

Resting in the Covenant of Grace

A Theological-Pastoral Reflection on Genesis 15

By [Ben Gonzaga](#)

Introduction

Life often exposes our insecurities. We worry about the future, question whether we are good enough, and wrestle with doubts about God's love and our salvation. Abram, the father of believers, knew these same struggles. Though God had promised him descendants and blessing, he remained childless and vulnerable. His faith trembled under the weight of delay and uncertainty.

In Genesis 15, God meets Abram's weakness with grace. This chapter opens a window into the Covenant of Grace, revealing that salvation does not rest on our strength but on God's sovereign promise, sealed with His own oath. Here we learn to rest—not in ourselves, but in God's presence, His promise, and His pledge, all fulfilled in Christ.

Rest in God's Covenant Presence (vv. 1–5)

Abram's fears were real. He had turned down the wealth of Sodom, but he had no heir and no visible future. What if God's promise failed? Into this anxiety, God spoke: *"Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great."*

God did not promise Abram an easier path. He promised Himself. This is the heart of the Covenant of Grace: *"I will be your God, and you will be My people"* (Lev. 26:12). His presence and protection are greater than any earthly security.

We, too, fear the unknown—the future of our families, the instability of our finances, the uncertainty of our health. Yet the covenant reminds us that God Himself is our shield. Our greatest security is not in what we hold but in who holds us. *"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble"* (Ps. 46:1).

Rest in God's Covenant Promise (v. 6)

Then comes the verse that reshaped redemptive history: *“And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness.”* Abram did not earn righteousness. He received it by faith alone.

Here lies the doctrine of justification: the sinner declared righteous by God’s grace through faith in Christ. Paul builds his teaching on this very verse (Rom. 4:3; Gal. 3:7–9). Abram trusted God’s word about a future Seed; we trust God’s word fulfilled in Jesus Christ, Abraham’s true offspring (Gal. 3:16).

Many believers wrestle with feelings of inadequacy. *“Am I good enough for God?”* The Covenant of Grace answers: no, you are not—and you don’t need to be. Christ is enough. Righteousness is not achieved but received. Our failures do not disqualify us, because our standing rests on Christ’s perfect obedience imputed to us. *“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus”* (Rom. 8:1).

Rest in God’s Covenant Pledge (vv. 7–21)

Finally, God seals His covenant with Abram through a solemn ceremony. Animals are cut in two, and normally both parties would walk through, calling judgment on themselves if they broke the covenant. But Abram never walks through. Only God, symbolized by the smoking fire pot and flaming torch, passes between the pieces.

This means the covenant rests entirely on God’s faithfulness. If it fails, God Himself would bear the curse. And that is exactly what happened at the cross. Christ bore the covenant curse in our place (Gal. 3:13), so that we might inherit the covenant blessings.

This pledge speaks directly to one of our deepest insecurities: *“What if I cannot hold on to God?”* The truth is, our salvation does not rest on our grip on Him, but on His grip on us. As the writer of Hebrews explains, God confirmed His promise with an oath, *“so that we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us”* (Heb. 6:17–18).

Implications for the Church Today

The Covenant of Grace is not only for individual assurance but also for the life of the church.

In Worship: Every Lord’s Day we gather as covenant people. We do not come to earn God’s favor but to rejoice in His covenant mercy, hearing again His promises in Word and sacrament.

In Family Life: Christian parents raise their children not in fear but in hope, trusting God's covenant promise that He will be God to us and to our children (Acts 2:39).

In Ministry: The work of the church does not rest on our ingenuity or strength but on God's covenant faithfulness. Mission and service are grounded in the assurance that God will gather His people through His Word.

The Covenant of Grace gives stability in unstable times. It assures the church that God is faithful, Christ has finished the work, and the Spirit will bring God's promises to completion.

Conclusion

Genesis 15 reveals how the Covenant of Grace speaks into our insecurities.

To our fear of the future, God declares: "I am your shield."

To our feelings of inadequacy, God counts faith as righteousness.

To our doubts about salvation, God seals His covenant with His own pledge, fulfilled in Christ.

The good news of the Covenant of Grace is this: God has bound Himself to us, not because we are strong, but because He is faithful. Christ has borne the curse, secured the blessing, and guaranteed the promise.

Therefore, we can rest. Not in our strength, not in our performance, not in our wavering faith—but in the God who swore by Himself and fulfilled His covenant in His Son. In Him, we find true and lasting rest.

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