

## WHAT'S IN YOUR WALLET?

Faith -- Faith in what God has done for us in Christ.

Genesis 15:1-6

**TEXT:** *After this, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward." But Abram said, "O Sovereign LORD, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?" And Abram said, "You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir." Then the word of the LORD came to him: "This man will not be your heir, but a son coming from your own body will be your heir." He took him outside and said, "Look up at the heavens and count the stars--if indeed you can count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.*

In Jesus' name, fellow redeemed:

The Capital One Credit Card has used the slogan for years: "What's in your wallet?" They had those TV commercials with Vikings raiding a fancy department store. There was that girl in the perfume department trying to spritz her perfume sample on the marauding Vikings as they ran past the perfume section. And at the end of the ad they would recite the slogan: "What's in your wallet?" You should have a Capital One Credit card.

Credit has enabled many Americans to enjoy many wonderful earthly blessings. Few of us could own a car if it weren't for financing plans that didn't exist when my Dad his first car. I was 6 years old when he put a \$1000 bill in my hand just before he went to the dealer to purchase a new car. A '56 Ford was only a thousand dollars in those days. Few of us can pay cash for a new car today.

Buy now and pay later... What enticing words! They are the rule of the credit card. Go home today with what your heart wants, and don't worry about the money until later.

The Word of God before us is pure gold. It talks about credit, but these words say: BUY NOW AND PAY NEVER! That is because what is credited to us is the gift of salvation paid for by the blood and righteousness of Jesus. Once again we heard the announcement on Good Friday: tetelestai, ***It is finished!*** Debt paid! And again, on Easter Sunday the announcement: Christ is risen! According to Paul, God's Word declares: ***(Jesus Christ) was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.*** Ro 4 This is all a matter of faith in what Christ has done for us. "What's in your wallet?"

Abraham had great wealth and many earthly blessings. He was so blessed by God that he had to have servants and even a chief steward to manage the daily affairs of his household. The Bible mentions his chief steward, Eliezer of Damascus. But his name comes up with a complaint that was weighing heavily on Abraham's heart. The Bible says: ***After this, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward." But Abram said, "O Sovereign LORD, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?" And Abram said, "You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir."*** What can you give me? I've got everything! But what good is all this wealth and honor if I don't have an heir? Eliezer will get it all!

Abraham was not concerned about Eliezer getting his estate! He was not worried about not having an heir to inherit his earthly possessions! Abraham was concerned because God had promised that he would have a son, and that the Savior of the world would come from him through his heir: no heir, no Savior. No Savior, no life eternal. No eternal life, then what good is all the wealth in the world? Abraham was at the age when people were expected to die. What good is a lifetime of wealth and pleasure if all there is in the end is the same shovelful of dirt in the face as waits for every man, rich or poor?

That Scripture should mention Eliezer by name makes me think that we should read between the lines a little bit with this man. That Abraham should mention him by name suggests to me that Eliezer was more interested in being the appointed heir of Abraham's household than in the hope of a Savior coming from a son born to old Abraham and Sarah. We can almost see Eliezer going about spreading rumors about these two old silly people living under the delusion of having a son in their old age! He'd would surely take good care of Abraham's property, since he believed: someday this will all be mine!

Do you have an "Eliezer" in your life? Every Christian does! They are the unbelieving of this world who covet night and day all this world's wealth and pleasure. They look at the Christian Church as a group of

pitiful self-deluded dreamers of a better life in heaven. Like it was with Abraham, these “Eliezers” get us down. They stir up our own sinful desires and cause us to wonder why God doesn’t make things better for His believers. No doubt, Abraham wondered, “Why is God so long in keeping His promise to give us a son? We are getting older and older, and soon we will be too old even for this miracle. Perhaps God has changed His mind because of my sins. I once lied and told the Pharaoh of Egypt that Sarah was my sister because I was afraid for my life. I deserve to have this great blessing removed from me and given to someone more worthy.”

How easy it was for Abraham to be distracted from the promise of God and made to look at his own self and situation! But is this not just like all of us? The countless distractions of this life, the ungodliness around us, mean people, and our own sins weigh us down. Paul is correct when he writes: *... if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. ... If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men.* 1 Co 15 How quickly we can be so distracted that self-pity makes us act and feel as if Christ has not been raised!

However, God knows where we are spiritually, and he knows just what we need. Like Abraham, we need to hear the Gospel promise. We need to be reminded of “What’s in our spiritual wallet.”

The Bible says: *After this, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward."* It is the Word of the Lord who comes to Abraham. There is no mighty sign, no sudden burst of glory, but the Word of the Lord repeating the Promise of the Gospel: *This man will not be your heir, but a son coming from your own body will be your heir." He took him outside and said, "Look up at the heavens and count the stars--if indeed you can count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be."* Here is the power of the Gospel Promise. Through this Word, the Holy Spirit strengthens the faith that He created in Abraham and in all who believe its message.

Now comes that passage of GOLD: *Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.* Abraham’s fears and doubts could be set aside. God had declared him righteous, sinless, holy and perfect simply through faith in God’s Word and Promise! That Savior who would someday come into the world through the birth of their son who also was still to be born would be the One who would pay the credit card.

Jesus would do two things that would benefit Abraham according to God’s promise. First, Jesus, True Man and True God, would live under the righteous demands of God and keep God’s Law perfectly. That would be the righteousness of the God/Man Jesus to be credited to Abraham’s account. Then this same holy sinless Son of God would go to the cross, bearing the sin and guilt of all mankind in order to be forsaken by God and punished by his righteous wrath so that sin would be paid for to the satisfaction of God himself.

Now it is important to know that Scripture takes this amazing text and makes it our own. Paul writes: *Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, "So shall your offspring be." ... This is why "it was credited to him as righteousness." The words "it was credited to him" were written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness-for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.* Ro 4 So we too are justified by faith alone in Christ alone, according to God’s written Word and promise!

We need to hear the Gospel promise, again and again and again! Only then are we assured, as was Abraham, that the Almighty God and Lord also is OUR *shield and very great reward*. A shield is for when there is war. The word translated as “reward” is also used to speak of one who is hired to protect us. If this meaning might be considered in place of “reward,” it fit’s the context of being protected from the “Eliezers” of this life who make our lives miserable by their sin and unbelief. God looks after His own just as He watched over Abraham and came to Him with His Almighty Word.

“What’s in your wallet?” According to God’s Word, we have Jesus, our *shield and very great reward*. Amen