

The Gaps In Our Faith

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[0:00] I trust God. If we were to ask most Christians here, most Christians, most people in this room today, they would say, I trust God.

! I trust God. That's what it means to be Christian, to have faith in Christ, that he died for our sins, that he rose from the dead. That's what we confess. We're people of faith. We trust God.

Of course we do. But often we continue on and add a few more words afterwards. I trust God, but what if?

I trust God, but what about university? I haven't heard back from that school yet. I trust God, but what about my job? I can't find a job, or I hate my job.

I trust God, but what about my family? What if they get sick and they don't recover? What if my children don't believe in Jesus? We say we trust God, and we do. But there's a gap.

[0:57] There's a gap. There's distance. There's a gap between the train and the platform. Do you feel that gap? The gap between what we know and believe about God and how our hearts feel when we confront our daily circumstances, when we go out on Monday and are faced with the situation in our lives.

Is there that gap? In my head, I know, I know, and I fully trust God that he is sovereign. He is for me. And if those things are true, then I should not have to worry.

That's the logical truth. I should not have to worry. I should not be anxious. I should not be anxious. If I fully trust in God, that's the logical implication. But for me, that's not the actual reality.

There's often a disconnect between our faith in the promises of God and our fears when we see what's right before our eyes in our lives.

I trust God. But what about this? What if that happens? And if you've ever found yourself in that gap, if you see distance between your faith and your feelings, then you're in good company.

[2:07] Because today, we're continuing in the book of Genesis. We're opening up to Genesis chapter 15, reading on about the story of Abram, who's later his name.

God gives him a new name, Abraham. That's the later name for Abram. Abram is known as the father of the faith. He's a giant of faith. Abram trusts God. He also trusts God.

But we know that Abram has his ups and downs. He has enough faith in God in Genesis chapter 12 to go, to leave his father's house when God calls him, to go to the land that the Lord has promised him.

But second half of that chapter, there's a famine. And then Abram, he flees to Egypt and sells out his wife to Pharaoh to save his life. That's Abram. Yet Abram believed God.

He has enough faith in chapter 13 later to not fight with Lot over the land, to let Lot have his pick, trusting that God would give him what was promised, would give him the land.

[3:04] Abram also gives glory to God in chapter 14 after the wars with the kings, choosing to honor Melchizedek, king of peace, the most high God, and to pass up taking wealth from Sodom.

So Abram, Sodom, the wealth of Sodom, the wealth of wicked Sodom. So Abram has faith. But we see through Abram's stories and in a passage today in chapter 15, that Abram, he also feels this gap and disconnect.

On one hand, he remembers and trusts the promises of God. But on the other hand, he faces uncertain circumstances. Abram has faith, but he also has questions, anxieties, fears.

And that is where God meets him. In the uncertainty, in the questions, in the waiting, in the confusion, God says to him, fear not, I am your shield.

I am the one who hung all the stars in the sky. I am the Lord who is with you, and I am the Lord who makes my covenant with you so that you may have certainty in my promises. That's what the Lord does.

[4:04] Even when we have faith, there can be a gap between what we know and what we feel. When our circumstances give us reasons to fear. But God, he steps into that gap.

He made a covenant with Abram. And he makes a covenant with us. He made a covenant with us. To show us that he can be trusted in all our circumstances. That's what we'll see in Genesis 15 today.

So let's stand out as we read the word of God. I'm going to invite Trevor to come up and read for us. We'll be reading from Genesis chapter 15. And we stand as a sign of respect and reverence for the word of God. Genesis chapter 15.

After these things, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision. Fear not, Abram. I am your shield. Your reward shall be very great. But Abram said, Oh 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.

[5:08] And behold, the word of the Lord came to him. This man shall not be your heir. 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. And he believed the Lord and he counted it to him as righteousness. And he said to him, I'm the Lord who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess.

But he said, Oh Lord God, how am I to know that I shall possess it? He said to him, bring me a heifer, three years old, a female goat, three years old, a ram, three years old, a turtle dove and a young pigeon.

And he brought him all these, cut them in half and laid each half over it against the other. But he did not cut the birds in half. And when the birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell on Abram. And behold, dreadful and great darkness fell upon him. Then the Lord said to Abram, know for certain that your offspring shall be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there.

[6:17] And they will be afflicted for 400 years. But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve. And afterward, they shall come out with great possessions. As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace.

You shall be buried in a good old age. And they shall come back here in the fourth generation for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete. When the sun had gone down and it was dark, behold, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces.

On that day, the Lord made a covenant with Abram saying to your offspring, I give this land from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates, the land of the Kenites, the Kenites, the Kenites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, the Amorites, the Kenanites, the Gergashites and the Jebusites.

Thank you. This is the word of the Lord. Please take a seat. So again, we're focusing on the theme of faith today. As people of faith, we say, I trust God, but we often add a little more.

I believe. What about this? What about that? There's a gap between our faith and our feelings sometimes. Distance between what we know about God's promises and our present reality. And in the same way, Abram also had faith.

[7:33] Abram believed God, but he also had reasons to worry. Abram trusted, but he had a few what ifs and what abouts. First, he says, I trust God, but what about my security?

We read in verse one, after these things, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision. Fear not. After these things. Now, why does the Lord come to Abram and tell him to fear not?

Remember, we read chapter 14 last week. There was a war. The first war recorded in the Bible. The four kings in the east, led by Ketolaomer, defeated the kings of the Jordan Valley.

They conquered the area, including the city of Sodom. And Abram's nephew, Lot, was living in Sodom. Lot was taken captive. And so Abram got involved. He took 318 men, fought against the eastern kings, won, and freed Lot.

And that's the background when we read in verse one, after these things. Abram is living in the aftermath of this war. He did win the battle. Abram won. He rescued Lot. He won.

[8:34] He's successful now. But he also kicked the hornet's nest. He's made an enemy of four kings. It's all good now. Abram's fine now. But what if in one year's time, in five years' time, ten

years' time, they regroup and they want to take vengeance?

Will I have to flee? What will happen to my family? Will they get captured? Can you relate to that feeling of having concerns or having these lingering threats against you?

Life could be good now, but what if things change? What if gas prices keep rising? What if they cut my position at work? What if I have a bad experience in university?

What if rent goes up? I need to leave Hong Kong. What if my children turn away from Christ? What if that friend turns against me? Are there these lingering threats, these concerns against you, even if life is okay now?

And another thought we might have is, I trust God, but what about that fear of missing out? What if by obeying God, I'm missing out? Remember again, Abram, he won the war. He won the battle.

[9:40] He had all the spoils of war. He could have taken everything for himself, all the food, the animals, all the riches. But Abram turned it down. He turned down all the possessions he could have taken because he didn't want to take anything from Sodom.

He didn't want to associate himself with evil. So that the king of Sodom couldn't say, I have made Abram rich. So Abram turned down what he could have had for himself.

And the thought is, I want to glorify God. I trust God. What? What if I made a mistake? What if I gave up too much? I want to follow Jesus.

But what about the money I turned down? All the crazy things I see my friends doing. Did I make a mistake? Following Jesus meant losing that job, that opportunity.

It cost me. Did it cost me too much? Abram's circumstances gave him reason to fear. But God steps in and he says this. Look at me. This is in verse 2.

[10:42] Or sorry, it's in verse 1 still. Look at me. Fear not, Abram. I am your shield. Your reward will be very great. God says, I am your shield. I am your shield.

Nobody can touch you. I'm the one who will step in and protect you. And also, your reward will be very great. Your reward is far greater than anything you passed up.

Notice, God's comfort to Abram, it doesn't come in reassuring him about his exact circumstances. He doesn't give him details about his exact circumstances here.

The reassurance comes by reminding him about who God is. God says, fear not because of who I am. Fear not because your reward is found in me and I am your shield.

Our peace comes not as we dwell as much on our situation, but when we think about and we are reminded about the almighty, sovereign, compassionate God who is on our side.

[11:45] Amidst the threats, God is our shield. Our reward is great. And so God promises Abram a great reward. And Abram believes, but then Abram, he looks around inside his tent and realizes, what good is a massive reward if I don't have a son to inherit it?

That's Abram's thought in verses two and three. It says, but Abram said, oh 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. Abram's thinking, okay, God, you'll give me a reward. But what good is it if I don't have a child to pass it on to? You promised to make me a great nation, but I don't even have an heir right now. I have nobody to continue my name. Even if I get the promised land, I get everything I want. I don't have anybody to give it to. If I die tomorrow, my servant Eliezer, this foreign servant will get everything.

And remember at this point, Abram is, he's 75 to 85 years old. And yes, in Genesis, people lived longer. But we see in the genealogies in chapter 11 that lifespans are getting shorter and shorter.

[12:56] And everybody in chapter 11 had their first child by the time they were in their 30s. Abram now is at least in his 70s. And there's still no child. Abram thinks, I trust you, God.

But what about this weight? What about the fact that I'm getting older and older? What if I never have a child? What if at my age, having a kid is simply impossible?

Can you relate to Abram's weight? Thinking, this can never happen. This, I've waited so long. This is totally impossible. It can't be.

Maybe, like Abram, it's a desire for a family, for a child. That's a real challenge. Maybe you've been praying for change in your life. Wishing for something to change.

Your circumstances to change. You've been praying for someone for years. But they still seem so far from God. It's been so long. At this point, it seems like there's no chance.

[13:55] It's impossible. I trust you, God. But what about all these years of seeing absolutely nothing come to pass? This is how God responds to Abram in verse four.

And behold, the word of the Lord came to him. This man shall not be your heir. Your very own son shall be your heir. God reassures Abram. Your heir won't be Eliezer.

Your very own son. You will have your very own son born from your flesh. That son will be your heir. And next in verse five, the Lord brought Abram outside and said to him, Look toward heaven and number the stars if you are able to number them.

Then he said to him, so shall your offspring be. We know now more than ever that there's too many stars in the skies to count. We can't count them with our eyes. There's too many.

And God is telling Abram, you will have more offspring than he can count through a son from your own flesh. And also, that's the promise God makes to Abram here.

[14:55] But also in pointing Abram to the stars, God reminds Abram of his power in creation. He's saying, you can't even begin to count all the stars in the sky.

But you know what? I made them all. God spoke and they came into being. And you can't even count them. Does that sound impossible to you? I say, let there be light and there was light.

Is that possible? Sounds impossible, but not for God. And if God could do that, then what is it to give Abram a child? If God is our creator, then what can't he do?

He can do the easier thing of taking care of all our needs. That's what God is saying and pointing Abram to the stars of the sky. More stars than he can even count. Is our situation impossible?

God can still do it. And that takes us to verse six. Abram believed the Lord and he counted it to him as righteousness. As we read that, we see the gap open up again.

[15:58] Having faith doesn't always mean we instantly feel full certainty all the time. Because just one verse later, God reminds Abram of the promised land.

And Abram responds in verse eight saying, oh Lord God, how am I to know that I shall possess it? Abram believed God, verse six, verse eight, how can I know for sure?

And part of the reason for this gap is God gives us his promises, but sometimes he holds back all the details. Back in chapter 12, God promised to make Abram a great nation.

We read that a few weeks ago to make Abram a great nation and give him offspring. But God didn't specify how this would happen. And the promised offspring actually in their context could have been a legal heir like Eliezer.

It could have been through Eliezer, God's promise in chapter 12, that God would make Abram a great nation. And it's only now, probably years later, that God reveals that Abram will have a son from his own flesh and blood.

[17:10] And for us also, we know God's promises that he is for us, that all things work together for the good of those who love him. But like Abram, we don't always know how these promises will play out.

We don't have all the details. We don't know whether we'll get that job we want. Will I find a partner? Will my family be okay? We don't know all the details. Living by faith means saying, I trust your promises, even when I don't know how all these details will work out.

And here's the comfort in this. God doesn't rebuke Abram for his uncertainty. When Abram asked, how will I know for sure? God doesn't criticize him.

He gently addresses Abram's questions. Even as Abram faced unknowns and battled fears, God still says, he declares Abram's faith was counted to him as righteousness.

To have faith doesn't mean that we know the whole Bible back to front and know every answer to theology and apologetics. Have every question answered. To have faith doesn't mean that we never think about the difficult circumstances in front of us and wonder, will we be okay?

[18:23] It's natural. It's okay to have questions. Now there's a way to ask questions in unbelief. If God is so good, how can there be evil? I don't understand it.

And therefore, there must be no God. We can ask questions in unbelief. But we can also ask questions in faith. I trust you, God. But I don't understand.

I trust you, God. But I still feel uncertainty. Uncertainty. Why do you allow illnesses in the world? What is your plan for my life? I can't see how it's possible. I don't get it.

But you are God and I will put my faith in you. Even when there's a gap between what we know and the fears and our feelings, God welcomes our questions.

He is gentle with our questions. Like Abram, when we look to him, believe in him, our faith is counted as righteousness. And so how does God answer Abram's question?

[19 : 20] Abram asks in verse eight, how am I to know that I shall possess it? Abram believes God, but he's looking for certainty. He wants a guarantee. He wants full certainty. But God's response is possibly not the certainty Abram was hoping for.

God does give him certainty and he will eventually seal it with this covenant ceremony. But before they seal this covenant, before they make this covenant, they ratify this covenant, God answers Abram's desire for certainty in an unexpected way.

Look at verse 13. We'll skip forward a bit. Abram wants certainty. And God says, know for certain that your offspring will be strangers and slaved and oppressed in a foreign land for 400 years. You can know that for certain. Abram says, give me certainty about this blessing. And God replies, know for certain your offspring will suffer. They'll be slaves. This doesn't sound like the perfect blessing.

Sometimes in the process of fulfilling his promises, God takes us through a painful journey. He makes us wait 400 years and brings us through trials. We read earlier, Abram, he faced a famine. [20 : 29] Abram had to fight kings to save his nephew. And now God promises him, your offspring will be slaves in Egypt. We know later it is Egypt for about 400 years. When we follow Jesus, God doesn't promise us health, wealth, prosperity.

That's not what he promises. But don't we want that? And sometimes don't we expect that? And maybe that's where some of these what ifs, what about questions come from.

I trust God, but why isn't life going as I want it to go? As I expect it to go when I put my faith in God? Well, God doesn't promise that life will be smooth sailing.

I bet some Israelites in Egypt also asked, why did God allow Egypt to enslave us? When they were going through that. God doesn't promise us an easy life. Instead, he does promise us.

I will never leave you or forsake you. Even though we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for you are with me. That's what we can say when we trust in God.

[21 : 29] Your rod and your staff, they comfort me. God doesn't always spare us from suffering, but he promises to be with us and deliver us through our trials. And we hold onto that by faith in our lowest even.

God promises slavery to Abram. Yet he also promises salvation in verse 14. He says, but I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve. And afterwards they shall come out with great possessions. God will bring justice. He will deliver his people. He will bring them out of slavery. He will bring salvation and give them the land that he promised after all. And through it all, God will be with them. In verse 17, we see the smoking fire pot and flaming torch. Smoke and fire. Kind of like that pillar of cloud by day and pillar of fire by night. That represented God's presence with his people, the people of Israel.

When God led them out of Egypt, God will be with them. Suffering is part of God's covenant with Abram. But in that suffering, God promises that he will be with them and will deliver them, will bring them salvation.

[22 : 36] Now at this point, we should also go back and talk about this covenant. Abram wanted assurance. God makes a covenant with him.

What is a covenant? Covenant is an agreement that binds two parties together in a relationship. And today we talk about marriage covenants.

We just announced we're celebrating that Nathan is going to make a wedding covenant, marriage covenant with Kelly in times to come. And in marriage, the husband and wife, on that wedding day, the husband and wife, they make vows to one another.

There's promises you make to one another, conditions you promise to meet, that to be faithful to one another, richer or poorer, better for worse, sickness and health, as long as we both shall live. This agreement binds you together in relationship and marriage. You make your vows. You sign the wedding certificate. And that seals the covenant. In Abram's time, they had a different custom, different way of making covenants.

[23 : 39] In the ancient Near East, to make serious and formal agreements, treaties, their practice was to take animals and cut them in half.

That's what they would do. Instead of signing with a pen, take animals and cut them in half to ratify a covenant. Cutting the animal, it symbolized a curse upon anyone who would break the terms of

the covenant.

We have some evidence from one treaty saying, it says this, as this calf is cut in two, so may Mateo be cut in two and may his nobles be cut in two if they break the terms of the covenant.

May they be cut in two just like this animal that sealed the covenant. Today, if I sign a lease, but I stop paying rent, then I've broken the contract and you can go to court. You can find a lawyer, go to court and sue me to collect your money.

But in the ancient Near East, their covenants promised something more extreme. If I break my end of the promise, may I be torn apart and killed just like these animals. That's what they're promising.

[24 : 45] We also have an example in Jeremiah 34 verse 18, where God said, it says this, And the men who transgressed my covenant and did not keep the terms of the covenant that they made before me, I will make them like the calf that they cut into and pass between its parts.

All the people of the land who passed between the parts of the calf. Custom there was to cut the animals, arrange them in two lines as Abram did, and pass through between the halves.

And by doing that, by passing through, that would mean to be agreeing to this curse, to be torn apart if they broke the covenant. And so that's what Abram prepares.

It's a weird ceremony. It's weird. It's foreign to our culture, but that's the context they're in. That's what he's preparing in verse nine. He takes a heifer, that's a cow, a goat, a ram, and cuts them in half. And he lays each half across the other, opposite the other.

He's creating two lines and a gap between the pieces, a gap for them to walk through. And what we expect following tradition is for him and God to both walk together through that gap, walk together in between.

[25 : 52] To step between the carcasses and say, if I break my end of the deal, let me be torn into pieces. But look at verse 12. As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram.

A deep sleep fell upon Abram. Why did Abram fall asleep? It's no accident. He wasn't bored. God immobilizes him so that Abram couldn't move. God put him to sleep.

Why? Because God knows that if Abram walks into that gap between the animals, he's going to die. He is going to take the curse.

God knows that Abram and his descendants, you and I, will constantly fail to trust him. We will constantly fall into the gap between our unbelief, the gap of our unbelief and sin.

And if we had to, if we weren't forced to walk through those animals, we'd end up torn in pieces just like them. And look what happens in verse 17. When the sun had gone down and it was dark, behold, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces.

[26 : 57] On that day, the Lord made a covenant with Abram saying, to your offspring, I give this land. Smoke and fire represent God. He steps into the gap between the animals alone.

He puts Abram to sleep and walks through alone. And by passing through alone, God took full responsibility upon himself to fulfill the covenant.

He made a promise unilaterally without other conditions. By passing through the gap alone, God was saying, as surely as I live and I will continue to live forever, I will keep my promise to you.

I will certainly keep my end of the bargain. And if you fail to keep yours, the curse will not fall on you. We learned the curse will fall on him. Imagine if Abram passed through, he was bound to obey God perfectly or be killed.

And that's in fact what we deserve. That's what we would, we should deserve. But God gives Abram grace. Grace. That's why verse six we read earlier is so beautiful.

[28 : 03] Abram believed the Lord and he counted it to him as righteousness. God counted Abram's faith to him as righteousness. Not because he deserved it.

Not because he earned righteousness by fulfilling everything that God told him to do. Because he ticked off every box of the covenant. Abram, he didn't work for acceptance from God.

Abram, he simply believed God and God took on his punishment for disobedience and credited Abram with his righteousness.

And verse six is beautiful because it applies to us also. When we believe God, our faith is counted to us as righteousness. That's what Romans four says.

Abram was fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. That's why his faith was counted to him as righteousness. But the words, it was counted to him were not written for his sake alone, but for ours also.

[29:02] It will be counted to us who believe in him, who raised from the dead, Jesus, our Lord, who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification. And that's why this verse, this covenant is so beautiful for us.

Points us straight to the cross of Christ. Just as God promised Abram, God sent his son, Jesus, to take the curse upon himself. Jesus died under the cross to take the penalty for our sins.

Galatians three said, Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us. For it is written, cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree so that in Christ Jesus, the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles so that we might receive the promised spirit through faith. Jesus stepped into that gap. He stood between God's perfect holiness and our sin, our failures. He was pierced for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities. Upon him was a chastisement that brought us peace.

And with his wounds, we are healed. God knew that Abram and his descendants, that we all will constantly fail. We will never hold up our end of the bargain.

[30:10] There will always be that gap between our faith and our fears, between what we believe and how we live it up and how we obey. We say, I trust God, but why do I keep on worrying?

I believe God, but why do I keep on sinning? I put my faith in Christ, but why do I still doubt him? And this is, that's why Abram's faith could be counted to him as righteousness because of what Jesus did.

And that's why when our faith is weak, when we're confronting this gap between what God has promised and the terrifying circumstances in front of our eyes, we can still trust him.

Because God doesn't ask us to obey him, follow him perfectly. He does ask us, but he credits Christ's righteousness to us by faith.

We are saved by faith. He doesn't require us to bridge that gap alone. He sent Jesus to bridge it for us. And it's not the strength of our faith, the degree of confidence in him that saves us, but the strength of the savior, the Christ that we put our faith in.

[31:16] It's his strength that saves us, not our own. Several months ago, my in-laws were in town. And with Jojo, we went to take a walk around North Point, that new boardwalk by the harbor.

And when we got there, we found that they found that they built a new walkway in glass. There was this glass walkway that they built, this observation glass floor.

It's quite a long section, maybe 20 or 30 meters. And you can step on it. You can walk over it. Look down through the glass and see the water in Victoria Harbor below you.

Okay. And there's two very different types of people who cross across the glass. The first is what Jojo, my father-in-law, and I did.

I really don't care about these types of things. I'm the type to just run across, jump on the glass, and try to get other people to be scared and laugh at them when they are. We have 100% faith in this glass.

[32:17] This is Hong Kong. The architects, the engineers, they designed it. We should be safe. We step on it, jump around, take a selfie without any second thought. We have faith in this glass. And there's a second type of people, such as my mother-in-law.

We're calling over to her. Come over, take a picture. It's going to be fun. Get on the glass. Let's take a selfie. And she's like, I really don't want to.

She's terrified, anxious, uncertain. She's got questions. Is this glass really thick enough to support my weight? Her knees are shaking. Her heart is pounding. She's holding her breath.

She's filled with fear. And only has a little ounce of faith. When we call her, come on this glass. Let's take a picture. She's afraid. But yet, she trusts enough and takes a step on the glass.

Now, what do you think happens? Did my mother-in-law fall through into the water? Did she step on the grass and fall through, take a swim, just because she was afraid?

[33:21] She only had a little bit of faith. Of course not. She didn't fall into the gap. She stepped on the glass. And it was strong enough to hold her. It was strong enough to support her.

We all made it to the other side. Did we make it across because I was so confident and I ran across and I was just laughing, hopping around? No. Did she fall through because she was crawling on all the floors on the glass, all scared?

Of course not. All of us, we had faith, stepped on the glass. We survived for the same reason. It was strong enough to hold us.

That glass was strong enough to hold us. And it's not about the strength of our faith. That's not what saves us, but the strength of the one we have faith in. Abram believed God and it was counted to him, not earned.

It was counted to him, reckoned to him as righteousness. And we're saved simply by believing in Jesus and giving him all the glory. God gets all the glory for our salvation, not because we just had perfect faith and we deserved it, but because we trusted him and he was strong enough.

[34 : 30] He is the one who is worthy. He's the one who gets the worship for saving us. We don't need. We are simply saved by believing in him. That cross takes away all our boasting.

We can't boast because I was so confident that I jumped on the glass and I made it across. And also, we're not ashamed. We're not put to shame when we fear. That's the call for us today. We don't need perfect, unwavering confidence to follow Jesus. We don't need to overcome all our doubts, all our fears to take a step. We just need faith enough to step onto the grace of Christ, into him, and trust him for our salvation.

Even if we're overwhelmed by our circumstances, even when we ask all our what ifs, what abouts, even with all our questions, when we put our faith in Christ, God says to us, same thing he says to Abram, I am your shield.

Your reward shall be very great. There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. There's no more punishment for our sins because Jesus, the son of God, took the curse for us.

[35 : 39] That is what it means to be saved by grace through faith apart from works. So let's put our faith in Jesus. Let's keep taking steps of faith, not turning back so that we make it to the other side.

And to do that this week, let's do what God said to Abram. Look up. When Abram was caught up in his whatabouts, God took him outside and said, look toward heaven.

Look up and number the stars. We're so prone to forget. As soon as we leave these rooms, our anxieties will come back. The circumstances of our life will face them again. The whatabouts will come straight back into view.

And to fight the fight of faith, God gives us reminders of his goodness. He gave Noah a rainbow. Abram, the stars. Tell us, look at the birds, the grass of the field.

And most of all, Jesus, God, he gave us the cross of Christ to show that if God did not spare his own son, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?

[36 : 37] God reminds us through his word in prayer or weekly Sunday worship, life groups. When our faith is weak, where can we find reminders of God's faithfulness?

We need them. So let's look towards God, not our circumstances, but look to him. Remember the God who created us, loves us, gave his son for us.

And fight the fight of faith. Let's pray together. Invite the worship team to come up. Lord, we believe. Help our unbelief. We believe you. We trust you. But we also confess. We also have doubts, uncertainties, fears, anxieties.

We put our trust in you. We want to put our trust in you. Trust that Christ died to save sinners. And he is our only hope in life and death.

[37 : 38] Thank you, God. You sent your son for us. Help us to believe in you. Give us faith. For those of us who are here and have questions, doubts about God, pray that you gently answer those questions.

Draw us to you. We want to see more of you. Open our eyes that we can see your glory. You deserve the worship.

You deserve the praise. Save us so that we can praise your name. Pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. as great is your faithfulness and when we're faithless you are faithful we trust not in our own instinct or emotion but trust in the truth that God you are faithful and so Father help our unbelief help our doubts when we're in the midst of doubting and so Father as we depart in our ways God may we as a community with each other may we remind each other of your faithfulness when we're faithless may we see open our eyes to see brothers and sisters who are doubting may we be the voice of truth may you speak through us to encourage each other and Jesus may you may your faithfulness carry us through and not not by our own strength but by your spirit Lord and so God where we lift up today to you we lift up our worship to you Lord and we continue to worship throughout our week because we worship your faithfulness so in Jesus name we pray

Amen Amen