favourably on Abram's life.

v 17 represents God passing between the pieces.

v 18 makes clear what just happened. 'On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram...'

Covenants give relationships certainty (think e.g. marriage, adoption, even a full-time permanent job contract). What does the covenant signify to Abram?

Read 1 Cor 11.23-26

What does the New Covenant signify for your relationship with God?

Are you certain about your future with God? (to test it answer these questions: Does God love you? Did Jesus die for you? When you die are you going to live forever, with King Jesus?)

What is the basis for your certainty?

Reflect on Hebrews 10.19-25 and spend some time praying:

HEB 10:19 Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus,²⁰ by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body,²¹ and since we have a great priest over the house of God,²² let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.²³ Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.²⁴ And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.²⁵ Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching.