

God Keeps All The Promises He Makes | Genesis 18:1-15 Sermon Discussion Participant Guide

Purpose of Discussion:

1. To remind us that God is a faithful God, that He always keeps his promises.
2. To clarify what God has and hasn't promised.
2. To move us from doubting/taking matters into our own hands to trusting/surrendering/obeying

Sermon Refresher: Keith says we can be tempted to think "all things are possible with God" means God will do whatever we want. We can become disappointed or angry with God when things don't turn out the way we hoped they would. We think God has failed us if he doesn't do what we want or need. But the problem is we don't really understand what God has promised us. Keith's encouragement is to trust and believe in the goodness of God and ultimately surrender to his will.

Icebreaker: What was an unexpected good that happened this week?

Discussion:

Transition: Keith told the story of Abraham and Sarah and their struggle to believe that God was keeping his promise to bring them a child and make them into a great nation. This led them to take matters into their own hands and caused them much trouble.

1. When was a time you were disappointed with God?
2. How were you tempted to take matters into your own hands?
3. Keith said "Nothing is too hard for the Lord" is not a promise but a truth about who God is. What is dangerous about thinking of this verse as a promise?
4. God often wants to use the hard circumstances to grow us. Read these verses below about this very thing. How does knowing this help us to accept hard circumstances and look for God at work in ways we might not have considered?

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Romans 8:28-29

²⁸ And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.

Hebrews 12:10

¹⁰ They disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share in his holiness.

James 1:2-4

² Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, ³ because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. ⁴ Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

5. One of the keys to fighting doubt and moving to trust is to surrender to God. Why is surrender so hard?
6. Often at the root of doubt is questioning whether God actually knows what is best or doubting his love for us. Take turns reading these truths below. How do these verses and two quotes from Jerry Bridges help you foster a heart that trusts him and willingly surrenders?

God is wise and knows best

Romans 11:33

Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!

Isaiah 55:8-9

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

"It should fill us with joy, that infinite wisdom guides the affairs of the world. Many of its events are shrouded in darkness and mystery, and inextricable

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confusion sometimes seems to reign. Often wickedness prevails, and God seems to have forgotten the creatures that he has made. Our own path through life is dark and devious, and beset with difficulties and dangers. How full of consolation is the doctrine, that infinite wisdom directs every event, brings order out of confusion, and light out of darkness, and to those who love God, causes all things, whatever be their present aspect and apparent tendency, to work together for good."

- *Trusting God*, Jerry Bridges

God loves me

[Romans 8:35, 37](#)

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?...No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

[1 John 4:9-10](#)

This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

[Psalm 103:11](#)

For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him.

[Zephaniah 3:17](#)

He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing.

"Any time we are tempted to doubt God's love for us, we should go back to the Cross. We should reason somewhat in this fashion: If God loved me enough to give His Son to die for me when I was His enemy, surely He loves me enough to care for me now that I am His child. Having loved me to the ultimate extent at the Cross, He cannot possibly fail to love me in my times of adversity. Having given such a priceless gift as His Son, surely He will give all else that is consistent with His glory and my good."

- *Trusting God*, Jerry Bridges

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7. One of the things that helps me to trust God is to think back on a time when God answered my prayers differently than I wanted but it ultimately worked out for my good in ways I couldn't see at the time. Share a time when that happened to you.

Sharing and Prayer:

We can fall into two directions when we are disappointed with God.

1. Pray... thinking God has to answer our prayer the way we want.
2. Stop praying...thinking God doesn't care and isn't going to answer our prayer.

Keith suggested praying persistently believing that God is capable of doing what we ask but with a heart of surrender, believing he knows what is best.

Share something that is currently not going as you hoped. Tell God that it has been hard, sad (or another emotion). Pray boldly for what you want but also ask God for faith to trust Him with this no matter the outcome.

To do during the week:

Meditate on lyrics to Great is thy Faithfulness.

Meditate on the verses below to help you cling to God's promises.

God gives strength

"I have learned the secret of living in every situation. For I can do everything with the help of Christ who gives me the strength I need." Phil. 4:12-13

"Have you never heard or understood? Don't you know that the Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator over all the earth? He never grows faint or weary. No one can measure the depths of his understanding. He gives power to those who are tired and worn out; he offers strength to the weak. Even youths will become exhausted, and young men will give up. But those who wait on the Lord will find new strength. They will fly high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint." Isaiah 40:28-31

"No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it." 1 Cor. 10:13

God gives wisdom

"If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him." James 1:5

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God gives comfort, mercy, grace

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows." 2 Cor. 1:3-5

"Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us cling to him and never stop trusting him. This high priest understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same temptations we do, yet he did not sin. So, let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it." Heb. 4:14-16

"Though He brings grief, He will show compassion, so great is His unfailing love. For He does not willingly bring affliction or grief to the children of men." Lamentations 3:32-33

God guides us

"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul." Psalm 23:1-3

God is with you

"Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave or forsake you." Deut. 31:6

"Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you. And though you pass through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you." Isaiah 43:1-2

God hears our prayers and is our help

"The Lord hears his people when they call to him for help. He rescues them from all their troubles. The Lord is close to the brokenhearted; he rescues those who are crushed in spirit." Psalm 34:17-18

"I waited patiently for the Lord to help me, and he turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the pit of despair, out of the mud and mire. He set my feet on solid ground and steadied me as I walked along." Psalm 40:1-3

"Because you are my help, I sing in the shadow of your wings. My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me." Psalm 63:7-8

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"Surely God is my help; the Lord is the one who sustains me." Psalm 54:4

God is our safe place

"My soul finds rest in God alone; my salvation comes from him. He alone is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will never be shaken." Psalm 62:1-2

"God is our refuge and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble. So, we will not fear, even if earthquakes come and the mountains crumble into the sea." Psalm 46:1-2

"My salvation and my honor depend on God; he is my mighty rock, my refuge. Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge." Psalm 62:7-8

Promise of heaven

"Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away. I am making everything new." Rev. 21:3-5

"Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." Philippians 1:6

"Therefore, we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So, we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal." 2. Cor. 4:16-18

"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness. Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me." 2 Cor. 12:8-9

God gives us what we need for life today and to obey

"His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness." 2 Peter 1:3