

Biblical Hero: Abraham

Icebreaker: Who is your hero? This could be someone you know personally or someone you admire from afar, living or dead. But no Jesus answers. ☺ Invite each member to share.

Prayer: Almighty God, you have surrounded us with a great cloud of witnesses: Grant that we, encouraged by the good example of your servant Abraham, may persevere in running the race that is set before us, until at last with him, we attain to your eternal joy; through Jesus Christ, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

Observe: Underline God's promises in this passage and circle all of Abraham's questions & doubts.

Genesis 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."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, "Behold, you have given me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir."⁴ 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."⁵ 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."⁶ And he believed the Lord, and he counted it to him as righteousness.

⁷ And he said to him, "I am the Lord who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess."⁸ But he said, "O Lord God, how am I to know that I shall possess it?"⁹ He said to him, "Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon."¹⁰ And he brought him all these, cut them in half, and laid each half over against the other. But he did not cut the birds in half.¹¹ And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

¹² As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell on Abram. And behold, dreadful and great darkness fell upon him.¹³ Then the Lord said to Abram, "Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years.¹⁴ But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions.¹⁵ As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age.¹⁶ And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete."

¹⁷ When the sun had gone down and it was dark, behold, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces.¹⁸ 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,¹⁹ the land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites,²⁰ the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim,²¹ the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites and the Jebusites."

Interpret:

- What were some of the promises of God and questions of Abraham you discovered?
- How does God reassure Abram in this passage?
- We often think of faith as the absence of doubt. Abraham is held up by the Bible as the best example of faith, yet in this passage he openly expresses his doubts to God. What does the passage teach us about faith?
- How does Abraham show himself to be an example of faith through his words and actions in this passage?

Apply:

Abraham shows us that it is always acceptable to ask God questions and express our doubts. In fact, a critical part of our faith is continuing to engage with God in the midst of doubts and questions.

Abraham is an example for us of a faith that continues to trust God beyond our own understanding.

- If you could ask God one question about your life, what would it be? Why?
- Is there any area of your life that God is inviting you to trust Him with?

Take some time to offer these questions and areas to the Lord. Then close with this prayer of St. Anselm of Canterbury:

Teach me to seek you, and as I seek you, show yourself to me; for I cannot seek you unless you show me how, and I will never find you unless you show yourself to me. Let me seek you by desiring you, and desire you by seeking you; let me find you by loving you, and love you in finding you. Amen.