



Genesis 15: 1-7, 15-16

John 2: 1-11

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We have all become tired, sick and tired of being afraid of becoming sick!

A year ago, at the ides of March when all this was new, there was a level of excitement: "We are being forced to stop working!" "How pretty a fabric and how novel a mask can you make?" "There is a city-wide scavenger hunt for Toilet Paper!" "The end of the story has not been written and nobody knows better than we do how long this will last!" BUT When we become especially tired, no matter how old we are, we become three year olds in need of a nap. "I don't wanna wear a mask!" "It makes my face sweat and my glasses fog up." "But you PROMISED if we stayed apart and got our shots this would all be over!" "You PROMISED there would be plenty of vaccine for everyone!" "You PROMISED anyone who registered could get a shot, and once we had the first shot we would get the second shot exactly 21 days later!" Please don't shoot the messenger, I cannot yet even register! I searched to be your Pastor for years; but as a Pastor I cannot make Pastoral Calls; and the heck with Social Distance, when I do get to worship with you, I have to stay at least 20 feet away! There are many different ways to turn water into wine today!

One of the problems with a PROMISE is that a Promise is not a contract. A Contract specifies when the promise is to be fulfilled and who is responsible for doing what. For most of us the longest contract we can imagine is our Mortgage... the word mortgage coming from the word Death, because this was a life-long commitment. Several of us have been able to Refinance our Mortgages, at lower rates, without Mortgage Insurance and at the same number of years instead of starting over! A PROMISE, like Vows of Marriage and Ordination and Faith, are intentionally Open-Ended. At one time, I had a couple who thought they wanted to get married, except that instead of "Until Death Us DO Part" they wanted to say "For as long as it lasts!" As we unpacked what commitment they were willing to make, not only "For Better and Richer and Happiness," they rightly decided they were not prepared for that kind of promise.

In Genesis Chapter 12, Abram was identified as being 75 years of age when called to leave Ur of the Chaldeans and follow where God would lead, and in Chapter 16 when Hagar conceives and bears he and Sarah a child, Abram is 86, so already this PROMISE has gone on for 11 years. Looking ahead, we know that Isaac is not born until Abram reaches 100. Could you believe in the fulfillment of a PROMISE for 25 years without sign of fulfillment? Abram begins to reason as we often do, believing life is a limited resource. If everything continues as it is right now, will I be able to Retire in 5 years or will it take 10? Given my resources, who is going to take care of me, who will continue the projects and missions I care about after? But the Bible does not assume life is limited. The foundational principle of the Bible is Life is a Promise! None of us can even imagine all that God might yet do in our lives. We could not conceive of an international pandemic crippling the world for over a year; how can we imagine the possibilities God may yet provide? At 85, based on the limitations of what Abram knows, he can only reason that his lead servant Eliezer of Damascus shall inherit all Abram's property. But God bases our lives on Promise not on Reason, so it does not matter that Abram is 85 years young, he might still produce a child at age 99! Instead of reasoning based on the next 15 years, God has Abram go out in the night and stare at the stars, considering

not the One who shall inherit, but the possibility of all the generations that might come over the next 400 years, and that was only from Abram to Moses, let alone to David, to Jesus, and all the children of Abram in Christianity and Islam as well as Judaism?

A few years ago, I went to Jerusalem and Palestine, and when we went to Jerusalem one of the required stops is at the Holocaust Museum. That was a very hard day, witnessing photographs of those who were oppressed and persecuted. Witnessing piles and piles of the shoes of those who were killed. Next we were to go to the Museum of the Children of the Holocaust, and my stomach turned, imagining how much more tragic. But the designers of the Children's Museum did something totally different. They created a maze of thousands of mirrors each reflecting and reflecting the reflection of a single candle flame, that like