

God is About to Do the Impossible

"Illuminate: Learning to Trust and Surrender Through the Life of Abraham"

Genesis 15:1-6

October 21, 2018

BIG IDEA

Many times, the hurdles we face seem impossible to overcome. We begin to doubt the faithfulness of God. We develop a worldview that says: Nothing will change. The same is true of churches. As we continue to move forward in our "Illuminate" initiative to restore our building, we can easily forget that God can provide all of the resources we need. God does his best work when you're stuck. The life of Abraham, and his longing for a son, is proof that God is about to do the impossible.

THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

Context:

In Genesis 12:1-3, God had called Abraham to an unknown land. Here, in the reiteration of the Abrahamic Covenant, the Lord encourages Abraham that, though he was more than 90 years old, he would have descendants as numerous as the stars. He was making a humanly impossible promise.

Genesis 15:1-6

After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: "Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great." ² But Abram said, "O Lord GOD, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" ³ And Abram said, "Behold, you have given me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir." ⁴ And behold, the word of the LORD came to him: "This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir." ⁵ And he brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." ⁶ And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness.

1. God Was Abraham's Protector

Genesis 15:1 – After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: "Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great."

The "Word of the LORD" came to Abraham. In this context, this amazing phrase refers to God himself, and possibly the pre-incarnate Christ. Immediately God reminded Abraham that he was his protector. It's possible that Abraham was concerned about retaliation after his victory in a recent battle. But in this vision (not a dream) God promised protection and reward.

a. Do you ever feel like you are alone? Can you describe what that feels like?

b. Do believe that God has taken notice of your situation?

c. Is there something you'd like him to do that he's not doing?

2. Abraham Longed for a Child

Genesis 15:2-3 – But Abram said, "O Lord God, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?"³ And Abram said, "Behold, you have given me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir."

Abraham was sure that one of his slaves, Eliezer of Damascus, would end up inheriting his household based on the custom of the day. Not having a son meant everything went to the household manager—the legal heir. This is the belief system that Abraham had developed. And it's the same for us, isn't it? If we can't see it, it can't be true. It can't happen. That's because we tend to look at things from only a human perspective.



- a. **Can you think of a time in your life when God revealed himself in a way that you had deemed impossible? Can you describe how you felt?**

- b. **Perhaps you're still waiting on God for something that you deeply desire? How hard is that for you?**

- c. **Talk to each other about the ways in which God has answered prayer in your lives in order to help build one another's faith.**

3. God Shatters the Impossible

Genesis 21:1-2 – The LORD visited Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did to Sarah as he had promised. ²And Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age at the time of which God had spoken to him.

The impossible is a playground for God. Throughout the Bible, God did the impossible:

- Winning wars for Israel by his might.
- Destroying evil prophets through Isaiah by sending fire to a soaking-wet altar.
- Slowing the earth's rotation so a day lasted longer for Joshua to win a battle.
- Jesus calmed storms.
- Jesus healed people even from a far distance away and raised the dead.
- Jesus was born to a virgin.
- The Father brought his son back from the dead.

The list is endless. God shatters the impossible.

- a. **Ridgewood is seeking God regarding an expensive restoration project. What hurdles do you see in the way?**



b. Humanly speaking, this all seems impossible. But can you think of scripture that details accounts whereby God shattered the impossible?

c. Do you pray with faith? Is there an expectation that God is going to act? Why or why not?

4. Abraham Believed God and Received a Reward

Genesis 15:6 – And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness.

We believe that we need our building to be restored as a tool to walk with God in his mission. We pray that our faith and generosity will be used by God to do amazing things. We can then turn around and say, "Glory to God because that never could have happened without him doing it!"

a. As you examine your own generosity, can you honestly say that you are walking in faith? Or are you depending on your own power to take care of yourself?

b. Has giving to God become ordinary and routine for you? Do you long to walk on the edge and watch God do miracles?

c. If someone had a glimpse into your giving habits, what would they say? Could you give God glory for amazing rewards that you can't explain?



PRAY

Lord, help me to walk in faith. Help me to trust you. God promised to do a miracle in Abraham's life. Help me to trust you to do the same. Help me to discover more about you. Help me to walk in a deeper relationship that causes me to trust you more. Amen.

DIG DEEPER

For further study this week:

- "What Does It Mean to Walk By Faith?" – a blog from Dr. Jerry Vines: <https://bit.ly/2GgKZlh>
- "Giving Might Be the Most Neglected and Least Modeled Spiritual Gift in the Western Church" – a blog from Randy Alcorn: <https://bit.ly/2IoVSFu>

NEXT WEEK'S BIG IDEA

"Illuminate" – Put God First (Genesis 13:1-17)

