

Sunday, March 17, 2019  
Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18  
Theme: "WITH ALL YOUR HEART-IMITATING"

#### (IMITATE)

To imitate is to follow or copy someone by example...

But it is not always good to imitate every behavior we see in a person...

The subject before us this morning is Abram and how we could imitate parts of his faith journey...

#### (GOD & ABRAM)

This chapter introduces God and Abram...

Until now (Chapter 15), Abram did everything God asked him to do...

\*He left his homeland and family for a promised land...

\*Like each of us he made some poor decisions along the way...

\*But in the end he obeyed and traveled to the land God showed him...

Abram thought he might die without having a son...

His faith was strong until now, when he thought that God's promise was not going to be fulfilled...

So, he thought it would be good to adopt his servant...

#### (APPREHENSION)

\*Friends, isn't it true that when we think God's plans are about fail that we begin to get apprehensive and raise questions...

\*Isn't it true that it is during these times that we get confused, fearful, and even come up with our own plans...

Abram had a counter plan, but God refused it, brought Abram outside, instructed him to gaze toward heaven, told him to count the stars, and see if he could number them...

Then God said, "So shall your descendants be..."

(v. 6) Abram believed God; this was a further evidence of Abram's confidence in God...

(v. 7) God reminded Abram of a time when he was in exile and how he was delivered...

Friends, any time we feel anxious about what God can do, let us be reminded of the times we were delivered...

God promised that Abram would inherit the land...

Even though Abram believed God, he still had questions...

(Genesis 15:8) And he said, "Lord GOD, how shall I know that I will inherit it?"

#### (TWO SIGNIFICANT PROMISES)

So, God made two significant promises when Abram expressed his concern...

1. God promised that Abram will father a son through whom his descendants would become a great nation...

2. God also promised Abram's that his descendants would possess the land...

God established these promises as a covenant between God and Abram by telling Abram to offer a sacrifice of specific animals and birds...

Each animal was cut in half and laid on the ground...

The covenant was sealed...

Abram believed God and God honored him for his unwavering faith...

The sacrifice of the animals was not to serve as a witness between them but was a sign of God's commitment to fulfill God's promise...

(HORROR & DARKNESS - v. 12)

But after everything, when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, horror and great darkness fell upon him...

\*Horror in this context suggests that he was nervous, but also a sense of reverence...

\*And so, God causes Abram to experience an unconscious state of mind...

\*Darkness came...

\*But it was out of the darkness, out of the chaos, disorder and confusion, that God does God's work...

As Christians, we can rely on God's faithfulness...

As Christians, we should imitate the good things Abram did and believe that God can and will fulfill God's promise to us...

(OBJECT OF FAITH)

Friends, God is always the object of our faith...

God is always the source of our confidence...

The promise of reward in this story is significant in view of the fact that Abram had just refuse a reward from the king of Sodom...

God would be Abram's true reward...

Indeed we are all God's reward...

(Psalm 127:3) Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, The fruit of the womb is a reward...

(GAZE)

I encourage us to continue gazing upon the heavens where we can find our source of promise...

God's promises may seem far, but they are ever near...

(PSALM 147:1-5) \*I know this and that is why I am joining the Psalmist in proclaiming the God who built up Jerusalem...

\*The God who gathered together the outcasts of Israel...

\*The God who heals the broken-hearted and binds up their wounds...

\* The God who counts the number of the stars; who calls them all by name..

\* Great is that God, and mighty in power; whose understanding is infinite...

\*Friends, Hebrews 13:8 reminds us that the second person of the Trinity, Jesus Christ, is the same yesterday, today, and forever...

The first person of the Trinity, God, is our shield and strength...

\*Abram waited in the darkness until his prayer was answered...

\*He waited in the darkness until God's promise came to to past...

\*Are you in darkness today...

\*If so, be strong in the Lord...

(LIFE'S PATTERN)

\* Abram 's faith kept strong in spite of the darkness...

I therefore invite us to IMITATE the good behavior of Abram...

Keep walking on the journey for these forty days and hold on to God's promises...

\*When God's promise doesn't seem to be any nearer...

\*Instead of questioning your faith...

\*Instead of questioning God's faithfulness...

\*Instead of questioning your dreams..

\*Instead of going through the hurt, pain, and apparent disappointment by yourself...

\*Pray that your heart will be shaped into a more trusting heart because life's pattern is full of good and bad experiences...

\*Life itself is a familiar pattern of faith and doubt...

\*It is a familiar pattern of Joy and sadness...

\*It is a familiar pattern of dreams and wilderness...

\*It is a familiar pattern of green pastures and dry valleys...

And so, there will be times of struggle and hardship; pain and suffering...

But there will also be times of peace and happiness...

As Paul writes to the Philippians, so I encourage you, imitate the Lord...

Salvation story...

Amen!