

Genesis 15:1-6 - Fear is Conquered 征服 by Faith

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: Abram conquered Chedorlaomer and 3 other kings of the east and rescued the 5 kings. Abram acquired great wealth in Ur, Egypt, and Canaan. Abram had a skilled army for his family's protection. But fear conquered Abram. Humanly speaking he had almost everything a man could want—yet he was afraid. So in stepped God – his loving Father – to set things right. We will take some time today to examine how God showed his love for his son and removed the fear that was overwhelming his life.

Our headings are: **Command Not to Fear**, and **Reasons not to fear**.

Our goals are: You will learn **how to deal with the problem of fear and uncertainty – that's the moral lesson**. But I hope you will learn more...I hope you will learn who your covenant God is and how he secures a secured future for you through Jesus Christ so you can trust him.

Command Not to Fear

1 After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward." 2 But Abram said, "Lord GOD, what will You give me, seeing I go childless, and the heir继承人 of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" 3 Then Abram said, "Look, You have given me no offspring; indeed one born in my house is my heir!"

1. Why was Abram afraid?

a. **Revenge**. Chedorlaomer could have planned to come back...stronger than before...especially after enduring the insult of being destroyed by a much smaller army. Eastern peoples are known for seeking revenge 报仇 even after many years. The king of Sodom might have sought revenge as well...seeing Abram as a threat. Remember how Abram refused the gift that the king of Sodom offered him. That was a great insult. And men in the East have been killed for a lot less than this! Maybe the men of Canaan would have been suspicious of Abram as well...Abram was becoming too powerful for them...and becoming a threat. So they could have been a cause for concern.

b. **But Abram mostly fearful about his future because he had no children – no one to continue the family name**. Abram was suffering really suffering from spiritual depression or anxiety. He had no church elders to help him, though he could possibly have gone to Melchizedek for advice.

2. Have you, children and grown-ups ever been afraid...of animals...of darkness...but also of the world?

Sure you have! The world is trapped now by concerns of war, and bio-terrorism, eco-terrorism, and chemical terrorism. Are you afraid of job security and health concerns? Are you afraid that you children might turn out to be wicked and renounce 声明放弃 the faith? Maybe there are different terms you would use instead of fear. Maybe you say you have “concerns,” but it may be fear. Like Abraham, the Lord knows when you are afraid. He knows your heart's condition! What does God say to you? Look at what he said on many different occasions to others!

3. This wasn't strange at all. God called on his people not be afraid many times in Scripture...

To Hagar – when she ran from Sarah and was fearful of the future – and her son.

To Isaac – When he had to face his enemies with the filling of the well...

To Jacob - Genesis 46:3 - Fear not to go down to Egypt...death...famine...

To Rachel in Childbirth – Gen 35:17 ...you shall have this son also.

To Joshua – Joshua 8:1 – Fear not...I have given the king of Ai into your hand...

To Gideon...fearing the gods of the Amorites...do not fear...

To the Israel - Joel 2:21 Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice: for the LORD will do great things.

To Joseph...husband of Mary.

To Mary...

To the women searching for Jesus. Matthew 28:5

To Jeremiah when he was a child.

God constantly called people not to fear because God knows your tendency to fear...

4. The Lord gave this “call not to fear” in the form of a command: Do not be afraid. This means you can do it! God never gives a command without giving the means to do it.

Deuteronomy 1: 21 `Look, the LORD your God has set the land before you; go up and possess it, as the LORD God of your fathers has spoken to you; do not fear or be discouraged.'

Deuteronomy 20:3 And he shall say to them, `Hear, O Israel: Today you are on the verge of battle with your enemies. Do not let your heart faint, do not be afraid, and do not tremble or be terrified because of them;

Deuteronomy 31:6 Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the LORD your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you. Deuteronomy 8] And the LORD, he it is that does go before you; he will be with you, he will not fail you, neither forsake you: fear not, neither be dismayed.

Revelation 1:17 "Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last.

See also how your God loves you and gives you the right command...the right prescription for your troubles! God knows that he has given you the ability to stop being afraid.

5. God called Abram by his personal name...because he was Abram’s friend. You can know about the state of marriage by the way one refer to his or her spouse. “John and I have some trouble.” “Alice and I don’t see eye to eye anymore.” There is more hope for such couples for there is still a sense of closeness, but when you hear: I don’t know what is wrong with “her,” and “he doesn’t care about me,” you know there is trouble. But using a personal name shows closeness.

Reasons Not to Fear

1 ...I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward."

4 And behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir."

5 Then He brought him outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be."

6 And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.

1. God gave Abram the grounds for not fearing Chedorlaomer or the future without children. Abram was not to fear because God was his shield and his exceedingly great reward. God was showing Abram that the removal of his fear and the gaining of his happiness were dependent upon God (his shield – a shield that secured him from the arrows of Chedorlaomer and his friends). And this sense of God being a shield for his people is found throughout the Bible, and particularly in the warrior Psalms. Think of the warrior Psalms and God’s promise of protection of his own.

Psalms 144:2 - My lovingkindness and my fortress, My high tower and my deliverer, My shield and the One in whom I take refuge, Who subdues my people under me.

Psalms 28:7 - The LORD is my strength and my shield; My heart trusted in Him, and I am helped; Therefore my heart greatly rejoices, And with my song I will praise Him.

Psalms 3:3 - But You, O LORD, are a shield for me, My glory and the One who lifts up my head.

A shield was intended to protect the main parts of the body or the whole body. Some soldiers who died their bodies were taken home in their shield.

2. But of course God was not just referring to a physical shield, though that is true, but God was referring to spiritual protection. You see, there is only one shield that will protect you from the enemies of the Lord and the “wiles of the Devil.” It is the shield of faith. It is the shield that makes you acknowledge what God has done for you in Christ and you trust that he will save you on account of Christ’s substitutionary death for you. This shield will protect you in the day of the Lord’s judgment. God is *your spiritual Fort Knox. He’ll keep you safe...like Fort Knox keeps gold safe.*

3. Questions: If you are not a Christian, can your god be your shield? Children...career...money. No, they can't. So trust in God who can. And if you are a Christian: When you sing: A mighty fortress is our God - as the Psalmists and the Reformers...does it give you more courage to fight against sin, and the Devil?
4. Further, God reminded Abram that he was Abram's great reward. In other words, Abram's didn't need anything in this world to be satisfied except knowing and holding on to God. You see, a reward speaks of inheritance – something unearned. In this way, God was dealing with Abram's concern – that he had no one to leave all his "stuff" to. So God is literally saying: "You are my adopted son" And God he doesn't give his son mere money...but his company. What is interesting to note here is that God first revealed his person and promise to Abram in Ur of the Chaldees...and now God is beginning to reveal his power to do what he had promised.
5. What a comfort this must have been to Abram who had refused the reward from war. Not just your reward...but your **exceedingly great reward**. Get a sense of this reward!
Matthew 19:27 – Peter asked a fair question by. "See, we have left all and followed You. Therefore what shall we have?" Jesus' answer: You shall reign in heaven.
 Being a child of God is the greatest reward imaginable. It is secured in this life and in the world to come. This reward comes from Jesus Christ's death. What an inheritance! By rejecting the gift of this world (from the king of Sodom) and not entangling himself with Sodom as Lot did, Abram was properly rewarded. But if you have another god as your reward...then learn that your reward is not secure...No other god has real power to reward! All the other gods of this world are expressions of the Devil – and he has not authority or ability to reward you with anything that can be considered truly good.
6. After reminding Abram that God was the source of his happiness, God then bluntly told Abram that Eliezer would not be his heir – as Abram feared, but one from his own body would become his heir. It was said clearly and without limitations and would have been a real source of joy to Abram as he received God's promise. Promises must be received by faith to be enjoyed.

Summary & Conclusion:

Abram's had great troubles...Chedorlaomer, the king of Sodom, the Canaanites, and he had no children. But Abram's greatest trouble, like Peter, was that he temporarily took his eyes off of Jehovah. Abram looked around him and saw the troubles. He did not look up. Because of that, he doubted God and fell into fear. God graciously brought him out and reassured him of his love and gave him promises of future protection as well – a protection that came from Abram having faith in the coming Savior...

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: Today you might be fearful of terrorism, what your children might turn out to be, chicken pox, war, economic instability, and unemployment. **Yet, know who your God is.** He is a **caring** God. He **called** you from your place of darkness and depression, and he **keeps** you. How? The Lord says: I am your shield... More, God says: I am your extremely great reward... fulfilling man's most fundamental need. John Calvin wrote many years ago: *"Whoever can be persuaded that his life is protected by the hand of God and learn to resort to him in cares and troubles will find this the best remedy for all evil."* (Let me repeat that.) Like Abram, let me reassure you that your protection and great reward comes to you from Jesus Christ alone who died on the cross for your sins. This is the only thing that will comfort you in life and in death.

Finally, if you do not have Jesus as your Redeemer, I plead with you today, come to him, confess your sins, ask him to make you his child, and enjoy the protection and reward of God Almighty. Then instead of fearing...you would be singing songs of joy.