

Abraham is a role model for how we as Christians are to live our lives. We see his faithfulness in this text in Genesis 15:1–6. In fact, verse 6 of this passage is cited five times in the New Testament as Abraham is used as an example of a faithful believer.

What can we learn from today’s Old Testament text? We have to consider the promise, the pit, and the trust. **THE LORD CALLS US TO TRUST HIS PROMISES, EVEN IN THE PITS.** First, the promise.

I. The Lord promises great things. We see amazing promises of the Lord in our Genesis text. The Lord speaks to Abraham in a vision and says, **“Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.”** The Lord then promises to Abraham, **“your very own son shall be your heir.”** **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.”**

God comes right out of the gates with splendid promises to Abraham. Right after Abraham defeated some kings in a battle, God tells Abraham that He Himself is Abraham’s shield. God promises a rich reward to Abraham. Most specifically, God promises the gift of offspring to a couple who are beyond childbearing age, not just a son, but offspring more numerous than the stars. What an amazing promise!

We just did a review of the promises of God earlier in the service. It’s called the Apostles’ Creed. There’s a longer version called the Nicene Creed. Perhaps you’ve said these before in church or learned them in Sunday school. These creeds are not just great statements of belief, but they are a list of promises that God makes to us.

When we say, “I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth,” we are reminding ourselves that our reward is great! Our Heavenly Father not only made us, but He promises to richly and daily provide us with all that we need to support this body and life.

When we reflect on the words about Jesus Christ, God comforts us with the promise that Jesus did indeed die and rise for us for our forgiveness and renewal. We are proclaiming that Jesus is our Shield. The Son of God promises that He is in control of all earthly affairs as He rules at the right hand of power. We are confessing that Jesus promises to come back again to make all things right, to end evil once and for all and to wipe every tear from our eyes. These are the great promises of God!

When we read about the Holy Spirit in the last part of the creed, God showers us with promises more numerous than the stars. The Holy Spirit promises to walk alongside us and enable us to live out our lives as Christians. The Holy Spirit promises us the Church, which is a community of believers to support and strengthen us. The Holy Spirit promises us the forgiveness of sins delivered from

the cross to us. The Holy Spirit promises the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting, and we take heart knowing that this life is not all that there is.

These are great promises, but what about when doubts arise? Remember our three key words: the promise, the pit, and the trust. Second, II. The pits make us doubt those promises. We see some of those doubts arise in Abraham. After being told by God Himself that He is Abraham's shield and his reward will be great, Abraham interjects "**O Lord GOD, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?**" And Abram said, "**Behold, you have given me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir.**" Abraham was pointing to the fact that he had no kids, and his wife was past childbearing age. How is it possible to have an heir!

And so, from the pits, we start to doubt those great promises of God. The "But God's..." start to bubble to the top.

The Creed summarizing the Bible promises that our Heavenly Father is our maker, creator, and sustainer, but God! What about the supply chain issues? What about the formula shortage? What about the starving Africans? What about my recent cancer diagnosis? But God... What about?

The Creed summarizing the Bible promises that our Savior Jesus Christ has redeemed us from sin. But God! What about my sin habits? What about that so called Christian who lives like a heathen? The Creed promises that our Savior Jesus Christ rules the universe, but God! What about the shootings that never seem to stop? What about the War in Ukraine? The Creed promises that the Son of God will come again in glory to make all things right. But God! He hasn't come yet, is He still coming?

The Creed summarizing the Bible promises that the Holy Spirit binds together the Church in unity. But God! What about all the sin and division in the Church? The Creed promises that the Holy Spirit delivers the forgiveness of sins. But God! I don't feel forgiven. The Creed promises that the Holy Spirit will work with the Father and the Son to raise us up. But God! I've been to many funerals and deceased seem pretty dead. Will I ever see my loved ones again who have departed in the faith?

So with great promises come deep pits: pits of doubt, pits of "But God!", pits of trials and tribulations. What do we do when the troubles come? And they *will* come! Remember: the promise, the pit, and the trust. III. Faith trusts the Lord even in the pits.

What did Abraham do with the great promises of God even despite the fact that humanly speaking, he and his wife would be unable to have children? Despite all evidence to the contrary: "[Abraham] **believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness.**"

Faith, belief, trust: all of these are similar words. To be a Christian means to trust the Lord. To be a Christian is to believe that the God of the Bible—the God of the creed—is the true God and is not some myth. To be a Christian means to have faith that our Triune God will get you through, even when it seems impossible.

Dear Christian friend, grasp tightly to the promises contained in the Bible. Read your Bible and trust the words therein. Confess the creed with your family or even say it alone at home. Don't just say it mindlessly, think of each line as a promise from God Himself to you directly because you'll need it handy in the pits.

A friend of mine is an upstanding Christian man and a faithful pastor. He and his wife went through a tragedy: their son died within days after he was born due to birth defects. When the nurse came into the room to deliver the bad news that the son had passed, she tried to console the husband and wife. This friend of mine stopped her and grabbed both her shoulders and looked directly into her face and said, "I believe in the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting." He repeated this to her several times before letting her go.

Isn't that the picture of trust? That even in the pit of losing a child, he proclaimed the hope that he would see his child again at the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. May we follow that example of clinging to the promises of God even in the midst of trials and tribulations.

May we follow in the footsteps of Abraham who trusted God even despite the evidence. His example was held up throughout the Bible of what true trust and faith looks like.

When you doubt that your Heavenly Father provides, believe the Bible which teaches, "**I have been young, and now am old, yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken or his children begging for bread.**" When sickness arises, trust the great physician who will heal you if not in this life, but in the life to come.

When you doubt Jesus, trust that everything in the Creed, He did for you: conceived by the Holy Spirit for you, born of the virgin Mary for you, suffered under Pontius Pilate for you, was crucified, died and was buried for you. He descended to hell for you. The third day He rose again from the dead for you. He rules over the world and he is even able to make good out of evil situations, and He will return one day to judge the living and the dead.

When you doubt the Holy Spirit, know that Jesus promised the gates of hell will not prevail against His church. When you doubt you're forgiven, believe the Scripture that reads, "**as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.**" When you watch the casket lower into the grave, "**I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live,**"

As you are wrapped in these promises, you find that the Holy Spirit works to have you trust God, even in the pits. Amen!