

SERMON PASSAGES – see separate sheet

SERMON READING – Genesis 15:1-6 (PL translation)

Sometime later, Abram had a vision, in which God said,

'Abram, never fear. I'll shield you from harm, and you'll never want for anything.'

'That's easy for you to say,' replied Abram. 'But what does it actually mean? Promises are all very well, but they depend on my having a family; and as that's looking less and less likely, your words seem empty. As things stand, I've had to make one of my servants my heir!'

'He won't inherit a thing,' said God. 'Your heir will be your own flesh and blood. Come outside the tent a moment. Now, look! Look at the night sky, see the stars, have a go at counting them! Your descendents will be scattered across the earth like the stars across the heavens.'

Abram took God at his word, and that faith put him in good standing with God.

The meaning of 'righteousness' in Rom 3 & 4

- Paul's understanding of God's covenantal faithfulness
- therefore Paul does not mean simply individual salvation
- the basis of 'being put right with' God is faith in Jesus Christ

Taking God at his Word – a study in Abraham

the words 'faith' 'trust' & 'believe' occur 25 times from 3:21 – 4:25

- being willing to give up everything and GO (Gen 12:4)
- being willing to believe what God says even if it seems impossible (Gen 15:6)

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER THOUGHT

1. How do you respond to the view that your own individual salvation is part of a much wider plan, whereby God intends to fulfil his promises to his people and ultimately restore and renew the whole of the creation?
2. In what ways have you 'taken God at his Word?' Share stories in your group or with friends. What testimonies do you have to tell? Are there any we could share in church?
3. Are there any words which you believe God has spoken over you which seem humanly impossible? Share those with your group and ask them to pray for you. Remember that we don't fix our eyes on the 'word' itself but on the God who speaks.