

Know for Certain | Genesis 15:7-18 Sermon Discussion Participant's Guide

Purpose of Discussion: To develop a practical way that we can choose to remind us of God's certain promises in these uncertain times.

Sermon Refresher: Dave reminded us that God and his promises are the only thing that is certain in these uncertain times. God's promise to Abraham is a promise to us to come into a renewed heaven and earth. But, part of God's promise is that getting to what he has promised is going to be hard. God has made this promise certain by sealing it with his own blood.

Icebreaker: What feels most uncertain to you in this time?

Pray then read together the passage.

Genesis 15:7-18

⁷ He 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." ⁸ But Abram said, "Sovereign Lord, how can I know that I will gain possession of it?"

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." ¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ Then birds of prey came down on the carcasses, but Abram drove them away.

¹² As the sun was setting, Abram fell into a deep sleep, and a thick and dreadful darkness came over him. ¹³ 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. ¹⁴ But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves, and afterward they will come out with great possessions. ¹⁵ You, however, will go to your ancestors in peace and be buried at a good old age. ¹⁶ In the fourth generation your descendants will come back here, for the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure."

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¹⁷ When the sun had set and darkness had fallen, a smoking firepot with a blazing torch appeared and passed between the pieces. ¹⁸ 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—

Discussion:

1. What was uncertain in Abraham's life?
2. What did God do for Abraham amidst his uncertainty? What has God done for us to show he is committed to his promises?
3. Read these verses about answer who Abraham's descendants are and what is ultimately the land promised to Abraham.

Galatians 3:7

⁷ Understand, then, that those who have faith are children of Abraham.

Galatians 3:29

²⁹ If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Romans 4:13

¹³ It was not through the law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith.

4. Read again verse 13. What will Abraham's descendants have to go through before they inherit the land God has promised?
5. Read the following verses. What should we expect to experience in this life until we come into the renewed heavens and earth? How should we think differently about our hardships?

Acts 14:21-22

²¹ They preached the gospel in that city and won a large number of disciples. Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, ²² strengthening the

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disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God," they said.

Romans 8:18

¹⁸ I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.

2 Corinthians 4:17

¹⁷ For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.

6. The fluctuation of good times and times of troubles often make us misinterpret our present lives and the life to come. How have the recent events been a sobering wake-up call?
7. Remember Dave's illustration with the optical illusion of the subway train that can appear to be moving either direction. By merely deciding, we could change the way our minds perceive the direction the train is going. What is a practical way you can allow God's promise to shape and change the way you are interpreting these present times?

Sharing and Prayer:

Amy Carmichael records being present and witnessing how Andrew Murray responded to a particularly painful situation in his life: "He was quiet for a while with his Lord, then he wrote these words for himself: 'First, He brought me here, it is by His will I am in this straight place; in that fact I will rest. Next, He will keep me here in His love, and give me grace to behave as His child. Then, He will make the trial a blessing, teaching me the lessons He intends me to learn, and working in me the grace He means to bestow. Last, in His good time He can bring me out again – how and when He knows. Let me say I am here, 1. By God's appointment, 2. In His keeping, 3. Under His training, 4. For His time.'"

Psalm 139:7-12

Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me

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and the light become night around me," even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like a day for darkness is as light to you.

- *Pray that though we are confused and don't know why this is happening that we would trust God.*
- *Thank God that we are not out of His presence or control.*
- *Thank Him that He knows what is going on at all times and is guiding us and holding us.*
- *Thank God for seeing and knowing all things even if that is hard for us.*