



## Like Sand and Stars

The boy scrunched up his nose and spat. “It’s dusty.”

Abraham nodded. “I don’t mind the dust.”

“Why not? Mom hates it.”

“She doesn’t always remember the promises. Neither do I.”

“Tell me, dad.”

Abraham closed his eyes as he trudged on. “The LORD said to me, ‘Leave your country, your people, and your father’s household, and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you. I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse. And all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.’”

“Before I was born?”

“Long before you were born.”

“How long?”

“Twenty-five years. Twenty-five years I waited for God to keep his promise. But he did. He sent you.” Abraham paused beside a rock. He coughed in the dry, dusty air. “Wait, Isaac. I need to rest.”

“It’s a big mountain. Why didn’t we bring the servants?”

“This sacrifice is for you and me.”

“And the LORD.”

“Yes. And the LORD.”

“That promise doesn’t have anything to do with dust.”

“Hm? Oh. Yes. The dust. The LORD kept making promises. ‘Lift up your eyes from where you are and look north and south, east and west. All the land that you see, I’ll give to you and your offspring forever. I’ll make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted.’”

Isaac looked up the incline. “That’s why you like dust? Because God said you’re going to have as many kids as dust?”

“That many descendants, yes.”

“And I’m the first! Well, other than Ishmael.”

“Yes. But he... he is not the child of the promise. You are.”

“You should have named me Dusty!”

“We named you laughter instead.” There was no laughter in Abraham’s eyes now.

“And now the LORD kept his promise! Here I am!”

Abraham shook his head. “He has not kept all his promises. Not yet. All nations on earth have not yet been blessed. Someone is coming later. Someone from you, when you are older and married. Or perhaps from your son. Or his son. The LORD has not kept all his promises. Not yet.”

“Didn’t he say something about stars?”

Abraham looked toward the sky, bright with the morning sun. “Yes. ‘Look up at the heavens and count the stars, if indeed you can count them. So shall your offspring be.’”

“Like dust and stars.”

They stood together as Abraham regained his breath.

“Father?”

“Yes, my son?”

“The fire and the wood are here, but where’s the lamb for the burnt offering?”

“God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.”

And the two of them went on together, but what happened atop the mountain is a story for another day.

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Brothers and sisters, as we enter Advent remember that for so long, we waited for God to keep his promise. As you look ahead to Christmas, yearning and longing to look into the manger: wait.

As you clean your house and you see the dust, think of the promise to Abraham.  
As you look up and see the stars, as Rich Mullins said, remember: that one star was lit just for you.

Yes.

We have the God of faithful promises. And he has kept all of them.

And this story is true.

Genesis 13:14-18, Genesis 15:1-6, Genesis 22  
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