

After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, "Do not be afraid, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great." ² But Abram said, "O Lord GOD, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?"³ And Abram said, "You have given me no offspring, and so a slave born in my house is to be my heir." ⁴ But the word of the LORD came to him, "This man shall not be your heir; no one but your very own issue shall be your heir." ⁵ He brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your descendants be." ⁶ And he believed the LORD; and the LORD reckoned it to him as righteousness. Genesis 15:1-6 NRSV

What do we really have to believe in these days? So much of what we've believed in the past for example is no longer true. Remember the time that there were certain places you could work for and everybody thought they were "fixed for life?" If you brought an "American" car you believed it was completely made in America? Today you can buy an "American" car and discover that most of it was made overseas. You can also buy a "foreign car" and then discover it was made in America. Then there is a current commercial from an insurance company that pokes fun over folks that believe everything they see on the internet.

Real faith and belief in any age is a challenge but in this lesson from Genesis is the perhaps the "mother" of all statements of faith, that of Abram, who later becomes Abraham.

He is already taken the "award" for great faith by believing in a God that is different than any of his ancestors, and in his old age follows that God to a land this God will show him. Clearly in the eyes of some of his family members he was probably thought to have "lost it". Now God says that he is going to "reward him"

However in that day and age a reward meant nothing unless you could pass it on to your descendents. Abram was in his extreme old age, as was his wife, so it was going to a distant cousin and servant, Eliazar of Damascus. To Abram God's "reward" then was worthless.

So what does God do; God promises him an heir from himself and his wife. Think about that. An extremely old man and old woman are going to have a baby, and to make it even crazier, Abram will have descendants greater than stars in the sky. Not to be sacrilegious, but we might have said to God, "what are you smoking.... It must be pretty good stuff."

But Abram very simply completely believes God and it put him in right standing with God. That's it, no statements from Abram at that point just faith that God's promise is true. Since we know the "rest of the story" God does give Abram all God promises and more.

Where in your life do have to simply trust God, even when trusting doesn't seem to be working for you at the present? Abram lays down the challenge for you and me. Are you and I up to it???