

Real Confidence and the Blazing Torch

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Please consider donating to this work in the San Francisco Bay Area online at ChristChurchEastBay.org. Good morning. My name is August Fern and I am one of your deacons, which means I wear one of these orange name pads.

It also means I'm one of your deacons that stands up to the front, just on my left, your right, after service every week, praying and hoping and hoping to be there to pray with you and for you for anything that might be happening in your life, anything that the sermon or the service brings up. But I just want to remind you that the deacons are here after every service right over here, and we would love, love, love to pray with you. But right now we're going to read a reading from the book of Genesis, chapter 15, verse 1.

After this, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision. Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward. But Abram said, Sovereign Lord, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is the leaser of Damascus?

[1 : 27] And Abram said, You have given me no children, so a servant in my household will be my heir. Then the word of the Lord came to him. This man will not be your heir, but a son who is your own flesh and blood will be your heir.

He took him outside and said, Look up at the sky and count the stars, if indeed you can count them. Then he said to him, So shall your offspring be.

Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness. He also said to him, I am the Lord who brought you out of Ur and of the Chaldeans to give you this land to take possession of it. But Abram said, Sovereign Lord, how can I know that I will gain possession of it? So the Lord said to him, Bring me a heifer, a goat, and a ram, each three years old, along with a dove and a young pigeon.

Abram brought all these to him, cut them in two, and arranged the halves opposite each other. The birds, however, he did not cut in half. Then birds of prey came down on the carcasses, but Abram drove them away.

[2 : 36] As the sun was setting, Abram fell into a deep sleep, and a thick and dreadful darkness came over him. Then the Lord said to him, Know for certain that for four hundred years your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own, and that they will be enslaved and mistreated there.

But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves, and afterward they will come out with great possessions. You, however, will go to your ancestors in peace and be buried at a good old age. In the fourth generation your descendants will come back here, for the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure. When the sun had set and darkness had fallen, a smoking firepot with a blazing torch appeared and passed between the pieces.

On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram and said, To your descendants I give this land, from the wadi of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates, the land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Cadmonites, Hittites, Perizzites, Raphites, Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites, and Jebusites. The grass withers and the flowers fade, but the word of our God stands forever. Good morning, Christ Church. I wonder if you ever said these words as a kid.

[3 : 59] Did you ever say, but mommy, you promised? Or, but daddy, you promised? When we're little, we understand that even the smallest of parental promises are for us, little people, solemn and unbreakable undertakings.

Right? If your parent says even something small to you, like, you're going to get a special treat after dinner. Or, you're going to have an extended bedtime.

Or, you get to choose the menu for breakfast. You get to pick out the movie we're going to watch as a family. That is not a huge deal to you as a parent, but in your child's mind, it's an unshakable expectation that what you just said is going to structure my entire reality.

And these become sort of the load stars by which I, as a child, am going to navigate sort of the day-to-day uncertain waters of my life.

Sometimes, as parents, we struggle to follow through on particular promises. And broken promises, even small promises, can create existential crises in the little world of a child.

[5 : 27] Kids, of course, not only remember our small promises, but they build their lives on them as if they're this firm and sure foundation. And they hang their hopes and their dreams on the scaffolding, even of our most offhanded parental pledges.

You said 12 months ago that I could have ice cream if I brushed my teeth every day today. And you're like, I said that? I don't think I said that. But the time frame doesn't matter because these scrupulous little enforcers will ensure that your solemn undertaking is kept.

And I can just confess this morning, as a parent, I've committed myself to all manner of enterprises of which I have absolutely no recollection. And promises, you know, they not only structure reality in life for kids, but they structure reality in life for adults as well.

I have three major promises that I've made. I've made a promise to my wife to have and to hold till death do us part. I've made promises to my kids in their baptisms that I'll live before them a Christian life and help them learn what it means to have a Christian life.

I've made promises to the church. You, this church, to the church as a pastor, much like you've made as members to be members of the church, that I'm going to do what I'm supposed to do even when it hurts.

[6 : 55] And these promises, a cluster of vows and commitments that I've made, it's what clarifies and simplifies when life gets complicated, when life gets hard, it tells me who I am and what I'm supposed to do.

And this is important for us because the whole foundation of the scriptures is about the vows, the promises, the commitments that God has made to us as his people.

If we can pull up a slide from last week, we talked about Genesis chapter 12. And we really said that this fourfold promise that God gave to Abraham 4,000 years ago, this promise of a people, a place, a protection, international blessing, this promise is really what drives the drama of the book of Genesis.

It drives the drama of the Torah, the first five books of the Bible. It drives the drama of the rest of the Old Testament. It really drives the drama all the way through to the end of the New Testament. You cannot understand Christianity if you don't understand these promises that God has made.

And I want us to keep those promises of God in mind as we dive back in today to Genesis, Genesis 15, and we track Abraham's journey of faith. And we're going to talk about three things.

[8 : 19] First of all, doubting God's promises. Secondly, believing God's covenant. And third, living in the already but not yet.

So doubting God's promises, believing God's covenant, and living in the already but not yet. First of all, doubting God's promises. To me, it's amazing that, you know, here's Abraham.

Abraham, he's looked upon by three major world religions. A good chunk of human beings on the planet look to Abraham as the paragon of faith and the model of how to live.

And yet what fascinates me is that the Bible is so honest. It gives us this real, unfiltered, unvarnished picture of Abraham as a person who wrestles with fear and who has questions for God and who voices his doubt in lament to God.

And he struggles with uncertainty. Anybody relate to Abraham this morning? The Bible doesn't give us this flat, you know, one-dimensional, perfect hero or any heroes of the faith.

[9 : 26] These are real, earthy, human people who have dirt under their fingernails and are complex, multidimensional people.

And you see that in verse 1. After this, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision. Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward. Why is Abraham afraid?

Why does the Lord have to come and calm his fears? Because in Genesis 14, Abram's just had this battle with these tribal chieftains who've attacked his nephew Lot.

He has to go rescue them. And now he's fearing reprisal. And he's afraid of retribution from his enemies. Fear is just a part of what it means to live in a fallen, broken, violent world. And just because you're a person of faith doesn't mean you're immune to fear. And God doesn't come to Abraham and say, Abraham, what's the matter with you? No, he doesn't shame or rebuke Abraham.

[10:26] He comes alongside Abraham to encourage him, to put courage inside of him and to say, Abraham, fear not. And then he says, I am your shield.

I am your protector. And then in Hebrew, it says, your reward shall be very great. Not only am I your protector, but I am your reward. I'm your provider.

And how does Abraham respond to the Lord's reassurance? Well, it's interesting that these words right here from Abraham are the first time we've actually even heard Abraham speak to God since Genesis 12.

God called him in Genesis 12. Abraham doesn't talk so much as he just walks, right? He shows his faith by what he does. And finally, we now hear him speak. And Abraham doesn't say, well, gee, Lord, thank you so much.

I feel so much better. I was really starting to lose my grip. And this really helps me. I appreciate you so much. No. Abraham, like many of us, has got some stuff bottled up inside of him.

[11:31] And as soon as God approaches him, he just starts to pour it out to God. And he says, well, Lord, since you mentioned reward, we need to talk.

And how does Abraham pray? Well, he asks a question. And this is what he says in verse 2.

Abraham said, sovereign Lord, what can you give me since I remain childless? And the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus.

You have given me no children, so a servant in my household will be my heir. Now, in the Psalms, which is the prayer book of the Bible, you get this a lot, right?

The people that are praying in the Psalms, they're having a dialogue with God. They're asking questions of God. And they're in this posture of what we call faithful lament or holy complaint.

It's a wonderful way to pray. And Abraham is saying, Lord, do you remember the fourfold promise that you made back in Genesis 12?

[12:37] I trust in your promises, but I'm experiencing the exact opposite of your promises. I've broken all my ties with my family to come and follow you.

I've become a childless wanderer. I've been in constant danger, and you promised to give me a child, but it's been 10 years since you made that promise, and I remain childless, so what's up with that?

Why is there this gap between your promise and my reality? And how, Lord, are you going to keep your promises? Does anybody ever pray like that? This is how the people of the Bible pray.

Abraham, the psalmist, is how we're supposed to pray. Disappointment and frustration becomes too much for Abraham, and so he just begins to respectfully, reverently, pour out his soul, pour out his complaint to God.

And how does the Lord respond to Abraham's question, his lament? Does he say, well, how dare you question me, you little mortal? No, verse 4.

[13:45] Then the word of the Lord came to him, this man will not be your heir, but a son coming from your own body will be your heir. And he took him outside and said, look up at the heavens and count the stars, if indeed you can count them.

And then he said to him, so shall your offspring be. It's amazing in this moment of holy complaint. That God comes and he basically puts his arm around Abraham.

And he says, look up at the innumerable stars. Which we have the benefit of knowing today there's about 300 billion stars in the Milky Way galaxy. Two trillion galaxies.

There are more stars in the universe than there are grains of sand in all the beaches of the world. And God says to Abraham, that's how powerful I am.

And that's the extent to which I plan to be true to my promises to you. And that is the extent to which you're going to have children. The extent to which I'm going to bless all the peoples of the earth with salvation through you, Abraham.

[14:50] This is one of the most loving, one of the most encouraging assurances in the whole Bible. And what happens next is it says in verse 6, Abraham believed the Lord and he credited to him as righteousness.

And it seems at this moment like Abraham's fear and all of his questions and all of his doubt have been overcome. But then verse 7 it says, The Lord also said to him, I am the Lord who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to take possession of it.

But Abraham said, Sovereign Lord, how can I know? How can I know that I will gain possession of it? As soon as the subject changed from this promised people and these promised children now to the promised place and the promised land, now Abraham's uncertainty comes rushing back and his questions are pouring out and his doubts.

He says, Lord, how can I know? And does God dismiss him? Does God just wave him off? No, what happens next is one of the greatest scenes in the whole Bible, which we're going to look at in just a moment.

But the question is, how does this apply to us? Well, on the one hand, what I want you to see is that God is quite open and he's quite gentle with our doubts.

[16:05] When we're taking him seriously. Right? He's very patient with doubters because he knows that doubt is just inevitably a part of the life of faith. But on the other hand, God also doesn't want us to stay in our doubts.

And even though the Lord doesn't condemn Abraham for his questions, he also challenges him and keeps coming after him in this remarkable balance. Right? And so, first application is that the church should be a place where doubters are completely invited and welcomed.

Conservative minded people tend to create churches where no one is allowed to talk about their doubts. Nobody's allowed to express their intellectual questions or their emotional struggles.

And doubt is seen as a sign of weakness and immaturity and failure. And the problem with such churches is that they're telling people, you just can't be intellectually honest or emotionally authentic and be a Christian at the same time.

And so lots of people have been turned off from Christianity because such churches see doubt as a total failure. And therefore, they're not very welcoming of outsiders with doubts.

[17:20] And people feel condemned and they can't get answers to any of their questions. But if Abraham had said, I don't have any doubt, then we wouldn't have gotten Genesis 15, which is one of the greatest things that's ever happened in human history.

Another point of application is this. The church should not only be a place where doubters are completely invited and welcomed, but also the church should be a place where doubters are clearly addressed and challenged. Liberal-minded people tend to create churches where doubt is a virtue, where doubt is so intellectually sophisticated and emotionally mature that you're encouraged to be perpetually in a state of doubt and to be skeptical about everything and basically uncommitted to anything.

And the problem with such churches is you're basically telling people there are no solid answers to your questions. And that anyone who does have convictions, anyone who does have confidence about their faith is either a naive rube or a backwards fundamentalist.

And what I want you to see in Genesis 15 is that God doesn't do the conservative thing and say, how dare you doubt? No, he's gentle, he's patient with Abraham's doubt because he knows that an admission of difficulty and struggle is how we grow in the faith.

But then God doesn't do the liberal thing and say it's fine to just stay in unresolved doubt. No, he addresses and he questions Abraham's doubt with clear and strong revelation.

[18:53] He says, you cannot stay here. You need to doubt your doubts. You need to be skeptical of your skepticism. Jesus does this. When he's raised from the dead, he comes to the guy named Thomas, one of his disciples.

And he says, hey, Thomas, I've heard you've had doubts about whether or not I've been raised from the dead. And he says, hey, you know, if you want to, you can see and touch my wounds. But then he says, Thomas, stop doubting and believe.

And that's what God is doing with Abraham. He says, Abraham, I'm going to help you resolve your doubts. I'm going to help you trust in my trustworthiness. I'm going to help you hope in my reliable promises.

Does that make sense? So, Abraham shows us something about doubting God's promises. But also he shows us something about believing in God's covenant.

Believing in God's covenant. Like all of us, we, you know, we forget God's words or we're not sure about God's words.

[19 : 58] And so we need them to be repeated to us. We need them to be reaffirmed. We need them to be restated. And that's exactly what Abraham needs. And that's what he's getting here. And verse 6 tells us that at the core, Abraham trusts the Lord.

Abraham hopes in his promises. And it says that by Abraham's faith, it's counted to him as righteousness. By the object in which Abraham puts his faith, he is counted as one who's in the right.

One who's justified. One who will be acquitted and saved in the day of judgment. Because of his faith and the object of his faith. But even then, Abraham says in verse 8, he says, sovereign Lord, how can I know?

How can I know? And you know what Abraham needed in addition to God's word? Abraham needed God's audible word to be confirmed and to be guaranteed by God's visible sacrament. He needed this acted out covenant where he could not only hear the grace of God, but he could also see the grace of God. And what you see in Genesis 15 is that the Lord gives Abraham and gives to us both word and sacrament.

[21 : 11] Just as Abraham needs to go outside and look up and see the uncountable stars. So that he can trust in God's creative and sovereign and unlimited power.

So now, God gives him another picture. So now, Abraham needs to see these broken bodies and the shed blood of all these animals so that he can trust in the unbreakable bond of God's loyal covenant love.

What in the world am I talking about? Well, look at verse 9. So the Lord said to him, bring me a heifer, a goat, and a ram, each three years old, along with a dove and a young pigeon. Abraham brought all these to him, cut them in two, and arranged the halves opposite each other. Abraham knew what to do in this situation because he and all people in the ancient Near East understood intrinsically what it meant to, quote unquote, cut a covenant, which is what the Hebrew says here.

He's cutting a covenant. The rabbis call this the covenant between the pieces. And it's strange for us. We're not used to this. In our written culture, we tend to, you know, make commitments by putting pen to paper, right?

[22 : 33] And we outline, okay, here's all the commitments I'm making to you. Here's all the stipulations of those commitments. And here's my signature that guarantees that I'm going to follow through on everything I'm committing to do today.

But even in our written culture, I think we know how to make ritual commitments like ancient people did. Because remember what we used to say as kids?

We used to say, cross my heart, hope to die, stick a needle in my eye. And when we said that childhood oath, we were emphasizing the absolute truth and sincerity of the statement that I just made.

I'm implying that I'm willing to suffer terrible consequences if I'm lying. I'm willing to be, have my eye poked with a needle.

I'm willing to die if I don't do what I just said I'm going to do. Well, how do people in this ancient oral culture cut a covenant or ritually act out their commitments?

[23 : 45] Well, what you would basically have is you would have two kingdoms. You would have a greater kingdom and a lesser kingdom. And the representative of those kingdoms, the great king and the lesser king, they'd come together and they would walk between these pieces of broken bodies and the shed blood of these animals.

And they would act out and they would dramatize the consequences of breaking their vows, of not following through on their promises. And what they were doing is they were walking down the aisle between those bodies as they were ritually identifying with the pieces.

And they were saying, if in the future I do not do all that I'm saying today that I will do, if I break my vows and my promise, if I fail to be committed to you, then may I be like these animals.

May I be cut apart. May I be torn up. May I be ripped to pieces. May I die. Perhaps we should think about bringing back this form of making a covenant.

Right? If you're having trouble with your contractor at your house. You know, if your spouse isn't really caring for you like they should, you just say, hey, look at these bloody pieces.

[24 : 55] That's going to be you, pal, if you don't straighten up. Verse 12 says, As the sun was setting, Abraham fell into a deep sleep, and a thick and dreadful darkness came over him.

And then in verse 17, When the sun had set and darkness had fallen, a smoking fire pot with a blazing torch appeared and passed between the pieces. And on that day the Lord made a covenant with Abraham and said, To your descendants I give this land.

See, these are symbols of God's awesome presence. This cloud of smoke that's rising from this pot. This soaring tongue of flames of fire from this torch.

And you see that again in Exodus where God's presence goes with his people in cloud and fire. And what's happening here is that the Lord takes the initiative And he says to Abraham, If I don't bless you, May my immortality become mortality.

May my immutability become mutable. May the impossible become possible. May I be cut off if I'm not faithful to you.

[26 : 14] And it's astonishing that the maker of the stars cuts a covenant with Abraham. But what's, you want to know what's even more staggering? It's not just amazing who passes through the pieces, But what's more, the more amazing thing is who does not pass through the pieces.

And who does not give an oath. And who is not asked to do basically anything. Because verse 18 does not say, Then after the Lord passed between the pieces, Abraham passed between the pieces as well.

There is no corresponding covenantal commitment made by Abraham. The Lord is the only one who walks down the aisle And he does it on Abraham's behalf.

He does it in Abraham's place. And basically he says, Abraham, if I fail to keep the covenant, And I will not, May I become like these broken bodies. But Abraham, if you fail to keep the covenant, May I become like these broken bodies.

Abraham, I will pay the penalty If you are unfaithful to the covenant. And I'm making myself accountable today To pay the penalty for your failure To fulfill your end of the covenant.

[27 : 30] May I, If that's you, Then may I be cut to pieces And may I be completely cut off. You see, God alone makes a covenant with us.

And he obligates himself to Abraham. He obligates himself to his people In a unilateral, Unconditional, Immutable, Unchangeable, Inviolable, Irrevocable, Unbreakable, Commitment.

And in passing through these broken bodies In the shed blood, God invokes a curse upon himself. And he says, If you fail, Then you can be absolutely sure Of my grace, And my promise, And my blessing.

And Abraham had absolutely no idea Of what that was going to cost God To make that oath of grace. Because centuries later, God's word became flesh.

Centuries later, That cloud and that fire Became a human being. And on the night before Jesus went to his cross, In the gospel of Matthew 26, It says, Jesus took bread, And when he had given thanks, He broke it apart.

[28 : 51] And he gave it to his disciples, Saying, Take and eat, This is my body. And then he took a cup, And when he had given thanks, He gave it to them, Saying, Drink from it, All of you, This is my blood of the covenant, Which is poured out for many, For the forgiveness of sins.

Jesus is ritually acting out The covenant in this sacrament. And just like this thick and dreadful Spiritual darkness came down upon Abraham in this moment, We're told that when Jesus went To his cross, That darkness came down again.

Gospel of Matthew chapter 27 says, From noon until three in the afternoon, Darkness came over the whole land. And about three in the afternoon, Jesus cried out in a loud voice, My God, my God, Why have you forsaken me?

This one who is both the son of Abraham And the son of God, Is cut off from the land of the living. His immortality became mortality.

And his immutability became mutability. And the impossible became possible. And he experienced all of this, So that he could bless you, Even when you fail him.

[30 : 09] And so that your salvation would be An absolutely one-sided salvation That depends, Not on you, But entirely on him. So you don't have to walk through the pieces, You don't have to take the oath, Because Jesus did that for you, And no matter how much of a failure you are, If you enter into a covenant, With God the Father, Through his son Jesus, You are saved by sheer grace, That has nothing to do, With what you bring to the table, And none of your failures, Are going to get in the way, Of him blessing you.

The apostle Paul says it this way, In his letter to the Galatians, Chapter 3, He says, Christ redeemed us, By becoming a curse for us, In order that the blessing given to Abraham, Might come to us through Jesus Christ, God in his grace, Gave the inheritance to Abraham, Through a promise, So in Christ Jesus, You are all children of God, Through faith, And if you belong to Christ, Then you are Abraham's seed, And heirs according to the promise, Friends, Friends, We have so much more reason to, Than Abraham did, To call upon God, And say, Sovereign Lord, You are my shield, And my protector, You are my reward, And my provider, And when those doubts, And uncertainties, Inevitably creep in, And we say to ourselves, Yes Lord, But how can I know, How can I know, We simply look at the cross,

And we know, Lord how can I know, That you are going to be my shield, And my protector, Well look at the broken bread, That you are holding in your hand, Lord how can I know, That you are going to be my reward, And my provider, Friends, Taste the wine, In your mouth, That's how we know, See Abraham is telling us, Something about, Doubting God's promises, But also something about, Believing in God's, God's covenant, That he's fulfilled, In Jesus Christ, And finally, Before we close, I wanted to say a word, That's been speaking to me this week, About, Living in the already, But not yet, We live in the already, But not yet, The drama of, Abraham's life, Is that, He has to go, Live by faith, That, The promises, That God has made,

And the covenant, That God, Has guaranteed, Are going to be kept, They're going to be fulfilled, Even when he can't see it, Even when, He's not experiencing it, In his circumstances, Even when, His situation, Feels, The exact opposite, Abraham has to learn, How to, Use his sanctified imagination, When God's, Heavenly vision, Seems impossible, In light of all the harsh, And contrary realities, That are surrounding him, And Christians, Christians are in a very similar, Position, Aren't we?

Because, When Jesus rose from the dead, He brought that future, Kingdom of God, Into the present, But he did so, Only partially, And not fully, And we call that, The already, But not yet, Because we're already, United to the resurrected Lord, And his victory, But, And we're redeemed by him, But we're not yet, Fully redeemed, Are we?

[34 : 00] And so in that overlap, Between the already, Of God's kingdom, And the not yet, Of God's kingdom, We have to live by faith, In things that we cannot see, Like Abraham, And here's, The interesting thing, In this text, And I don't have time, You can come ask me questions, Afterwards about, The ins and outs, But verse 13 says, Then the Lord said to him, Know for certain, That for 400 years, Your descendants will be strangers, In a country, Not their own, And that they will be, Enslaved and mistreated there, But I will punish the nation, They serve as slaves, And afterward, They will come out, With great possessions, You however, Will go to your ancestors, In peace, And be buried at a good old age, And in the fourth generation, Your descendants will come back here, For the sin of the Amorites, Has not yet reached, Its full measure, What the Lord is saying to Abraham, Is Abraham, My friend, I have, A deliberate plan, And an outcome,

That I'm pursuing, With respect to, My covenant, And with respect, To my people, But that plan, Involves opposition, That plan, Involves difficulty, That plan, Involves judgments, That plan, Involves other dark powers, That are going to do, Their absolute worst, To try to undo, All of my promises, So Abraham, What I'm asking you, And what I'm asking all of your, Spiritual descendants, To do, Is to lean all your weight, On me, Because I have much to do, Over the next 400 years, God says, And indeed, Over the next 4,000 years, I've got a lot of things to do, To work out my, Good purposes, I've got a lot to do,

To work for the good, Of those, Who love me, And have been called, According to my purpose, And my promises, Abraham, Horrible things, Are going to happen, That are completely, Out of your control, Your descendants, Are going to go through, Three stages of suffering, God says, They're going to be exiled, And alienated, Because of famine, They're going to be enslaved, By the Egyptians, For 400 years, They're going to be, Increasingly mistreated, And afflicted, And oppressed, By Pharaoh, And his taskmasters, And absolutely, None of this, Will mean, That I've abandoned, My promises, Absolutely none of this, Will mean, That I've forsaken, My covenant, Do not believe that, For a second, And God says, These three stages, Of suffering, Are going to be followed, By three stages, Of redemption, That judgment, And plagues, Of punishment, Are going to come down, On your oppressors, And that,

In the Exodus, I'm going to bring Israel, Out with great, Possessions, As restitution, And reparation, For all their free labor, As slaves, And then, I'm going to bring Israel, Into this promised land, Even

as I use them, To, Judge all the injustices, And all the wickedness, And all of the oppression, Of the Amorites, I'm going to come, And put all that's wrong, To rights, And the reason, This spoke to me this week, Is because, I heard God saying, Abraham, Jonathan, My people, Here's the kind of faith, I want from you, Trust me, Trust my integrity, Trust my authority, Even when there's so much, In my plan, That is not yet accomplished, And not yet fulfilled, Even though so much, Of the kingdom of God, Has not yet been established, On the earth, As it already is in heaven, Even though horrible things, Are happening, And horrible things, Will continue to happen, Don't forget, That I'm patient, In keeping my promises, And even as so much, Is not yet here, What I'm asking you to do, Jonathan, And what I'm asking you, To do church, Is I'm asking you, To take all the weight, Of your reliance, Off of all your other, Securities, And I'm asking you, To lean all the weight, Of your trust, In my word, That I've already given, And in the promises, That I've already made, And in the covenant, That I've already, Cut, Through my son, Jesus, Jesus, When the apostle Paul, Reflected on this, Passage of Genesis 15,

[39 : 08] He said this, In Romans 4, He said, Against all hope, Abraham and hope believed, And so became the father, Of many nations, He did not waver, Through unbelief, Regarding the promise of God, But was strengthened, In his faith, And gave glory to God, Being fully persuaded, That God, Had the power, To do, What God, Had promised, And said that he would do, So friends, Let's think about that, In the name of the Father, Son, And Holy Spirit, Amen.