

Sermon, January 2, 2011,
“In the Beginning”, Genesis 15:1-6,
Pastor Thomas P. Bellhy

The Bible is your instruction manual for all aspects of living a Christian life.
The Bible is your gateway of knowing God and pursuing your relationship with Him as He pursues you.

The Bible:

- God has given us something very special so that we are free to pursue Him in knowledge and wisdom. This **special revelation** is His Word.
- Calvin expressed the three-fold purpose of Scripture:
 - The rule of faith and life
 - Uncovers and exposes sin in your life
 - Leads you to Christ
- Scripture isn't just a collection of old books written long ago.
- The Bible is the **Word of God**, God's love letters to you
- The Bible is the only way you can effectively grow in your relationship with Jesus, learn more about Him, discover how He wants you to behave, see how He is faithful to you, loves you in an altruistic deep way, wants the best for you...
- The Bible is your gateway of knowing God, pursuing your relationship with Him as He pursues you.
- The Bible is:
 - Progressive Revelation
 - Grammatical (words have meaning)/Historical Revelation
 - Redemptive Revelation
- The “Golden Thread” that runs through Scripture is all about God restoring His relationship with you through Jesus Christ

The First Five Books:

- Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy
- Written by Moses (John 5:46-47; 7:19; Luke 24:27)
- The Law, the Pentateuch
- From Creation to the edge of the Promised Land

Genesis

- Genesis means “origin”, “beginning”.
- It is the starting point that lays the very foundation of our Christian faith.
- Without Genesis we would have limited understanding of creation, the beginning of mankind, relationship with God, the nature of evil, the pain of disobedience, sin, redemption, salvation...
- **Genesis is truly the book of beginnings¹:**
 - The beginning of the world – 1:1-25
 - The beginning of the human race – 1:26-2:25
 - The beginning of sin in the world – 3:1-7
 - The beginning of the promise of redemption – 3:8-24
 - The beginning of family life – 4:1-15
 - The beginning of civilization – 4:16-9:29
 - The beginning of the nations of the world – 10, 11
 - The beginning of the Hebrew people – 12-50
- **Genesis 1-3 begins to illuminate our understanding of:**
 - The Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit); Three persons-One God - 1:1-3
 - Human beings are made special, in the image of God, with purpose - 1-2
 - The institution of marriage – 2:24
 - The nature of evil; Satan – 3:1-5
 - Our fallen human nature; disobedience to God (sin) – 3:6-24
 - Appropriate covering of sin – 3:7, 21
 - Promise of a Savior – 3:15

¹Henrietta C. Myers, “What the Bible is All About”, Gospel Light Publications, 1963.

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- **Genesis 4-6 we learn about:**
 - Worship – 4:6-8
 - Fellowship – 5:21-24
 - Universal sinfulness – 6:1-5
- **Genesis 6-11 teaches us about:**
 - Noah and the Ark
 - Universal judgment, grace, and salvation
 - Noah’s faith
 - Beginning of languages
- **Genesis 11-50, the Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, Jacob (Israel), Joseph**
 - Abram responds to God’s call
 - God promises Abram a Son, descendants
 - Abram believes God’s Covenant with him, **Genesis 15:1-6**
 - Abraham to bring Isaac to Mt. Moriah (where Jerusalem would eventually be) to sacrifice Isaac
 - God once again provides the sacrifice
 - Isaac marries Rebekah; Jacob and Esau born
 - Jacob “wrestles” with God, named Israel (32:28)
 - Jacob has twelve sons, including Joseph
 - Joseph sold into slavery by his brothers
 - Taken to Egypt, becomes second in command to Pharaoh
 - Jacob’s family moves to Egypt to escape the famine

Of the many lessons we receive from Genesis is the kernel of understanding that it is by grace through faith that we are saved.

- Abram believes God’s Covenant with him, **Genesis 15:1-6**
- *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.*

Romans 4:13 ¹³ *For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith.*

Romans 4:16 ¹⁶ *For this reason it is by faith, in order that it may be in accordance with grace, so that the promise will be guaranteed to all the descendants,*

Ephesians 2:8-9 ⁸ *For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; ⁹ not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.*

God’s grace and provision covered Adam and Eve’s sin...

God’s grace and mercy saved Noah and his family...

God’s grace provided the sacrifice in place of Isaac...

God’s grace sustained Joseph

God’s grace will do all of this for you!