

Abraham and Out Redemption Story

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Preacher: BK Smith

[0 : 00] Good morning, everyone. Please turn in your Bibles to Genesis chapter 12. Genesis chapter 12.

If you are new or visiting, welcome. My name is BK and I have the pleasure of serving as one of our pastors here. If you're required and you're wondering any new information about what it is to serve or be a part of the church, we have a welcome desk, which is manned before the service and after the service.

And I cordially invite you to come and get that information that you might need. So this morning, I want to continue our series on the story of the Bible.

Well, many of us, myself included, when we come to this text, it can be quite overwhelming.

There is, in fact, over 600,000 words written in two different foreign languages over a period of 1,500 years by 40 different authors.

[1 : 15] Perhaps you have been like me at one point. I want to read my Bible. Where do I start? How does this fit together?

My hope for this series is to continue on with the idea to help you understand what the Bible is. That the Bible is not just a collection of commands. It's not a collection of do's and don'ts.

This is how you live. These are the way other people live. Don't be like them. It's not that type of a book. It's actually a unified story about a God who relentlessly pursues his creation.

That's really the story. It's a story of redemption. It is a story that has been written by God through the power of the Holy Spirit, through the authors, wrote this book, which gives us God's mind, and it gives us his will for our lives.

And it serves, if you were here last week, I gave a little bit of a history on the Reformation. But how many people died to give us God's Word, and how they broke off from the Roman Catholic Church back in 1517 with the idea that we hold forth to this idea called sola scriptura.

[2 : 47] What that means is scripture alone, that this Bible is to be our source of truth. We don't rely on popes. We don't rely on councils. We don't rely on priests.

We go to the Bible, and we seek what the Bible says to speak to us. Nothing else. There's no philosophy. There's no tradition that we lean on.

It is to be solely God's Word. So I've got two goals for this series, and I've stated them before, but I'm going to repeat them for you again.

One, my goal for you is to see the Bible as one unified story. I want you to see that there is a story, because when you start to come to different parts of the Bible, and you're trying to translate it, it's actually going to tag in to other books that are written.

We call that cross-referencing. You're going to see that the story has often been repeated, but at the same time, it is, in some spaces it's just mentioned, other places it's elaborated on.

[4 : 01] But it is a unified story of redemption. It reveals, as I said before, God's pursuit of redemption of a fallen mankind.

It's not just a story from a past. It's a story which gives us hope for our future. Within that idea of the Bible as one unified story, it's to understand that the Bible just doesn't give us information, but it's revelation.

Right? It's not just information from the past. It's not just a history book, but it's revelation for today. It's God-specific, special revelation, which reveals who He is, who we are, and how He is redeeming us.

Like I said, many people think this, they look through the Bible for rules, or moral lessons, or what can I do? What do I eat? What are the do's? What are the don'ts? What are the actions that I do that put me in God's good favor?

What are the actions I avoid, so I won't be in God's bad favor? What's interesting, as we go through the Bible, it reveals Himself as both a creator, and we get to learn His character.

[5 : 25] In Genesis, God creates something that is beautiful, the Garden of Eden. There is order. There is peace between man and God.

By the time we get to Genesis 3, Adam and Eve have already chosen to rebel. It's our story. It's now our curse. But instead of abandoning the world, or choosing to redo the world, God initiates a rescue mission that, as we will see, will span many centuries, which demonstrates His incredible love and patience.

The type of qualities we need to understand if we're going to have a true relationship with Him. The Bible, quite simply, is not a rule book, but it's a relational book.

It's a book that describes God's desire for intimacy with us, the creation. He does this by giving us prophets, priests, Jesus, and now His Word.

Some people hate this word, but it's a love story. It is a story of God constantly drawing His people back to Him.

[6 : 49] This is the theme that runs all through Scripture. So there's two facts about redemption that we need to understand. The first fact is, God pursues us in our brokenness.

What that means is, we don't get ourselves right, and then God pursues us. God pursues us even when we were spiritually dead.

When we had no thought of God, we thought God as an enemy, we wanted nothing to do with God, God actively pursues souls that reject Him.

From Genesis to Revelation, we see this consistent theme. And the fact of the matter is, we're broken by sin. We struggle in our own darkness, yet God, that God chooses, continues to choose us, to love us, and pursue us.

The other fact about redemption is, Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of redemption. Jesus did not give us special teachings, that if we follow those teachings, we are redeemed.

[8 : 02] No, redemption is found in the person of Jesus Christ alone. So it's not like someone can set himself up as another God, and kind of give the same type of teachings of Jesus.

And this goes back to a point I made several weeks ago, that it's important for us to understand, that we have a working God. And what that working God means is, that we are saved by a definite action, that occurred in definite time.

Do you understand? We're not saved by a philosophy or a belief. We are saved by a God, and we're going to get into that human part of the story, a real part of the story, a real historical story. But ultimately, we are saved because Jesus Christ submitted to the Father, went to the cross, and was crucified over 2,100 years ago. If he had not raised, there is no Christianity.

There is no salvation. He would have failed. But he didn't. He rose again three days later. He fulfilled the prophecies of the prophets.

[9 : 10] So when we believe in Jesus Christ, we are believing in an action. We're not believing in his teaching or his morality.

We are believing in the definite work that he did definitely in time. That's why we do look to archaeology. All things point to the truth of Jesus Christ.

So like I said, my first goal is you understand this story of our Bibles. But I also want you to understand as we do this series, the history of redemption, how it flows through the books of the Bible.

And I know a couple of weeks ago, we already started in Genesis and worked our way to Ruth. However, I'm kind of backtracking a little bit because I've got more time. And I'm going to take advantage of it.

And although you might think, all right, are we getting into a big historical book? We're going to break down these themes. So what I've got for you, I'm going to have a slide come up, which is we're going to go through kind of the acts of redemption.

[10 : 13] There's essentially five acts of redemption. And I want to demonstrate to you that there is a story. So I've kind of divided our Bibles up into five acts. So we have this prologue, which is what happens in Genesis.

So when you read Genesis 1 to 11, it gives us a lot of information about the flood, destruction, how God interacted with people, obviously creation.

And then after the flood, it provides how mankind flourished, how languages were created. But by the time we get to Genesis 12, God has this plan.

And we're going to look at this plan. And this is the beginning of the rescue plan. So you notice act one, it's called the rise of God's program.

And that's between Genesis 12 and first Kings 10. So as I'm preaching over this series, I'm going to take certain scenes that demonstrate the rise of God's program.

[11 : 18] So obviously in this scene, we're going to look at the patriarchs. We're going to be looking today specifically at God calling Abraham. We're going to look at God's call of Moses.

We're going to look at the rise of David. So that's kind of like the upward trajectory of God saving a story. However, if you look at act two, it's called the fall of God's program, which starts in first Kings 11.

This is when the kingdom gets divided. Israel ceases to follow the wisdom of Solomon and David and the way that they ruled and they fell into their own self-absorption.

Like I said, this act captures the fall of Israel, a tragic descent marked by continued disobedience. They fell away from God's word simply is what happens in Acts chapter two.

So much so they undergo God's chastening where God destroys the city, destroys the temple. And then we get to act three. The Jews are in the time of exile and return.

[12 : 35] And we see this glimmer of hope that the prophets prophesied about. The exiles returned from Babylon. They rebuild the city. They rebuild the temple.

And through that time, God is preparing his time for the coming of Jesus Christ. So after 400 years of them waiting and anticipating, Jesus Christ shows up.

And we learn about Jesus in those four gospels. So that's the exile and return. And then we get to act four, which is called the redemption in Christ.

This is the creation of the church. Jesus ascends into heaven. His work is done. And now the believers live in the work that Jesus Christ has done.

And that's why we're going to be going from Acts to the epistles. This is the climax, the moment when God's promise is fulfilled. And we're here that Jesus doesn't just teach us about redemption.

[13 : 33] He accomplishes it. And he gives new life through his death and resurrection. And we read the stories of these men and women who went forward under the power of the gospel.

And finally, the act five is called the church and the new creation. The final act looks toward forward to the fulfillment of all things, the return of Christ and the restoration of everything broken by sin.

For lack of a better word, it's the return of the garden. It's the word. It's the return to peace with God. So all this time, I want to show you the purposes that God had, how his plan unfolds us for us.

Like right now, we live in the church and the new creation. But we're going to see what happened leading up to that.

So this morning, I want to spend some time in Acts 1, the rise of God's program. So God made a promise.

[14 : 44] And he made this promise in Genesis 3, 15. He said that there's going to be a redeemer. I know you're decimated, Adam and Eve. You've just sinned. You're now spiritually dead.

Death has come upon you. But there's hope that there will once come a child who will crush the work of the snake. And the first choice, the first act, that God does in bringing about this idea is he needs to create a nation.

So God sets out to create a nation. And the key text for this, we're going to look at them briefly. It's Genesis 12, Genesis 15, Genesis 17, and Genesis 22.

All those chapters speak into what's known as the Abrahamic Covenant. And I read you guys, I asked you guys, I don't know, maybe it was over a year ago, about how many of you guys had heard or knew what the Abrahamic Covenant was.

And I think three of you said you knew. And it made me think, okay, we need to go back and examine this because this is the kickoff to everything that we enjoy today.

[15 : 55] Right? This was the beginning of God. All right. I've got a plan. And the first thing I'm going to do is I'm going to call this man out of a foreign land and I am going to build a nation by which the Redeemer will come from.

So here we have Genesis 12, 1 to 3. Can I have the next slide, please? Now the Lord said to Abraham, Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you.

And I will make of you a great nation and I will bless you and I will make your name great so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you and him who dishonors you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed. So there's five key promises that make up the Abrahamic covenant.

I have them all listed here for you. So the first one is to make a nation. Now to have a nation even the UN if they're going to recognize someone as a nation there's essentially three rules that they need to follow.

[17:13] One, they usually have to have a language or a culture that's distinct from any other culture. Number two, they also have to have leaders and laws on which the leaders enforce.

So they have to have a government structure and number three what they need is land. You can't just say I want my own sovereign land and we're going to call ourselves Quebec, see you later Canada.

Right? You know, there's just, you know, they have to have all those things and that's what Quebec's arguing. They're saying, hey, we have a distinct culture, we have rules, why can't we be our own country?

That's part of the battle if you pay attention to such things. So the first thing I want you to see is how God is kind of showing his hand to what's coming next. First, he says, I will make you a great nation and this emphasis is this promise initiates the concept of a chosen people setting the stage for the Mosaic Covenant where God will eventually provide the laws for them to live as their own people.

So as you know, Abraham's coming over and eventually Abraham's going to be about 70 people by the time he goes to Egypt at the end of Genesis 50. At the end of Genesis 1, those 70 people, if I think that number, if I remember the number right, turn into about 2 to 6 million.

[18:49] So they go from a tribal people, a family, that will eventually become a nation. And that's why Moses comes in that Mosaic Covenant where they start to bring in rules and laws in which their society is supposed to function.

So that's what I will make you a great nation. It's going to be answered that through the Mosaic Covenant. And it also is a connection to future covenant. It establishes a people through whom God's laws, God's justice, and God's love is made visible to the world, preparing them to receive the Messiah.

When God chooses Abraham, he doesn't choose Abraham because he was great or he was powerful or any of those things. And neither is the birth of the Jews based on the fact that they were the most superior people in all the world.

There are people that God is choosing so God can demonstrate himself to the world. Do you with me on that one? It's to demonstrate. I'm going to show you how he does that in a little bit, but I want to get through these five promises.

The second promise he says, I will bless you. Now this is a promise of personal blessings which will extend his descendants as a sign of God's faithfulness.

[20:13] This sets the tone for the Davidic covenant that King David will have promises made to him by God. The third one we have is, I will make your name great.

Abraham's name becomes synonymous with faith and covenantal relationship. And his name is highlighted throughout the scripture. The passage that Josh read to you today, that's from Hebrews 11.

That is considered the hall of fame of faith. That this man's faith would be great. Would we be talking about it thousands of years later, we would hear about how faithful he was and is.

And he's referred to again in Romans 4. And in this covenant, God is laying down the groundwork for the new covenant in Christ.

And we're going to see as believers are grafted into Abraham's legacy of faith. And this is beautiful for us as Gentiles. If you grew up non-Jew, because his faith becomes the way we become God's children.

[21:23] So we don't become God's children because we're the seed of his physical background, but his spiritual faith. You with me? That becomes the premise of the new covenant.

That's how God will know that we are a part of his family. The fourth one, you shall be a blessing. Abraham's life becomes a source of spiritual inspiration and blessing.

blessing. The concept that God's chosen people are called to bless others becomes central in Israel's mission and the role of the church in the new covenant.

You get how we're supposed to live? It stems, it starts right with how Abraham is supposed to live. He's to be the model and finally it says to all the families of the earth shall be blessed. blessed. This is the ultimate promise. This is the one that anticipates the global impact of Abraham's faith and the coming of Jesus whom all nations are offered redemption.
[22 : 32] This is our hope. This is our blessing. A few things about this covenant. It is an unconditional covenant.

When Abraham makes this covenant he doesn't say if you do these things and you abide by my ways I will do these things Abraham. He doesn't. God says I will do it. It is a one-sided covenant. Now notice how he doesn't say Abraham you are going to build a great nation in my name.

Doesn't say that. It's I am going to build a great nation through you in my name. And just to prove this, this is about me, not you.

How old is Abraham when God calls him to it? Any Sunday school leaders know this? He's 75 years old. He is 75 years old.

[23 : 38] All right? He says he's going to have a whole bunch of children. Like who are you fooling? Right? My wife is barren. We have no children. I'm 75.

My body's broken. What is going on? And I believe God does that specifically because I asked if you were to strategize such a thing, you'd probably say if we're going to build a build nation, let's get a young guy like Josh and Jade up here.

You know, they're like 30, they're young, they're healthy, let's go from there. No, no, no, no. God chooses someone like my mom. Right?

My mom who still calls me to ask me how to use the Bluetooth button on her stereo. You know, just that, but that's who he's calling, someone who's 75 years old to fulfill this promise.

By the time we get to Genesis 15, Abraham is 86. There is no kid. He decides to go another way.

[24 : 49] Perhaps we heard the prophecy wrong, but Sarah says, why don't you take my handmaid Hagar and have a child with her so she does. Although a lot of people tend to beat on Abraham for making that foolish decision, let me ask you a question.

When's the last time you've waited 10 years for anything? Let me ask you another question. When have you waited 10 minutes for anything? Right?

You want internet? If you want information, you're on the internet, you want something to cook really fast, there's a microwave. Right? Stores are open 24 hours a day. You can go and get whatever you want. But 10 years wait.

He waited. He waited. We don't know why God wanted him to wait, but I believe that God wanted him to fully trust him.

This now becomes the foundation of the Abrahamic covenant. So this morning, I want to go through with you the seven trials that Abraham goes through to get to a point where God uses him to build a nation.

[26 : 13] And there's a few really great spiritual points that I think will speak directly to us, where you're at, where I'm at, or some of us will clearly say we have lived through these type of trials.

But there are seven trials. The first trial is found in Genesis 12 1. I want you to leave your country. I want you to leave the old boundaries for a place I will show you that you have never gone.

We've got people here in this church who left a home, a nation, a country, own borders to come here for the hope of a job.

It's been easy for every one of you, right? We've got people from Ukraine, Nigeria, Philippines, and even some you can point back to even where your parents came from.

Most people come with nothing with the hope of something. Am I right on that? We hope for a better future. It's not easy. One of the top ten stresses in a person's life is simply moving from one house to another.

[27 : 29] Going from one country to another is something else. So he's asking them, I want you to leave your boundaries.

The other aspect is he asked them to leave his friends and family behind. mind. You don't get to take everything, you know, beyond the physical relocation, Abraham is also asked to separate from his family and close relationships.

We see that this test challenges his loyalty, requiring him to prioritize his relationship with God over family ties.

I'm going to guess nobody's had that problem here. Right? You get, especially if you're saved in life, later in life, you've had these relationships that you were bound to, and now that you're in Christ, those relationships aren't exactly the same anymore.

It's harder. You don't see the same way. You don't do the same things. Just knowing a young man who changed his life, goes back over to see his old friends first thing they want to get him back to is the drug culture in which he lived in.

[28 : 52] That's been going on since I grew up. It's that pull of the old friends, and it still exists today. For some of us, it's even closer than that.

We feel bound by these physical bloodlines, and it tends to test our loyalties. God knows what that's like.

The fact of the matter is some of the most unhealthiest people in our lives is families. We find ourselves lost because we're stuck in this relationships that are unhealthy, and then we become, have this new faith, and we get to meet new brothers, new sisters, new fathers, new mothers, people who can speak wisdom into our lives.

My dad rejected me after I became a Christian. My dad didn't want anything to do with me after that. It was interesting, I think I shared, you know, when his funeral happened and they had asked me to come and say, you know, I had to go through this.

Do I go? Do I not go? And one of the things that's on my head is my dad had never visited me a day in my life. Never had given me anything. In fact, the flight there would have been more money than any money he had ever given me.

[30 : 18] So I guess I could have flown out there and said, Dad now owes me. You know, we didn't get the mother or the fathers that we wanted, but the Lord blessed me with friends that Proverbs 18, 24, there is a friend that sticks closer than a brother.

And I was quite blessed when I went to the church. It was just this new church and I met young men my age and their parents would make sure I was without anything.

If there was a sporting event, they would pay that I could go and attend and that's the love of the church. And I'm young at that age, you're too stupid to realize what's going on. Right? You don't understand that.

It was some people from the church that came over and fixed that broken front window that there was a draft that was really cold in the winter. I didn't understand that my mom couldn't afford to fix it. You're just clueless. But that's what the church does. And I know it's actively going on here for families, for kids that do not have fathers or mothers. Sometimes we have to set up proper boundaries because those family ties can really hurt us.

[31 : 31] Our call is to evaluate relationships to ensure that they encourage us rather than hinder our spiritual growth. That's the only thing. We can be friends. I've got non-Christian buddies that are friends I still talk to, still hang out with.

I love them. I wouldn't if they were trying to hinder my spiritual growth. In fact, I love it when they come here and they visit and they get to see a church.

I remember one, he came out, I think I told you, he actually works for the prime minister's office and he came to the church and saw that we were Baptists. He goes, oh, I thought you were from a cult. He goes, my sister's Baptist, why didn't you say so?

Because when he asks us, I always say, I'm Christian, sorry guys, Christian's my first title, not Baptist. Right? All right, then the other thing that, here's another third test.

So within Abraham's life, God sends Abraham to protect, for protection in Egypt. Egypt, and while he's there, his flocks grow. He becomes actually quite wealthy in Egypt.

[32 : 36] And God's calling him back to the land that he left. So he's got this other situation, and he needs to separate from what looks good, I'll call it.

Right? It's separation from Egypt. It looked good. He had the easy life. He got what he was doing. His wealth started to increase. Now you're asking me to go back where I kind of got to start all over again?

The fact of the matter is, every Christian needs to learn to risk the allure of worldly security and values. There's a lot of things that we think make us safe, but they really don't.

One of my best friends, he's got an MBA from one of the best universities in the world, and he felt this need to go into Christian ministry. I remember the greatest temptation that I called it on the first week.

I drove him back home, and I said, the biggest temptation you're going to have is, God led you to seminary to preach God's word, but every church you're going to go into is going to want you to do administration.

[33 : 43] It did. He worked at a church of 15,000, 20,000 people being the number two guy. He was the guy organizing everything. He made more money than any other pastor I knew.

He had the big house. He had all those things, but it took a while that he had to say, this isn't what I want. I don't believe this is what God was calling me to.

True to this day, he's one of the best preachers, and I love him, and now he's at another, all right, he's at a Baptist church of about 300 people, and he's loving life, because this is where God's all had him.

And he makes a fraction of what he used to make, but that's what God called him to. The other thing that we need to reject as believers, as Abraham had to reject carnal self-advantage, when Lot and Abraham's herds became so great, he didn't know which land, so he said, Lot, you pick, and Lot took the fertile lands near the risky towns of Sodom and Gomorrah.

He took what looked would be the easy way out, where his carnal, fleshly mind was saying, this is going to be good. Our call, as Abraham did, is that we are to pursue integrity over easy rewards.

[35 : 09] That when tempted to gain something through questionable means, remember that God's blessing doesn't come with strings attached. The world always has strings attached.

The reality is we are to wait for God's provision. Let's be honest, we negotiate with God all the time. If I take that job, I'd be a really good witness.

Right? Lord, if you give me that, I'll say your name every day. Oh, Lord, you give me that job. Oh, all that money I make, oh, I'll just give it to the church. You don't have to worry me about falling into the love of money.

Right? You just start this negotiation. But in your heart, you know it is the wrong thing to do. Even though you can say, I know it's going to make my wife's life more comfortable.

I know we'll be able to get a new second car rather than the one that's in the shop every time. I know my kids can go to private school. Everything's going to be great. Then there's a fifth test that he gets and it's called refusing ill-gotten wealth.

[36 : 19] Eventually, Lot is on that land and he gets captured by a foreign king and he runs away. So Abraham gets his guys, they go and rescue him and the king of Sodom is so overjoyed at this, he offers Abraham all this wealth because of it, but Abraham knows where that wealth comes from.

No. And he chooses not to take it. He refuses the ill, how would I say, the ill-gotten gains of wealth. The sixth test, and if I might say this is probably the test that I would say most Christians struggle with more than anything else is Abraham had to give up fleshly efforts.

It's the story of Genesis 17 18. It's the story when Abraham initially tries to fulfill God's promise of descendants through his own effort by having a child Ishmael with Hagar and hold me for a second. I'm not saying that most of us have illegitimate children, but what I do believe that many of us are guilty of is not waiting on the Lord and trying to do God's work through our own flesh.

[37 : 45] We're trying to push things in our timetable rather than God's timetable. I believe we as Christians struggle in our ability to surrender absolute control to God.

God. Like Abraham and Ishmael, we might try to help God fulfill his promises. Instead, we commit our efforts to prayer, faith, and patience, trusting his timing and ways in the way we want to do things.

See, here's the thing. The hardest thing to give up in the Christian life is the work of your hands that you did believing that God wanted you to do that.

You with me on this? Sometimes you feel God's calling you something, so you start to make sacrifices. You start setting your mind on something. God told me to do this, and you start going down that road.

And, you know, I know I'm in ministry. I can give you about 50 illustrations of this. I can tell you about my one buddy at seminary, wanted to be a missionary to Latin America so bad, he goes down, he raises the money, but there's a struggle with the money, and he's kind of not getting into it, and the problem is he can't speak Spanish for a lick.

[39 : 17] He can't. He just couldn't learn it. And sadly, he's like, his heart, his heart had to be for Spanish people. I have got to go down there. So for about 10, 15 years of his life, he's having to support himself going back.

I think he worked in carpentry, and it just never took off. Well, what's kind of interesting about his story is he used to be a Mormon. So where he ends up having to go back to his mom and dad's house, who, guess where mom and dad still live?

In Utah. Guess who's got a great ministry now? In Utah. Right? It's my buddy. Like, you know, he thought he wanted that so much. I knew this other man.

Same thing, he sells everything. He leaves his business, highly successful business. I meet him on the shipwreck of his life because God told him to go over, and I asked him, like, there's certain tests that in the government they give you in the civil service that actually will tell you if you have the ability to learn and understand languages.

He didn't even think about this. He just, God wants me over there. He goes over there. It's a complete mess. It's in Albania, if you can believe it. He can't pick up Albanian. So the only time he really works is all the missionaries get together for a conference every year for two weeks, and he runs the children's babysitting time during that time.

[40 : 38] And he's asking us all to support the money, and as a church we said, no. I know in your heart you feel called, and you've got cousins and uncles and aunts that are all in the mission field, and you want to do that, and I know you gave up your house, you gave up your money, and you did these things that you thought God was calling you to.

The question is, were you embedded in a church enough with elders that led you enough? Like one, were you elder qualified? You just don't go off and say, I'm just going to go do something. When you're going overseas, you still need to be elder qualified, or to be sent by elders to do a physical job perhaps, but he was going over to teach and have that, he just didn't have that spiritual maturity.

Man, I can tell you, I can tell you so much, I remember, I'll tell you one that happened with me when I was young, I was coming out of my church camp, and I started, I went on missions, I was kind of fired up, I wanted to go to Moody Bible School, one guy was encouraging me to become a Bible salesman.

Go door to door selling Bibles, that's going to be the greatest ministry you'll ever have. Praise the Lord, I had older men in my life that said, don't listen to that idiot.

[42 : 03] But this guy was very impressionable in my life at that time. That's not the way, right? The first thing they told me was grow up, you're still a stupid immature kid, I know you think you know everything when you're 19, 20, but you don't.

So some of the things that contribute to this is like language issues, immature church helps make immature decisions. When you make all the stuff, every barrier you come up on, you always think it's a problem rather than thinking, well maybe God put that barrier in there to protect me.

But you know, you do your own fleshly way, you go out and do it your own thing and you get to the end, well, I got another barrier, I'm going to go. Maybe God just wants my persistence. Maybe God's been really kind until he finally has to take a two by four and smack you on the head.

That's not something you're supposed to do. Anybody ever done that? We all have.

We've made decisions in our life and they haven't, let's be honest, some decisions, the consequences last a lifetime. But I want to tell you something encouraging for you.

[43 : 26] God did fulfill his plan through Isaac. But I think one of the most powerful passages of scripture is that God did not forget Hagar or Ishmael.

Look at Genesis 21, 16 with me. Shane, can you bring that up if I didn't give you this ahead of time? Sorry. Although Hagar and Ishmael were not part of God's plan, God still demonstrates care and concern for her and her son.

So there's tension in the camp and God has to kick Hagar and Ishmael out.

Sarah's jealous, the boy's a bit of a hellion in the camp. Here's this woman thinking, what is she going to do? I'm just going to go out into the desert and die. Notice 21, 6.

And she sat opposite him, her son, and she lifted up her voice and wept. God heard the voice of the boy. And the angel of God called Hagar from heaven and said to her, what troubles you, Hagar?

[44 : 52] Fear not. It's like he even needs to ask the question, right? For God has heard the voice of the boy where he is. Up, lift up the boy and hold him fast with your hand for I will make him into a great nation.

Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water. She went and filled the skin with water and gave the boy a drink. And God was with the boy and he grew up.

He lived in the wilderness and became an expert with the bow. He lived in the wilderness of Praan and his mother took a wife for him from the land of Egypt.

So even in the middle of our biggest mistakes, God might say, hey man, you're a real dunderhead. But I still love you. I still have a plan for you.

And although you've made decisions that you can't fulfill those plans because of what's happened, I still love you and I'm going to keep you. Even in the story, this is the birth of the Arab nation, which becomes obviously a thorn to Israel.

[46 : 05] But I know a ton of Arabs that are saved. A ton of Arabs that God has redeemed that are going to be in heaven with us. Even the son of the chieftain of Hamas, who I think got, his son is a gospel believing Christian who's proclaiming the gospel with everybody he interviews.

I don't know if you knew that. Just how God works, right? Probably the most vocal, I don't know any Jew that says vocal with the gospel as I do as the son of the Palestinian leader.

only in God's world, only in God's world. And then we're going to get to the seventh test.

And this is called sacrificing the supernatural gift. This is the ultimate test. God commands Abraham to sacrifice Isaac. Finally, Isaac has come.

He's waited 25 years for Isaac. And now God is asking him to give him up. This is the promised son through whom the nation was to come.

[47 : 21] What does Abraham do? He doesn't run away, doesn't escape to Egypt with his son, he obeys. He trusts that God can fulfill his promises even if it means raising Isaac from the dead.

Here, Abraham shows total reliance on God's power. Now I want you to turn, oh we're going to have the, Shane, we're going to look at Hebrews 11 8 and this is the text that Josh read.

And this explains what's going on here. It says, by faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance.

Right? So he went by faith into Palestine or Israel. And he went out not knowing where he was going. By faith he went to live in the land of promise as in a foreign land living in tents with Isaac and Jacob heirs with him of the same promise.

Verse 10 For he was looking forward to the city that has foundation whose designer and builder is God. Amen? That is the same thing we look forward to.

[48 : 29] The completion of our salvation. By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive even when she was past the age since she considered him faithful who was promised.

Therefore from one man and him as good as dead like that's when he bores Isaac he's as good as dead. We're born descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as many as the innumerable grains sand by the seashore.

Let's be honest. Even if you did not have that promise and you are to call and sacrifice your child you doing it?

You doing it? I guarantee you no one here is doing it. Even though if God spoke loud I don't believe no one here would have that faith to do that and I'm going to explain to you why in a moment.

Look at verse 17. It says by faith Abraham when he was tested offered up Isaac and he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son that's the knife is back of whom it was said through Isaac shall your offspring be named that word verse 19 he considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead that word considered means to reckon to reason it means to put together with one's mind and what can he conclude God's going to fulfill his promises through my son Isaac no matter what I do why I'm going to trust God now why did he get to a point that he could trust God this way he had these six other tests you with me on that that's why when we're born again we're not told imagine you're just newly born guess what

[50 : 29] I've got a plan you're going to Malawi you're going to be this missionary 20 years on this wonderful piece of God's earth a newborn believer do you think they got the faith to handle that of course not God brings it through trial after trial after the trial to the point that when God says that they know God's good on it he's built up their maturity now here's the thing God when he calls Abraham he didn't say come here and follow me Abraham here's the plan I have for you look at how I have everything worked out would you be willing to sacrifice Isaac knowing that whole plan or your child probably yes but that's not how God works God doesn't say trust my plan God says trust me that's what he says when he calls us to a life in

Christ he doesn't say hey Jimmy boy come over look at what I'm going to offer you this is what the next 35 years is going to be like you don't know you just know at that moment you are trusting in the

God of the universe to redeem your soul and you know that he loves you and he's good and you need to trust him that's it yesterday we were doing a study on 1st Peter and how we're to grow through our sufferings and one of the points he brought out is the way to the heart of God is through suffering how many of us willingly choose that there was a way I said hey you can get to the heart of God you can have a relationship with him unlike any other you can't get there because when God lays out what that suffering is you're like no way no how but

I'm going to tell you by looking at saints who been through the darkest parts of life who come out singing the praise of God one God always prepares them ahead of time and two when they're in that suffering he's with them he is with them he brings a supernatural power that enables them to deal with that suffering in a God ordaining way it's only then do they get to see the heart of God see by the time Isaac is being asked to offer Abraham gets to know a little bit about the heart of God with the test and we know the story of Abraham he failed multiple times with those tests right there was disobedience when he goes to Egypt you know he's passing off his wife as his sister because he's afraid they'll kill him because she's so beautiful just think about that she's over 75 years old at that time but yet considered desirable right you know crazy all these things but

God still loves him you see oftentimes when God calls us to something he doesn't lay out the plans for us doesn't tell us what the next 25 years of your marriage is going to look like or the 30 or the 40 or the 50 doesn't tell you whether in that marriage will you have kids or not have kids will kids be a problem will you lose your parents along the way you don't know those stories but what God simply tells you is trust me trust who I am and whatever comes your way you'll be okay you'll be okay don't trust the plan trust me that's what

God tells us God simply asks us to trust him by virtue of his character when God has a plan for you when he's calling you to something he always begins with trust me and when you do he starts opening the doors and you start growing in your faith to be who God has called you to be so I've got three concluding thoughts to this if I were by any way to give you any type of wisdom it would be this one trust God in his timing trust God in his timing Abraham waited 25 years for God to fulfill his promise like I said today we're conditioned to expect immediate results but if I can say anything else God's timing is not ours waiting isn't easy but it is where our faith grows to obey without full understanding obey without full understanding

[55 : 57] Abraham didn't have all the answers in fact he rarely knew what lay ahead like Abraham were called to obey even when God's plan isn't clear this is the essence of faith not having all the answers but trusting the one who does and three live with an eternal perspective live with an eternal perspective Abraham looked forward to the city whose architect was God that's the same call we live in the present grace looking forward to the future grace that is to drive us we are to call with an eternal perspective holding loosely to this world and its comfort and our ultimate hope is in Christ who will return and make all things new amen