

God's Appointments are Always on Time

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[0 : 00] Just a wee word to the young folk. Last week we were looking, you're looking at Moses in Sunday school.

So we're going to look at Moses today. But in life we all have to make choices. And you all made a really, really good choice today by coming to church, coming to tweenies, coming to Sunday school. That is a very, very good choice. And I hope that always you will make that choice. Sometimes the choices we have to make are very, very simple. Like at breakfast, do I have toast? Or do I have crispies? Or do I have porridge? Do I have, sometimes do I have milk? Do I have juice? Not big choices at all. It doesn't really matter which you have. It's not a big, big deal. Do I go in? Do I stay? Do I stay in? Do I go out? When you get older, your choices are going to get a little bit bigger.

[1 : 03] Because at school you're going to have to work out, I wonder what subjects do I take? And then you're thinking to yourself, I wonder what job am I going to do?

And so there's lots of these choices. Do I stay at home or do I go away when I finish school? All of these are big, big choices. And there'll always be these big choices.

Well, today in Sunday school, you're going to look at somebody who had a huge choice to make.

And that was Moses. Moses, you remember how last week we saw Pharaoh's daughter.

Pharaoh's the king of Egypt. Probably the most powerful man in the world at that time. His daughter found baby Moses. And we were looking at names, what names mean. Well, Moses grew up in the palace.

And Moses had everything in the palace that anybody could want. And if somebody said to Moses, what are you going to be when you grow up, Moses? Moses could have said, maybe one day I might be Pharaoh.

[2 : 07] I might be king of Egypt. It's possible. Because I am part of the line growing up here. So Moses had the best of everything.

Best teaching, best clothes, best, well, they wouldn't have cars, but the best chariots, the best of everything. And you'd think there was no choice for Moses.

That's everything is just going for you. But there was one thing about Moses. Though he was growing up in Egypt, he wasn't an Egyptian. He was an Israelite.

And the Israelites were God's people. And at that time, they were having a terrible time. Because they were being made, they were slaves, they were being bullied, they were being beaten, and some of them were being killed.

It was a tough time for the Israelites. Moses one day had to make a choice. Do I stay in the palace and hope one day to be king and maybe the most powerful man in the world and the richest man in the world?

[3 : 17] Or do I join up with the people of God, with the Israelites? Now that is what you call a big choice.

And do you know what Moses did? Moses made the big, big choice. And he turned his back on the palace and all the riches and all the things that he had.

And he went with God's people. He became a great, great man of God. If Moses had become king of Egypt, we probably today wouldn't know very much about him.

But today everybody still knows about Moses because he became a great man of God. He turned his back on everything that the world could give him in order to follow Jesus.

And do you know what's the safest place in the whole wide world is following Jesus? Close to Jesus' side. With Jesus holding your hand.

[4 : 19] And he does that when you believe in him, he has a hold of you. Never, ever, ever let you go. And this is a dodgy world we're living in. Sometimes quite scary.

But Jesus will always, always look after you. Safest place. So I hope, like Moses, that you'll say to Israel, well, I am going to choose to follow Jesus.

That's the way I'm going. I'm going to sing again from Psalm 66. And this is from St. Sam's, Psalm 66.

And I think maybe I put the wrong page in there. It's page 83 rather than page 82. Psalm 66, verses 5 to 12. Psalm 66 and page 83, verse 5.

Come, see what God has done. His mighty works of old. His deeds towards the human race, how awesome to behold. To let his people pass on foot through waters broad.

[5 : 28] He turned the sea into dry land. Let us rejoice in God. With might and power he rules on nations, sets his eyes. So let not rebels in their pride against him turn and rise.

O peoples, praise our God. His praise and song repeat. He has preserved our soul alive from slipping, kept our feet, and so on. Verses 5 to 12 of Psalm 66.

Come, see what God has done. His mighty works of old.

His mighty works of old. His mighty works of old. And so on earth.

He has preserved our soul alive. His mighty works of old. To let his people pass on foot through waters broad.

[6 : 39] He turned the sea into dry land. With those three doors in God.

With might and power he rules O nations set his eyes.

Though let no rebels in their pride against him turn and rise.

O people's praise our God. His praise in song repeat.

He has preserved our soul alive. From slipping kept our feet.

[7 : 52] You tested us, O God. God. Our silver is refined.

You laid sore burden on our backs. In chains we were confined.

You let us be oppressed. We went through flood and fire.

But yet you brought us to a place which met our hearts desire.

Let us turn to read God's word. In Genesis chapter 18. Read the chapter. Genesis chapter 18.

Genesis chapter 18.

[9 : 09] And the Lord appeared to him, that is to Abraham, by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day. He lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing in front of him.

When he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the earth, and said, O Lord, if I have found favor in your sight, do not pass by your servant.

Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourself under the tree, while I bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh yourselves. And after that you may pass on, since you have come to your servant.

So they said, Do as you have said. And Abraham went quickly into the tent to Sarah, and said, Quick, three sias of fine flour, knead it and make cakes.

And Abraham ran to the herd and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to a young man, and prepared it quickly. Then he took curds and milk and the calf that he had prepared, and set it before them.

[10 : 13] And he stood by them under the tree while they ate. And he said to him, Where is Sarah, your wife? And he said, She is in the tent.

The Lord said, I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah, your wife, shall have a son. And Sarah was listening at the tent door behind him.

Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in years. The way of women had ceased to be with Sarah. So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, After I am worn out, and my Lord is old, shall I have pleasure?

The Lord said to Abraham, Why did Sarah laugh and say, Shall I indeed bear a child now that I am old? Is anything too hard for the Lord?

At the appointed time I will return to you about this time next year, and Sarah shall have a son. But Sarah denied, saying, I did not laugh, for she was afraid.

[11 : 13] And he said, No, but you did laugh. Then the men set out from there, and they looked down towards Sodom. And Abraham went with them to set them on their way.

The Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do? Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him.

For I have chosen him, that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice, so that the Lord may bring to Abraham what he has promised him.

Then the Lord said, Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and their sin is very grave, I will go down to see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to me.

And if not, I will know. So the men turned from there and went towards Sodom. But Abraham still stood before the Lord.

[12:19] Then Abraham drew near and said, Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city. Will you then sweep away the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous who are in it?

Far be it from you to do such a thing, to put the righteous to death with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked. Shall not be that from you? Shall not the judge of all the earth do what is just?

And the Lord said, If I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city, I will spare the whole place for their sake. Abraham answered and said, Behold, I have undertaken to speak to the Lord, I who am but dust and ashes.

Supposing five of the fifty righteous are lacking, will you destroy the whole city for lack of five? And he said, I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there.

Again he spoke to him and said, Suppose forty are found there. He answered, For the sake of forty I will not do it. Then he said, O let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak.

[13:28] Suppose thirty are found there. He answered, I will not do it if I find thirty there. He said, Behold, I have undertaken to speak to the Lord. Suppose twenty are found there.

He answered, For the sake of twenty I will not destroy it. Then he said, O let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak again but this once. Suppose ten are found there.

He answered, For the sake of ten I will not destroy it. And the Lord went his way when he had finished speaking to Abraham. And Abraham returned to his place.

Amen. And may God bless to us this reading of his holy word. We are going to sing now in Psalm 37 from the Scottish Psalter on page 82. No, page 252 I should say.

252. Psalm 37, singing verses 1 to 7. And that is on page 252. For evildoers fret thou not thyself unquietly, nor do thou envy bear to those that work iniquity.

[14:36] For even like unto the grass soon be cut down shall they, and like the green and tender herb they wither shall away. Set thou thy trust upon the Lord, and be thou doing good.

And so thou in the land shalt dwell, and verily have food. So on to verse 7, Psalm 37, verses 1 to 7. For evildoers fret thou not.

For evildoers fret thou not thyself unquietly, nor do thou envy bear to those that work iniquity.

Nor do thou envy bear to those that work iniquity.

For evildoers fret thou not thyself unquietly, nor do thou of the wind.

[15:50] Help me with worship away. Set thou thy trust upon the Lord, and be thou to him good.

And so thou whom thou am children, and heavenly of good.

Delight thyself in God, dear God, thy heart desire to thee.

Thy way to God, committed trust, it bring to pass shall be.

And like unto the light he shone, thy righteousness sway.

[17:08] And thee thy judgment shall bring forth, like noontide of the day.

Rest in the Lord, and patiently pray for him, do not fret.

For him who prospered in this way, such as in sin not care.

Amen. Let's turn again to this chapter, Genesis chapter 18.

And I want us just to go through this chapter very quickly. But if I'm going to home in on anything, it's probably verse 17. The Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?

[18:17] Of course, that was in the context of Sodom, but it was also, we could say, that kind of summarized Abraham's life with the Lord. The Lord is saying, because Abraham we know was a friend of God, shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?

It's an amazing thing to be at the center of God's choices, God's purposes, God's appointments in this world. And that is certainly where Abraham found himself, at the very center. Because God had great plans and great purposes for his church, and for the coming Messiah. And right at the very, very start of everything, we find that Abraham is pivotal to the whole lot. But you know, God has choices and plans for you and for me as well. Sometimes we tend to forget that. Because all the time, there is one important thing in the whole wide world, and that is the church.

The church is at the very center of God's purposes and plans in the world. The worldwide church. The church that has been bought by the blood.

[19 : 29] Of the Son of God. And as the Lord said, His people are His portion. Out of this world, God's people are His portion.

This is what the Lord will take to himself out of this world at the end. Because one day, this world as we know it, it's going to be burnt up. The Bible tells us that.

And nothing is going to be, the Lord will take nothing of this world to himself, apart from his people. They're very special to him. So we find it a very humbling thing to find ourselves at the center of God's purposes for the world.

Now we find Abram at this particular time, he's having what I suppose we would term a siesta. It's in the heat of the day. And all work stops there when the sun is just beating down.

And he's in the shade. And he's having this wee rest. And all of a sudden, three men are standing before him. And obviously he gets a shock because he didn't see them coming.

[20 : 36] He didn't see them coming from a distance. But he couldn't have seen them coming from a distance because they just appeared. These were, we discover, they were angels.

Two of them were angels. And one, we believe, was the Son of God taking the form, not as he came taking human nature, but the appearance.

These angels, two angels, and the Lord Jesus, they took the appearance of men and they stood before Abraham. We don't really know what angels look like.

We often tend to see them regarding what we see of paintings, maybe of men, of women, of children, with maybe long flowing robes or whatever, and wings, and sitting in clouds, playing harps. We don't know what angels really look like. Although there was, we find in the Ark of the Covenant, there was the cherubim and the wings of that spread over on the Ark.

[21 : 34] So maybe that's where this whole idea, and probably the fact that they move around very, very quickly. They are God's messengers. They're there to do God's will and God's bidding.

And angels minister to us. It's quite an extraordinary thing, but we're told that in the Bible. They are ministering spirits to God's people in this world.

And little do we realize how often we've been helped, protected, kept, as God has sent an angel to do something for us or to deliver us from some danger that we maybe didn't even know a danger that we were in.

However, we have them here with the appearance of a human. And Abraham welcomes them most sincerely and in the Near East, hospitality was a very important thing and was part of a sacred duty as well.

And we find that he prepares for them quite an extraordinary meal because initially what he said to them, let a little water be brought and wash your feet and rest yourselves while I will bring a marshal of bread.

[22 : 47] But it wasn't just a marshal of bread. He kills a calf and Sarah prepares a huge amount. A sea, if you see in the footnotes, was about seven quarts or 7.3 litres.

So she's got three of these. So we're talking of over 22 litres. It's a huge amount that she's making. And so obviously the whole household are going to be fed, not just these people. But one of the things that comes out of this is when we look at Abraham and lessons, there's always lessons that we're learning, and we see how Abraham ministers to the Lord.

And two or three things hit us right away is that he ministered to the Lord very quickly. He got straight into it. He didn't hum and haw.

He didn't just think, well, will I or won't I? But he strayed away and he went very quickly. And that's really how we should minister to the Lord as well.

[23 : 52] You know, it's a wonderful honour. It's a wonderful privilege to be able in any way, in whatever we're doing, to minister to the Lord. And it isn't simply, we often tend to think of

ministering to the Lord as something in a full-time work.

No, in everything that we do for the Lord, we are serving him, we're ministering to him, anything at all, even the most insignificant thing. But it should be done quickly.

And we also see it was done very generously because he went and he picked the best. He went and he got that tender calf. Abraham ran to the herd and took a calf, tender and good.

He didn't go and say, oh, I'll take, there's a pretty rubbish one over there. It wasn't that kind of thing, you know. He said, I'm going to look for the best. And again, when we serve the Lord and we give to the Lord, we should give generously.

We should give with a, what the Lord looks for is a willing heart, that we don't serve him grudgingly, but that we serve him and we give of whatever willingly to him.

[24 : 56] But we also see that he served humbly because he bowed himself to the ground. He called him Lord. And again in our service, we always have to have this idea.

Here is God. He is my maker. He is the one who has given me my life. This, I am who I am because of him. Sometimes we forget, as the word says, that it's in him, in God, we live, we move, we have our being.

So there should always be this sense of indebtedness to God in our service to him. Now I don't know at what point Abraham came to realize that the visitors that he had were heavenly.

I don't think he knew right away because in Hebrews it tells us that he entertained angels and awares. In other words, initially, while he entertained them, while he gave them hospital, he didn't realize that they were actually angels.

But it didn't take Abraham long to realize that they were very special people. And it didn't take him much further to realize that he was in the presence of divine power because that becomes very obvious.

[26 : 13] And so the question was asked that Abraham was asked, where is Sarah, your wife? Now, if Abraham hadn't realized before, he certainly would have known now because remember his wife's name had been Sarah.

We saw the change of the name and it was God who had changed the name from Sarah to Sarah. Sarah. And so he was asking, where is Sarah, the God-given name?

And he's told she's in the tent. And then God gives again a further development of this long-awaited promise. You remember how over and over again the Lord had said, you are going to be the father of a great race.

And remember we've gone through all that of how the time was going and going and going and then it looked like Sarah was never going to have children and then they came up with the idea of the servant girl Hagar and that she would become a like a secondary wife to Abraham and of course then fathered and there was Ishmael and there's that whole story there.

But God had said, no, it's not going to be Ishmael. Ishmael's not going to be the child of promise. Sarah is the one who will be the mother.

[27 : 36] And here is God once again reaffirming but he's much more specific this time and he's telling that this time next year he's going to come back and there's a very definite statement because God says I will.

I will return. And I think we've always got to see that at the appointed time I will return to you. You know when God says I will that's the end of the matter.

And we should lay far greater store on God's promises than we do. And part of our problem is we don't believe God completely.

We don't trust God completely. Yes we do. One level we do. And if we have saving faith we do. But we still doubt him.

Because we bring God down to our own level. And we all know and we've all done it. We've all said things that we didn't. We had every intention of doing but we didn't do it.

[28 : 40] We're human. God isn't. When God says I will that's the end of the matter. The Bible says God is not a man that he should repent nor the son of man that he should deny himself.

Has he not said and shall he not do it? Has he spoken and shall he not make it good? So the Lord says I will surely return to you about this time next year and Sarah your wife shall have a son.

This now is going to be the covenant child. And it's amazing God has brought them to the very place where it is now humanly impossible for them.

to be the father and mother of a child. Because that's what Sarah says there in verse 11 or what it says the way of women and that is the possibility of bearing children is now an impossibility. That possibility that was part of my life, the possibility that I could bear children, it is now beyond me. It is humanly impossible for me.

[29 : 48] But God has taken them to that place to show that this is going to be all of him. And it's a picture here, we're not going to go into that just now, but it's a picture of the whole way of salvation where human effort is taken out and it is of God's doing, that it's a supernatural in a sense birth.

Although it was a natural birth, it was a supernatural. And God takes us to the end of ourselves as well. because we cannot produce any fruit to the glory of God in and of ourselves.

It is only as God works in us, as God puts his spirit within us that changes our life. Now, of course, when Sarah heard this, she just, she laughed.

When she heard the Lord saying, I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah, your wife, shall have a son, and she laughs. It wasn't a laugh of joy.

We found Abraham laughing as well previously. And Abraham's laughter, I believe, was a mixture of being overwhelmed, a mixture of joy, and we saw that already.

[30 : 59] Remember the name Isaac, what it means? Laughter. And that's exactly what God did. He brought laughter into their experience. Just as we sang last week in Psalm 127, 6, I remember how when Zion's bondage, God turned back as men that dreamed were we, then filled with laughter was our mouth, our tongue with melody.

That's exactly what God is doing here in the experience of Abraham and Sarah. But Sarah's laugh wasn't a laugh of scorn, but it was definitely a laugh of unbelief.

It was kind of a dismissive laugh. It was like when you hear something, you just say, that's utterly impossible. You kind of laugh at the impossibility of the situation.

And straight away, the Lord says, why did Sarah laugh? And again, this is quite extraordinary because Sarah's in the tent. But God heard her laughter, which was a laugh to herself.

Isn't that amazing? And it just shows us that there is nothing that we can do, either outwardly or inwardly, but God knows it all. And you know, that's going to be one of the quite extraordinary things in the day of judgment, where everything will be revealed, every single thing.

[32 : 23] Nothing that was ever done in secret, but will be known. It's quite a, it's an overwhelming thought. but every thought, every word, every action is noted by God.

And Sarah tries to deny it. Oh, I didn't laugh. Oh, but you did laugh. And again, that's how it's going to be on the day of judgment, because we can deny, we can make every excuse under the sun.

It's not going to stand, because God knows. Just as he said to Sarah, Sarah's trying to say, oh, I didn't laugh. It wasn't an outward laugh. She just laughed to herself.

Lord said, you did laugh. Heard it. I know it. And that's how it's going to be. The eye of God will see absolutely everything and take note of everything.

And that is why the justice will be absolutely correct. Abraham talks about God as being the God of justice. Shall not the judge of all the earth do justly, do right?

[33 : 27] He will. You know, some people throw up their hands with horror at the thought of a day of judgment. There has to be. When you think of all the evil, of all that has been wrong in this world, isn't it only right that there will be a day when God deals rightly with all that has been wrong in this world?

Well, it's going to happen. And that's one of the things that everything will be measured out exactly as it is. things. And then the Lord reinforces what's going to happen.

And that's why he says at verse 14, at the appointed time, I will return. It's anything too hard for the Lord. Literally, it's anything more difficult than Yahweh can perform.

And there's nothing. He is the God of the impossible. impossible. And you know, I am so thankful that our lives are not lives of random.

You see, although often in life there are difficult things, painful things, tragic things, things that don't measure up and things that don't make sense, and maybe some of you today, your hearts are all over the place because life for you and your experiences have just not made sense.

[34 : 55] And maybe it's leaving you in all kinds of different ways, but I'll tell you something. To know that God is still in control and ruling over everything and has a purpose in everything, has a huge, well, for me anyway, that means so much rather the alternative is that everything is just random, that there's no meaning really to a life, that it's all just accidents, it's all just fate, it's all just

a random movement of everything, not really meaning anything.

I would hate to live in that world. That's a world of meaninglessness and chaos. But God is in control, and he's showing here that at the appointed time, at the right time, at his time, not any time before it, not another time, at his time.

And it had gone way, way beyond. I'm sure Abraham and Sarah were saying, oh, come on, please, Lord, I'm going to get too old to enjoy having children. That's what Sarah would be saying.

Abraham's now 100. You and I know that people often say children, it's a young person's game, because bringing up children is hard going.

And here they are, they're old, and they'll be saying along the way, oh, we want children when we're younger, not when we're really, really old. But it's God's time, and it's going to be the right time.

[36 : 33] And so that's what the Lord is saying. And then we find that, I say, this time the conversation moves, and we find that, time is moving on, we find then that they move away, and they begin to move towards Sodom.

And here are this deputation, the two angels and the Lord, they're moving in that direction. And it becomes very ominous what's said here.

And the Lord, there's a conversation that takes place, and people may find that quite strange, because they say, the outcry, the Lord says, because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and their sin is very grave, I will go down to see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to them, and if not, I will know.

People say, that shows that the Lord doesn't really know. He knows there's something going on, but he wants to go down and see it was really as bad as he thinks. But that's not really what this means. But the Lord, again, as we say so often, it comes in human ways and in human language so that we will understand. God is saying, I won't do anything but what is right and what is just.

[37 : 50] That's really what he is saying. And the thing is that Sodom and Gomorrah had become so debauched in their ways that even the cities round about recognized Sodom and Gomorrah's debauchery.

And we've got to remember that some of these cities round about they went along with child sacrifices, babies were sacrificed, children were sacrificed to the different gods to appease them or to get good return on crops.

And even these cities thought of Sodom and Gomorrah as a byword for debauchery. But there's an outcry coming before God because you see the victims are crying.

There's a cry. Abel's blood cried from the ground. That's what the Lord said when Cain killed his brother. Your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground. You see sin has an impact.

Sin has a voice. The impact of sin, the effects of sin has a voice that goes up to God. And let us note even this day as you look at this world with all that goes on.

[39 : 03] And sometimes the appalling things that go on right throughout this world. God is taking note. There's an outcry that goes up to heaven. God is hearing and taking note of all that.

And God tells Abraham what he's going to do. And we find that, again there's so much as I say, the time's moving on. he says to him, you know, that he's going to tell, he says, verse 19, for I have chosen him, for I have chosen him that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice so that the Lord may bring to Abraham what he has promised.

That's a wonderful, something we're going to have to come back to again. But in verse 17, the Lord says, shall I hide from Abraham what I'm about to do? See, Abraham is a friend of God.

We're told that in Isaiah, we're told it in James, there's various references to it, that he is the friend of God. And we find then that as they move on, everybody else goes away, but Abraham is left with the Lord.

And that's what it tells in verse 22. So the men turned from there and went towards Sodom, but Abraham stood still before the Lord. He's locked alone with the Lord. Just going to look at this very briefly, a couple of minutes.

[40 : 35] Here's Abraham locked in prayer with the Lord. And the first thing is he's alone with the Lord. That's important. And you know, you and I must try and find time every day to be locked alone with the Lord.

Remember how in Matthew chapter 6, Matthew 5, Matthew 6, when Jesus is talking about prayer, he says, go in to your closet, close the door.

In other words, just the two of you, yourself and the Lord, get away on your own so that you won't be disturbed. You need time alone with the Lord. And you and I know that's one of the hardest things to find today because the demands in our time are so huge and an invasion of our space is taken up from so many different quarters.

To find time to be alone is difficult. But we must. And God says that if we seek him quietly, on our own, in the secret place, he will reward openly.

So that's the first thing we notice about Abraham's prayer. Second thing is we notice it's persevering prayer. He goes on and he goes on. He doesn't give up. And again, that is so important in prayer.

[41 : 54] That we don't just go in and out, but that we come to the Lord and we spend time with him. And if you haven't been in the habit of going to the Lord and spending time with him, you might say to yourself, I'm going to find that very difficult.

Well, you might, but still do it. You see, if our hearts are cold, you and I know that that ice, if it's been a freezing night, ice doesn't melt right away.

It takes time. It takes time for the warmth of the sun to melt it. And so it is sometimes when we come in prayer before the Lord. If our hearts are cold, if we've been far away from him, it takes time.

Sometimes we've got to be patient. We've got to persevere. perseverance in prayer is one of the essentials. And that's what we find. There's a persevering and there's a boldness with Abraham.

But that boldness is mingled with humility. Because, you see, what happens is that as Abraham is praying, verse 27, Behold, I have undertaken to speak to the Lord, I who am but dust and ashes.

[43 : 11] You know, the more you see of the Lord as you approach him, the more you will be humbled in his presence. Make no doubt about that.

The greater you see God to be, the less you will see of yourself. But the funny thing is this, the less you see of yourself and the more you see of him and who he is, the bolder you become in prayer.

That's what happened with Abraham. Because initially he's saying, oh, just 50. And then eventually, oh, I'm but dust and ashes, I'll take it down to 45.

I'll just speak once more. And then he's not moving by fives, but by tens. And he's pushed it all the way down to ten. And he stops at ten, because I'm sure he's thinking to himself, there's bound to be ten righteous people in Sodom.

but we see that God's willingness to save. He, one of the things I think we overlook as God, it tells us in the Bible, he's not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

[44 : 25] That is, that's what the Bible says. And you know, that's one of the great encouragements for us to go to the Lord and pray it, is take his word and say to the Lord, who is just and right, and say to him, if you have loved ones and you're saying to yourself, you know, the Lord's not answering my prayer, they're still out of Christ, take verses like that to him and say, Lord, you are willing that all will be, please save.

He wants to be, he wants us to be pleading, to be petitioning, to be supplicants before him. It's serious business prayer.

That's what the Lord wants. And as we do that, our fellowship, our relationship with the Lord deepens. Come to a greater understanding of him, a greater knowledge of him.

It will affect our life for good. It makes our Christian life a reality. That's why Abraham was such a great man. That's why he was a friend of God.

That's why God revealed things to Abraham. There's a verse, we should have actually, we're not singing that at the conclusion, we should, Psalm 25, it says, the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him.

[45 : 38] You live close to the Lord, the Lord will make known more and more of himself to you. Make no mistake about it. I hope and pray that we will all, like Abraham, seek to do real business with the Lord.

Let us pray. Oh Lord, our gracious God, again, as we reflect back on some of the great people, great characters in the Bible, there's so much that we can learn about them, so much that you teach us by their lives, by who they are and how they lived and what they did.

Lord, we ask that you will bless us this day, that you will do us good, that you will encourage us along the way, and that you will watch over us, taking us to our homes in safety. Oh Lord, be with us throughout this week, wherever we go, whatever we do, may your hand be upon us, guiding us, directing us, leading us, protecting us, shielding us.

Bless the tea, coffee in the hall, and take away your sin in Jesus' name. Amen. We're going to conclude singing in Psalm 65, the 65th Psalm, and that's on page 82.

It's from Sing Psalms, Psalm 65, verses 1 to 5, and Zion praise awaits you, Lord.

[47 : 08] To you our vows will pay. To you all people will come near you. Hear us when we pray. When we were overwhelmed by sins and guilt upon us lay, you pardoned all our trespasses and washed our guilt away.

How blessed are those you choose and bring within your courts of grace. We're filled with blessings in your house, in your most holy place. 1 to 5, Psalm 65, and Zion's praise awaits you, Lord.

And Zion's praise awaits you, Lord. To you our vows will pay.

Do you all people welcome near you? Hear us when we pray.

When we were overwhelmed by sins and guilt upon us lay, you pardoned our trespasses and wash our guilt away.

[48 : 24] How blessed are those you choose and bring within your courts of grace.

We're filled with blessings in your hands, in your most holy grace.

With awesome peace of righteousness, you answer us, O God, our Savior, hope of heartless feet, and all the earth across.

Now may the grace, mercy, and peace of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit rest and abide upon each one of you now and forevermore. Amen. Amen. Amen.