

The Call of God

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[0 : 00] So our passage for tonight, I'm going to flip back to the end of Genesis 11, beginning of Genesis 12. This is a major turning point, not just in the book of Genesis, but in the whole Bible.

This passage that we just read. Just to remind you of how we got here in the book of Genesis.

There is one God, the creator God, and he has made everything and he created it good.

Right? He created everything good, but mankind has rebelled and so sin has entered the picture.

And sin brings a curse on this world.

Meant to know God face to face and no longer can we be directly in his presence. And we die. We don't live forever anymore.

And it seems at a couple points as you're going through the book of Genesis that all is lost. Not just when Adam and Eve sin in the beginning, but God intervenes with the promise that he's going to send one, a seed of the woman who's going to crush the serpent's head.

[1 : 06] So this seed, this line, is so important. But just a few chapters on, God is looking at the violence and the wickedness of this world.

And it says in Genesis 6 that he is sorry that he's created it. Things have gotten that bad. Not only that, but right before the passage that we read in the beginning of Genesis 11, you have the story of the Tower of Babel where all the peoples of the earth, they kind of congregate, they gather together and they say, let's build this huge tower because we're awesome.

And we're going to make our name great. We're going to create a name for ourself that's going to echo through the ages. They think they can get up to God and God has to just come down to even see it.

And God comes down in judgment. He confuses their language. And you're kind of wondering, now all of a sudden there's all these different people groups and there's violence, there's division, there's these people who want to promote themselves.

What is God going to do about all the peoples of the earth? Well, right after Genesis 11 with the Tower of Babel, you get this genealogy. It's called the line of Shem.

[2 : 14] Remember I said the lines matter, the genealogies matter. And Shem, his name means name. So right after all these people want to make a great name for themselves, here's the family of a guy named Name.

And we're getting to our passage then. We're getting to Abram through that. But it's interesting because before it gets to Abram, when we started reading, it tells us about his father. His dad is named Terah.

And Terah lived in Ur of the Chaldeans, a little bit south of where the Tower of Babel probably was.

And what archaeologists will tell you is that they worshipped the moon in Ur of the Chaldeans.

And it's not just archaeologists. The book of Joshua in Joshua 24, it mentions Abraham's dad,

Terah, and says that he was a moon worshiper. And you're thinking to yourself, well, hold on.

This is the line of promise. Right? We've got all these descendants. God's promised to do something. And he's given us these lines of people, these genealogies. And you get to the end of the line of the guy named Name.

[3 : 19] And you have a moon worshiper. And you're wondering to yourself, what on earth is going to happen? Is everything just going to come apart?

Things ain't great, y'all. Even in the line of promise, instead of calling upon the name of the Lord, that's what they did in Genesis 24 in the line of Seth. You've got a bunch of moon worshippers.

And so Terah, he moves his family from Ur of the Chaldeans, and they end up settling in this place called Haran. Right? And that's where he dies. And if you were guessing which child of Terah would carry on, you know, some sort of hope through his line, you probably wouldn't pick the 75-year-old

guy whose wife is unable to have children.

Right? If you were picking. Doesn't seem very likely. But God's grace has this funny way of working in the world, where he likes to choose the overlooked, the ones that the world wouldn't choose so that we can see that it is him and his power that's at work.

So, what's the overall message of our passage right here? We could summarize it in this way. I'm going to talk a lot more about it. But summarize it in this way. For God so loved the world that he called Abram.

[4 : 45] Let me pray for us, and then we'll get to our outline. Father, we pray that we would all hear you calling us right now. Calling us out of hiding.

Calling us into the truth. Calling us to yourself. Calling us to rest in you. Calling us to let go of trying to control things and to trust you.

Calling us to die so that we might live. Would you be so gracious as to do this, Father, as your word is proclaimed?

We ask this in Christ's name. Amen. So, the claim here in Genesis 12 is that the answer to the world's problems is coming through the call of Abram.

Later it's called Abraham. Right now his name is just Abram. And in that, the people who would come, this nation of Israel, comes from Father Abraham. He had many sons, in case you haven't heard.

[5 : 49] You see, they would understand in this call, it's who they are. What they are there for. What it means to be part of the family of Abraham.

It all comes from this call. And in the same way, you and I, if you are a Christian, it means that you are part of the family of Abraham. And so, in the same way, when we see God is calling Abraham to specific things, right?

But at the same time, this call of Abraham applies in so many ways to our life. What does it mean for Abraham and for us to hear and to answer God's call?

I have six things for you tonight in our outline. It's like a bunch of heads just looked up at me and then checked their phones. It's about the same amount of notes. Oh, no, there's an extra couple pages.

No, we'll see. Six things that it means. The call of God is a call, and go through them and then we'll go back and talk about them. The call of God is a call to abandon the idols of your family and culture, to surrender to God's promises unconditionally, three, to enter into personal relationship with the creator of the universe, four, to receive a new identity, five, to live out a mission of blessing, and six, to look back in order to move forward.

[7 : 04] And I could have given you another six easily from just this passage. That's how important this passage is. Okay? We'll go back through them. Note-takers are like, my hand hurts already. First thing, the call of God is a call to abandon the idols of your family and your culture.

When God calls Abram in verse 1 of chapter 12, there's a specific nature to his call. God doesn't just say go, right? He also specifically lists what Abraham is supposed to leave in order to go. What does he say? Leave your country, your kindred, and your father's house. To answer the call of God means that he is first and all other things have to be second.

Now, there's nothing inherently wrong with loving your country or your family of origin, the culture that you live in. Of course not. Those things can be good things if we love them in the right way. However, what we could say is not only is that something that we struggle with, is loving those things more than God, but in Abraham's time, in the ancient Near East, what would be the three things that would give you most security and would define you most as a person and would draw out your highest allegiance?

[8 : 22] Your family, your nation, and your culture that you lived in. Those would be the defining things. In fact, in that time, it wasn't uncommon in the ancient Near East for people to have multiple gods that they worshipped.

So it would be easy. You could go, okay, well, Dagon will be my family god, and Baal, the Canaanite god. Why don't I grab him and he will be kind of the national god?

And then Yahweh. Oh, this god, why don't I just fit him in? He can be my personal god. Right?

Some combination of it. We've already mentioned Abraham, his dad, lived in a place and he himself worshipped the moon.

And the temptation would be to blend religions. Just take a little bit of that stuff. Sure, okay, I'll follow you if you show me that it's worth it, God.

But I'm just going to blend that with my moon worship, right? Just hedge my bets. Bring along my other gods with me. I'll listen to you, Yahweh, but I don't know if I can completely trust you.

[9 : 29] And you think, you know, how primitive, right? But sure, we do the same things. You're like, hey, you know, I'm a spiritual person. I like to come into church on a Sunday. I know I've done things wrong, and so maybe I would like a little bit of forgiveness.

But you know what? Can I trust God with my future and my joy? So why don't I come in on a Sunday and I'll worship the one true God of the Bible and then I'll worship money and pride and success the other six days of the week?

Some things, they're not meant to be shared, like a unicycle, right? The same thing with worship of the creator God. Jesus says in Matthew 10, whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.

Did you hear that? So to answer the call of God is to abandon the idols of family and culture. All these other things, it doesn't mean that you can't love them, but they do not get primary loyalty in your life.

This is why it's easier, or at least it should be easier, if your parents actually believe in the God of the Bible to follow him, because they should be, hopefully, wanting you to put him first above all things.

[10 : 44] No people who've come to faith from other religions, and one of the hardest things when they come to believe and trust in Jesus is what do we do about our family? Because they know this will be a huge wound to their parents.

No guys when I traveled somewhere else where I was saying, a parent who was ill, like, I can't tell her right now that this might literally be the thing that kills her, or knowing that you might be ostracized, you might be put outside of the community that means most to you, that you belong to, that gives you your identity.

But to answer the call of God is to put him first over those things. This is fundamental. We abandon the idols of family and culture. So God's call, it interrupts and it intrudes on Abram's life.

And for Abram to answer the call means that God's presence is going to reorder things. They say, and I know this from personal experience, having children reorders your life.

Right? When something new comes into your life, it changes things. All of a sudden, you know, believe it or not, I didn't spend a lot of money on dance shoes before I had a couple girls.

[12 : 04] They're so expensive. It's like, if you've got old tap shoes, just give them to us. Wow. And their feet grow so fast. I had kids and all of a sudden, all the stuff that used to be so boring to me, I was so interested in.

Like insurance and safety features on cars. Square footage in a home. Like who cared before? But all of a sudden, something new came into my life. And there were these new priorities.

You start to go places that you'd never gone before once you have kids. Again, believe it or not, I didn't hang out at the soft play before I had. That would be weird. Right? It would be something seriously wrong.

The presence of someone coming into your life reorders things. And the more important the person, the bigger the change.

As Yahweh calls Abram, it's clear that he's saying, my call on your life is going to reorder everything, Abram. God, it's like he comes in and he cuts the umbilical cord to the past.

[13 : 04] All the things that would provide safety and security and hope and love for Abram, chop. Done. There's a new source of life that you have to draw from, Abram.

The call of God for Abram and for us is a radical departure from the familiar and the safe to a God-centered life of dependence. Okay? It's the first thing.

Right? It's to leave, abandon idols of culture. Second thing, and in line with the first point of abandoning idols of family and culture, the call of God is a call to surrender to God's will unconditionally.

Okay? There's an emphasis and there's an urgency in verse one. It doesn't come across as well in the English, but if you read the Hebrew, you could put an exclamation mark after go.

It's not just in Hebrew. Go when you feel. It's go. Get out. For language nerds, it's an imperative of command. Okay? And literally, there's a pronoun right after it in the Hebrew.

[14:09] It sounds funny in English, so we don't put it in there. But in the Hebrew, it's literally, go yourself. You know why it's in there? To create urgency. This is something that you're supposed to command, that you're supposed to respond to right away.

Abram, go. Yourself. You. With regard to yourself. You. Get up. Go. That's what God's calling him to do. And I think this is incredible because God says to Abram in verse 1 to go, to leave all these things behind, and he's going to go to a land.

What does he say? At the end of verse 1, that I will show you. It's a little vague. Like, no right move pics that we can look at here.

Like, we don't even know what council tax band this land is in. Like, you just want me to go to the land that you're going to show me. God says, nothing here about a land flowing with milk and honey.

He just says, go. I'll show you later. When we were getting ready to move here, and it was getting close and we knew the visas were about to come, we started asking Phil and Wendy to go and look.

[15:20] Hey, oh, here's a flat. Can you go look at this for us? And they looked at some. And the place where we moved into and lived the last two years here in Glasgow, or Bears Den, so not Glasgow, I know, outside of the city council.

But it was a family who are now dear friends of ours, but at this point we'd FaceTimed with them once. And they're like, oh, we saw this place. Do you want us to go look at it for you? I'm like, sure. And so they took some pictures for us and a little video of some of the rooms and we're like, I guess.

We've got to live somewhere. It's great. And so, it felt so weird to wire a security deposit across the ocean, on this place that I had barely seen.

Abram doesn't have anything near that. Even that. It's just, go? I'll show you later. Go. I'll show you later.

This is what John Calvin, he says that Abram has to obey. Vrubam mundum. He obeys the naked word of God. That's all he gets at the beginning.

[16:24] That's what you got. You get the word of God. As a Christian, whatever you see as God's will, you must surrender to unconditionally.

That's what it means to answer the call of God. It's not truly answering the call of God if you say, I'll surrender if. Right?

You may want to know what the future holds. Welcome to people who struggle with control like me. Right? I want to know the end. I want to know all of it. You want to know what the future holds if you do that thing that God's calling you to do.

Whether it's to believe in him for the first time, to stop that sinful habit. Okay, God, I think I should be, I shouldn't be angry like this. But what's it going to mean? Is it going to humiliate me?

Is it going to make my life harder? Right? I would like to step out in faith in that new venture to confess that sin, but oh, that actually seems harder than what I'm doing right now.

[17:22] should I do it? Just prove it to me, God, that it's worth it. There's not going to be any pain, there's not going to be any suffering, nothing like that. Then I'll do it. Right? That's not part of the deal when God calls us.

That's not the arrangement. And he gives us something, and we're going to see that in the next points, but it is never a clear, absolute picture of what the future is. It's not.

You get the end in the story, but you know where you're going, but you don't get all the details. It's not until verse 7 after Abram's walked through the land, God says, this is the land I'm going to give to your offspring.

Oh, okay. And reflecting back, the author of Hebrews in Hebrews 11, he says about Genesis 12, by faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance, and he went out not knowing where he was going.

Sorry. It's a simple thing, but it is profoundly hard. The call of God at its base, it is a surrender of your life and your will.

[18:34] To trust him. The call isn't a question of whether it fits into your agenda. It is a whole new life. And for us who are trying to answer God's call and to obey him and to go where he's leading us, I would say there's so much that we learn that we only learn as we obey God.

Because we have so many questions, right? You want to know all the things. You want to know all of the answers. And there are some things that you only know and you will only experience as you

obey. Jesus says, whoever loves me keeps my commandments and I will show myself to him. The proof's in the pudding, we could say. It doesn't mean that it's easy, but that's what it means to answer the call of God. So, to answer the call of God, we abandon the idols of family and culture, surrender to God's will unconditionally.

The third thing, you enter into a personal relationship with the creator of the universe. There's a lot of promises made to Abram in verses 1 through 3 to help him respond to the call, but there's this implicit one underneath all of these promises.

Did you notice there's this repetition as you're going through a few different things, but one of them that God keeps saying is, I will. Right? Verse 1, twice, I will, I will.

[19 : 53] Again, twice in verse 2 and then again in verse 3. The Lord is saying to Abram that he's going to be his God. He will be his God.

And Abraham understands this because what does he do? He responds not just in obedience, but as he gets to the land of promise. He calls upon the name of the Lord. It means he worships.

It's the first time. The only other time that's been said is back in Genesis 4 when it says of the line of Seth, the one who knows the one true God, what did they do?

They called upon the name of the Lord for the first time. They worshiped God. That's what Abram does. That's how he responds. And as he enters into the land in verses 6 through 9, he builds altars in the land.

He builds these altars. It's almost as if these little signs that the kingdom of God is breaking into this land of promise. He doesn't know the whole story. He doesn't know how it's going to play out yet, but he plants the flag of God as he goes, clinging to God's promises that he's made.

[20 : 54] Here's the thing. When God calls you, he doesn't just give you all the specifics of what it's going to mean for your life, but he does show you that he's trustworthy.

He says, obey me unconditionally. To answer the call of God is to surrender and say, not my will, but yours be done. It's a really sweet thing when you can say that.

It's a hard thing to say, but it's a sweet thing. But he doesn't just say, just do that because I'm God. Get on with it. But rather, he enters in and he shows that he is the one who can actually be trusted. You can actually know God's goodness as you obey, as you answer his call. You can know his presence. You can cling to his promises. Again, because I have kids, they're easy sermon illustrations.

I think of it this way. My kids don't get to say to me, Dad, I will obey you if you answer all of my questions and let me decide after I do a cost-benefit analysis of what you're telling me to do.

[21 : 56] It's not the arrangement. It's not how it works. Right? It's like, you're going to hold my hand, little one, as we cross the street. Sorry. You can try to pull it away. We're not crossing that street unless you hold my hand.

Right? Or don't draw on the wall with crayons. That's a non-negotiable. I can explain it to you once, twice, but we're not going to keep going over this. Eat your veggies sometimes, right?

Are my kids ignorant for obeying me? Just going along? No. Why? Why? Because two things. One is they know that I know more about life than them.

Hopefully they know that. And then two is that they know me. Right? They know that I am, they can trust me, that I'm for them, that I love them.

It's going to be a struggle at times, of course, but in that relationship it builds a trust. So when I say, uh-uh, this isn't, we're not debating this, we can ask questions about certain things, this is daddy's way or the highway.

[22 : 56] We've got to do this. They know that they can trust me because they know me. There's a relationship. And this is why, this is a little bit of an aside, but this is why abusive parenting is such a tragedy.

It can cause so much harm because it's a betrayal of relational trust. It's why as parents we should strive to be as consistent as possible.

Repenting if we've done something wrong. You don't apologize to your child if you're doing the right thing. Oh, I'm so sorry. If it's the right thing, they need to know it's the right thing.

You can come along and say, hey, I know this is hard. It's hard for your dad too. It's hard for your mom too. I'll help you with this. You can recognize the struggle in it, right?

But if it's the right thing to do, it's the right thing to do. But when we have broken promises, they need to know that we understand that that's the wrong thing because there's a relationship of trust

built in that.

[23 : 57] Lots of times people struggle with what I said in the previous point. There's a surrender to God's will unconditionally because they've experienced abusive, authoritarian relationships, whether it's in the home or in the church.

And they hear that one, surrender unconditionally, and it kind of makes your skin crawl maybe because maybe there's a pastor who said that before, you just got to do it because I know more than you and God's called me and you just need to obey.

Or a parent who's done things where they haven't been trustworthy, been violent with their words and actions and things like that. It can cause a deep mistrust, right?

I'd encourage you to find somebody to process that with, whether it's a pastor you trust, a professional counselor, or a close, wise friend. Listen, God calls Abram and his call to Abram is to obey without all of the details but undergirded underneath that is a loving relationship that he has, a close relationship where God binds himself to Abraham.

I will, I will. So, it's not just a relationship that he wants but it's also fourth thing, it's the answer to the call of God is to receive a new identity.

[25 : 12] God promises in verse 2 that in blessing Abram he will make from him a great nation and he will make his name great. Again, remember I mentioned at the beginning, Tower of Babel, what do they want to do?

Make their name great, right? Doesn't go so well. They want to live their life apart from God and his purposes but, to answer God's call is to actually find the name that we really desire, that we really want.

Even as you go through the story, right, Abram, his name gets changed from Abram to Abraham, his wife, Sarai to Sarah. The nation, the people of Israel that have come, this Old Testament part of our Bibles, they're named, Israel's, from Abraham's grandson and they're going to be called, as they go, the family of Abraham.

To be part of this group of people, this group through the Old Testament would be to be part of a group that they would define themselves as being in Abraham. What does that mean?

To be in Abraham as part of the people of Abraham, you would say, well, the promises that were made to him apply to us. We're trusting God to make our name great too.

[26 : 26] We understand our role, our purpose, our mission is in line with what God has called Abraham too. You would know who you are and you would know that you belonged if you were in Abraham.

Part of that people, right? Oh, this is who I am, part of the family of Abraham. What does that mean? I belong. And they would receive in the Old Testament a covenant sign of circumcision to mark, to give a visible representation that you were in, that you were in Abraham, that you belonged, that you knew who you were.

only be applied to males in the Old Testament. When we get to the New Testament, well, this is what the argument that Paul makes in Galatians chapter 3 is that if you are part of the family of Abraham, you're not just in Abraham, you're in Christ.

And now, it's not just men, but men and women both receive the covenant sign now of baptism. What does it tell you? It tells you who you are. It tells you that you belong.

You're in. This is what it means to be secure. It's a sign that you're in Christ. You can know who you are and that you belong if you answer the call of God.

[27 : 48] Okay. So to answer the call of God, abandon idols of family and culture, surrender unconditionally to God's will, enter into a personal relationship with the creator of the universe, to receive a new identity, fifth thing, to answer the call of God is to live out a mission of blessing.

God promises to bless Abram. It's this word that gets repeated in just a very short few verses at the beginning of chapter 12. It gets mentioned five times.

To this point in the book of Genesis, the word curse, the thing that's been brought into this world because of sin, has been mentioned how many times do you think? Five times.

It's like all that's come into this world, all the heartache and the suffering, all that's wrong with the world, it's a curse. And we long for blessing. And how are we going to get that blessing?

It's through God calling Abram. Clearly, God is planning to address the problems of the curse in his blessing of Abram. And notice, he doesn't just bless Abraham, so Abram's like, oh, I got blessing.

[29 : 00] I'm just going to lay back and chill out for the rest of my life. There's a so that. He blesses Abram so that he will be a blessing. There's always a so that attached to God calling you.

He wants to bless you, but that's not a dead end. So that you will be a blessing. The families and the nations of the earth are in disarray after the Tower of Babel.

How are we ever going to find blessing? He calls Abram. Why? So that in Abram, all the families of the earth shall be blessed. Israel, it's called to be a light to the nations.

Like how one pastor put it, he said, God is a spiritual tornado. He never pulls you in without also sending you out. He blesses so that you will be a blessing.

And what this does then, it destroys a consumer mentality to your faith. Where it's all just like, what's in it for me? If that's your first question and you're kind of missing the point of it, is this just for Abram?

[30 : 03] No, he blesses him so you'll be a blessing. Does this just apply to the Old Testament? No. What does Jesus say? He says, as the Father has sent me, so I am sending you.

We enter into this relationship and receive blessing. Why? For the life of the world. For the sake of others. in order to be a blessing. No one has joy like someone who knows that they actually have something that can change the world.

And no one is more confident than someone who lives for something beyond their own petty self interests. I was watching an interview with the coach of the Miami Dolphins.

Miami Dolphins are a national football league team. That's my team. I grew up in Miami. The Dolphins are actually good this year and their coach is named Mike McDaniell. He's kind of revolutionizing offensive football in the NFL.

I was like, who cares? Football, right? It's the sport that we play with our hands. We struggle with the English language. But in this interview, it's really interesting because Mike McDaniell was talking.

[31 : 17] His dad had abandoned the family when he was young and he's gone through different struggles. And he's now a coach and he has a two-year-old daughter. And the interviewer asked him, what are the similarities between being a coach and being a father?

And he thought about it for a second and he said, you know, they're both servant roles. And he paused and he thought a little bit more. He has this amazing line.

He says, to not exist for yourself, just for yourself, is a beautiful thing. To not exist just for yourself is a beautiful thing.

He's not a Christian as far as I know. But he gets this key part of life. To lose your life is to find it. To not just exist for you, not just to say, oh, I just need all the blessing for myself.

But to find blessing in order to bless others, that's a beautiful thing. That's a powerful thing. That's something that's going to change the world. Our life with God propels us out into the world.

[32 : 21] Last thing, the call of God, we can move forward in it because it calls us to look back in order to move forward. I'm just going to point this out.

The flow of God's call to Abram is, Abram, go. I'll do the following so you might be a blessing. And what does Abraham do? Verse 4, he goes. He obeys. Right?

And so we're supposed to read on through the book of Genesis kind of with this anticipation of how God is going to keep his word. This mission is launched. And in verses 6 through 9, it's like this little travel log.

It's like when you're reading your Bible and you're like, well, there's a lot of words about blessing. I want to read that. And then you get to like, you're like Shechem and Haran and Ai and Bethel. And you're flipping to the back of your Bible to look at the little map because you're like, I don't know where any of this is.

Well, the point that the author is making is that Abram, he walks through the land. He walks through the land and he's building these altars along the way.

[33 : 20] And in verse 6, there's this little phrase that gets snuck in there. It's so easy of your eyes just to pass over it. What does it say? It says, at that time there were Canaanites in the land.

Now, if you're part of the family of Abraham, if you live as a nation of Israel and you receive Genesis for the first time and you're waiting to enter into the land of promise, you're on Jordan's stormy banks, what are they afraid of?

The Canaanites. The Canaanites, they're terrified of them. And you got this little thing, hey, here's the promise of who you are, what it means to belong, what you're supposed to do, where you're

supposed to go, and guess what?

You know who was in the land when Abraham walked through it? They were Canaanites. So you can have confidence as you look back that God was with Abraham and that can give you confidence to move forward.

Not just that, but we just happened to mention that Sarah was 75, well, Abraham was 75 and Sarah didn't have any children. In order to be a great nation, kind of key and basic first step is what?

[34 : 30] You need to have one kid. And they go, even if they didn't know all the story that was going to come, somehow, some way, God has kept his promise.

When I was in seminary, I was volunteering with a church with their youth ministry, and I had a group of, they would be like S1 boys, and we'd do Bible study, and we'd go play games in the gym at the church, and we made up this game, it's too complicated to, I don't even remember how we played it, but basically we were throwing a ball around, and at one point, I remember I was standing there looking for somebody to throw the ball to, and I heard behind me, Nate, turn around, Nate, look back, pass it to me, I'm open.

And I turned around, and there's this 13-year-old named Thomas standing behind me, and he's just got this smile on his face, like he knows what to do, and this kid cracked me up all the time.

He's standing there, come on, Nate, turn around, and I'm like, Thomas, we're going, run that way, the goal's that way, go, I'll throw it to you there, and he's like, Nate, trust me, throw it back here, and I just ignored him, I threw it somewhere else.

Later, I get the ball again, guess what I hear behind me? Nate, hey, Nate, throw me the ball. I was just like, you've got to be kidding me, I was like, here, Thomas, and I threw it to him, and you know what happened?

[35 : 54] My defender went to him, it was like a little give and go, and I was like, oh, I'm open, and I ran, and he threw it to me, caught it, and we scored, and I'm coming back to give him a high five, and you can see on his face, it's like just like dripping and like oozing with this 13-year-old confidence, and he's got this smirk on his face, and he just looks at me, and he goes, hey, Nate, sometimes you've got to go back to move forward, huh?

Just like, shut up. That phrase, it stuck with me, it stuck with me. Sometimes you've got to look back in order to move forward. Now, how true is that, though?

Sometimes you have to look back in order to move forward. If you're an Israelite, if you're part of the family of Abraham, you look back and you see the Canaanites in the land, and that God provided for Abram then, and it would give you confidence that he'd provide for you, too, as you move forward into the promised land, and you know that God had kept his promise to provide a child, Isaac, to Abram and Sarah, and you look back, you'd realize that your very existence meant God kept his promise and would help you to move forward in faith.

Here's the point. How much more can we, this side of the cross, be given the security to move forward in life by looking back?

You know, that there is one who has come who has answered the call of God, that he left his heavenly kingdom to go to a land waiting for him. He leaves the security of his father's house in order to become a vulnerable child.

[37 : 29] He surrenders to God's will. He says, I have come to do the father's will, and as he faces the horror of the cross, he says, not my will, but yours be done. And why does he do it?

Why does he do all of that? Well, Paul tells us in Galatians 3, so that in him, the true seed of Abram, the nations, you and me will be blessed.

So you know who you are and what you're supposed to do and that you belong.