

The Call of Abraham

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[0 : 00] The following message is given by Walt Alexander, lead pastor of Trinity Grace Church in Athens, Tennessee. For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us at TrinityGraceAthens.com.

! Turn with me to Genesis chapter 11. Genesis chapter 11. I'm going to begin reading in verse 27. Now, these are the generations of Terah. Terah fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran. And Haran fathered Lot. Haran died in the presence of his father Terah in the land of his kindred in Ur of the Chaldeans.

And Abram and Nahor took wives. The name of Abram's wife was Sarai. The name of Nahor's wife was Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah and Iscah.

[1 : 11] Now Sarai was barren. She had no child. Terah took Abram, his son, and Lot, the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sarai, his daughter-in-law, his son, Abram's wife.

And they went forth together from Ur of the Chaldeans to go into the land of Canaan. But when they came to Haran, they settled there.

The days of Terah were 205 years, and Terah died in Haran. Verse 12, 1. Now the Lord said to Abram, 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 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.

Verse 4. So Abram went as the Lord had told him, and Lot went with him.

[2 : 40] Abram was 75 years old when he departed from Haran. And Abram took Sarai, his wife, and Lot, his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people that they had acquired in Haran, and they set out to go to the land of Canaan.

When they came to the land of Canaan, Abram passed through the land to the place of Shechem, to the Oak of Morah. At that time, the Canaanites were in the land.

Then the Lord appeared to Abram and said, To your offspring I will give this land. So he built an altar to the Lord who had appeared to him.

From there he moved on to the hill country on the east of Bethel and pitched his tent. With Bethel on the west and Ai on the east.

And there he built an altar to the Lord and called upon the name of the Lord. And Abram journeyed on, still going toward the Negev.

[3 : 52] May God bless the hearing and the preaching of his word this morning. When the Beatles landed on U.S. soil in the winter of 1964, they swept the nation by storm.

Some say the universe began with a big bang. Well, for all intents and purposes, rock and roll began with the big bang of the Beatles. They played on Ed Sullivan's show to an audience of 73 million people.

That's six times the number of people that watched this past year's NBA final. And many more times than people have ever shown up for a Led Zeppelin show. They played to sold out crowds every night.

And when they arrived in city after city, you've probably seen the images or the video footage. The runways are lined with adoring fans screaming, We love the Beatles.

At one particular performance after the Beatles played, rhythm guitarist George Harrison stuck his face into the camera and said, Who are you?

[5 : 04] Where are you from? Where are you going? Who are you? Where are you from? Where are you going?

What are you all about? What are you after? In so many ways, he's asking, What do you want? What do you want?

It's a piercing question. Is there any more piercing question than, What do you want? But it is a most important question.

Perhaps the first and the last and the most basic question of discipleship. In fact, in John's gospel, when people begin following our Lord Jesus Christ, the first followers who begin to follow him, he turns to them and said, What do you want?

I love it. He doesn't say, What do you know about me? What do you believe about me? He says, What do you want with me?

[6:11] Cuts right to the heart. In our passage this morning, when the Lord comes to Abraham and says, Go! He is really saying the same thing.

The Lord isn't calling Abraham to believe something. He isn't calling Abraham to make a decision about something. The Lord is calling Abraham to want something. The Lord is calling Abraham to faith.

What's faith? We often think faith is an empty hand. Faith is an openness to the Lord. But faith, biblically, is not automatic.

Faith is not like your thermostat in your house that you set, and everything just rises up to the appropriate level. Faith is more than that. Faith is something you and I bring into operation.

It is a gift. And yet, it's one that demands our response. J.C. Ryle helpfully says in his book on holiness, It is not gazing on the lifeboat that saves the shipwrecked sailor, but actually getting into it.

[7:16] It is not knowing and believing that Christ is a Savior that can save your soul. Unless there are actual transactions between you and Christ, you must be able to say, Listen, Christ is my Savior because I have come to him by faith and taking him for my own.

Faith is about wanting God, seeking God, taking your empty hand and grasping the gift of God. So in this passage, this most, and I said this last week, but this is a most important passage for how we put our Bibles together.

And what it's saying, the children of God are not, the children of Abraham are not those who know the right things. They're not even those who believe the right things. Children of Abraham are those who want the right things.

The true children of Abraham are those who have left everything to take Jesus for themselves. In a word, where we're going, the promise of God depends on faith that leaves everything to follow.

The promise of God depends on faith that leaves everything to follow. We're going to break this out in three points. The first is an unexpected promise, an unexpected promise tearing out the end of chapter 11.

[8:39] You know, as we read through our Bible, you know, as those who've read the Bible before, it's so easy to read the unexpected things that happen with little more than a yawn.

I remember as a new believer, I would set out time to read the Bible every night before I went to bed. Now, that's mistake number one, because I would start to fall asleep. Some nights I found it so hard to stay awake, I would read it on my knees, not because I was especially reverent, but because it hurt, you know, and it kept me awake, it kept me reading.

I would recommend reading in the morning when you're a little more fresh with coffee. But anyway, if we're not careful, we could read through these verses with little more than a yawn like that without getting a sense of how utterly unexpected they are.

Now, this is an unexpected promise the Lord makes with Abraham because of all that has just happened. If you remember, we've just covered the first 11 chapters of Genesis are truly breathtaking.

It introduces us to the internal God who made everything that is out of nothing. The eternal God that stamped his image on men and women, making them like him, to reflect him and represent him and filled it with so many different creatures.

[10:04] The great God and all that he's done, but the first 11 chapters remind us again and again of the awful reality of sin. D.A. Carson says, one of the most striking evidences of our sinful human nature lies in the universal propensity for downward drift.

Our universal propensity for downward drift. We don't have to be just chasing ungodly things to get into an ungodly life.

All we have to do is drift. Like a little ocean liner, few knots off its direction, gets vastly lost.

So too do we. The story of Genesis 1-11 is one adrift. The fall. The rebellion. God's curse. God's curse. Then the reality that man, the Lord says, the intent of, every intent of their heart is evil continually. So the Lord floods the earth with his judgment.

[11:16] The Tower of Babel, when they unite again, they build not a monument to the Lord, but a monument to human pride and arrogance. And so the Lord divides them and disperses them, separating them by language and nations.

And so anyone carefully reading the Bible would expect judgment. Worldwide judgment. But the Lord in these verses does not come to condemn the world. He comes to make a promise. But it's also unexpected because of who is the recipient. The Lord makes a promise to Abraham, of course, but at the end of chapter 11, it's introducing us and telling us more about Abraham. Look at 11:27. Now it says, now these are the generations of Terah. Now we've said before that that phrase separates Genesis into 10 different sections.

These are the generations. Just saying, these are what happened to Terah and his family. So it's introducing us to Abraham's father, Terah, telling us a little bit about him, but it's underlining something very important that we might not catch.

[12:27] Twice it says, Abraham is from Ur of the Chaldeans. You see it in verse 28. See it again in verse 31.

They left from Ur of the Chaldeans. Also twice it said, they set out to go to Canaan, but they settled in Haran. Twice it mentions Ur and Haran.

In addition, just hold on with me. In addition, 12:1 makes clear that the Lord had spoken to Abraham while he was still in Ur. Ur, rather. In verse 12:1, now the Lord said, is what my translation says, but it really should be the Lord had said, past tense, indicating that he heard this message while still in Ur.

Ur. And Acts 7, which we have for you, says the same thing. The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham while he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran.

So first Ur, then Haran, then on this journey. So he's saying, he heard while he was still living in Ur, before he went to Haran. And so why this emphasis upon Ur and Haran and upon the fact that the promise was heard while he was in Ur?

[13:45] Glad you asked. It's making clear that God called Abraham while he was still worshipping idols.

Both Ur of the Chaldeans and Haran, as Acts 7 carefully underlines, were important cities for the moon god worship.

Sarai and Milki were probably named after the companion and daughter of the moon god. It's underlining for the original audience, we need a little help to get there, but it's underlining for the original audience that Abraham was an idol worshiper.

In fact, Joshua 24 too reminds the people of this confirms his idolatry. Joshua said to all the people, thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, long ago your fathers lived beyond the Euphrates in Mesopotamia, Terah, the father of Abraham and of Nahor, and they served other gods.

Now what is going on? when God was looking for someone to save the world, why did he call an idol worshiper?

[15:08] Well, these things are coming together to make clear the most unexpected thing about this promise is that it rests on sovereign grace alone.

That's what's going on. That's why that little section is included. You might be tempted to believe God is only going to keep his promise if you keep yourself free from sin, but that is not what's going on here.

God calls Abraham while he was still worshipping idols to show that the promise rests on sovereign grace alone. Essentially, the Lord is saying, I'm done bartering with you.

I'm done waiting on you to get your act together. I'm done, I'm writing my own agreement with you. I am committing myself to you. I'm making a promise to you.

The heart of the Bible is not a God who helps those who help themselves. The heart of the Bible is a God who helps those who cannot help themselves. The heart of the Bible is a God who's determined to save by sovereign grace alone.

[16:17] And it's the same reality is true today. That's exactly why Romans 5:8 is written the way it is. While we were still sinners, Christ died for the ungodly.

Now, we've said, I've argued, Moses wrote these words to the people of Israel when they were in Egypt and traveling to the wilderness.

Why would he write this? Can you imagine the effect of these words on the original recipients? They would realize their security and peace must never come from how well they've cleaned themselves up.

It must come from God's commitment to his promise. You know, I remember as a young man, I was all over the place.

was wild, serving the sins of my flesh. At 15 years old, I got a driver's license. By 16, I'd had two wrecks.

[17 : 32] And at one particular season, I was with my family for a family reunion in Georgia, South Georgia. I was asked to go to the store to get some milk and to get some other things and went with my cousin and we went to get some milk and get some stuff and on the way back, I'm coming up to this interchange and the milk slides underneath my leg, making me unable to brake or to accelerate and flew through a stop sign, crushed into another car, watched this car bounce down the interstate and had a massive wreck.

Have you ever been in one of those scenes and you realize everything just stops? White noise, so to speak, takes over every second, seems like minutes. I get out of the car and realize I'd been near death.

I was driving my dad's minivan. The front of the car was crushed all the way up to where my feet were. I was distraught. Before long, the scene was filled with police cars and ambulances.

Everything was a blur. I didn't know what to do. I was frazzled. I was humiliated because this was my third wreck. This time, I totaled the car.

In the meantime, unbeknownst to me, a policeman had gone down the road and picked up my parents.

[19 : 06] And as my father walked onto the scene and as I saw him, I had an immediate sense of affection, security, and peace.

Despite my failure, I saw sorrow in his eyes. Affection. Despite my failure, felt secure that I'd done something foolish, but I knew his love for me.

This promise that Abraham's making with his people is meant to anchor them with the same security and peace. In so many ways, it's not what he's helping Abraham to see at the outset of this whole scene.

In so many ways, it's not we who are keeping a promise with God. But the heart of Christianity is God is keeping a promise with us. Now, you can imagine if I take my kid walking through the mountains and I say, hey, we're approaching a treacherous spot.

I want you to hold on to my hand. You know, my confidence is not in how hard they hold on to me. My confidence is I'm holding his hand.

[20 : 27] And the same thing is going on in our lives. This promise is breathtaking because how unexpected it is that the God of the universe would place his hand, so to speak, on us and keep us.

point to an unbelievable promise. An unbelievable promise. After telling what has become of Terah and the family, Genesis 12 unveils the promise of the Lord.

Look how it begins in 12.1 that the Lord said to Abram, go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. The story of creation began with the Lord speaking.

Remember, in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth with a word. Well, so too, the story of redemption begins with the word of God. The first word he says to Abraham is go.

Hebrews 11 tells you, he went out not knowing where he was going. Sometimes we feel like we're doing that in life. Some who wander are not lost, but some who wander are lost. Sometimes that's the way we feel.

[21 : 39] So the Lord is telling him to go from his home country, his family and his father's house. You know, it might be tempting to assume this is a little more than loading up the van for the family vacation, but what he's saying essentially is leave everything to follow me.

John Calvin, the reformer, says, and essentially what he's saying is, I command thee to go forth with closed eyes until having renounced thy country thou shalt have given thyself wholly to me.

It's a stunning command, but the command of God is followed with an unbelievable promise. Look in 12, 2, and 3. He says, I'll make a great, to the land I will show you, to the land I will show you, I'll

make of you a great nation, I'll bless you, make your name great, that you'll be a blessing, I'll bless those who bless you, him who dishonors you, I will curse, and you, all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

The promise is importantly made specifically to Abraham. If you counted the number of you's in there, it would be seven. The Lord is saying, I'm making this with you, you know, the whole earth is scattered everywhere, but I'm starting a plan of redemption with one man, underlining the electing purposes of God, but I'm starting this with one man.

There's also seven statements of purpose. I will make you great, I will bless you, I'll make your name great, you'll be a blessing, I'll bless those who bless you, I'll curse those who curse you, and you, all the families of the earth will be blessed.

[23 : 16] Now we know seven is a number for completion, so what the Lord is saying, I'm making an unstoppable commitment with you, an unbreakable promise to you, but what's this promise all about?

The smart guys have essentially said it boils down to three things. First, a people. It says, I'm going to make of you a great nation.

Now we immediately think like, pull out our hand and do the pledge of allegiance or something like that. You know, we think nation in a nation or country sort of sense, but the focus of this promise is on a people.

Not so much thinking tied to a certain nation state, but a people as numerous as the stars. What he tells us? As numerous as the number of sand on the seashore, as one of my kids said this week, that's a lot of sand.

A lot of people. So it's a promise of a people out of Abraham. Promise of a land. He said, to the land I will show you.

[24 : 34] So go to the land, the land of Canaan, a land we know from the rest of the Old Testament, a land that would be rich. One of the things they say again and again, filled with milk and honey.

Apparently, that means rich. You know, a rich land to have peace and to serve God, to worship Him. and a blessing.

He says, I will bless you. Make your name great. Five times in Genesis 1-11, the Lord says, I will bless you to different people. Five times in 12, 2, and 3, the Lord says, I will bless you.

What's it meant to say? It's meant to say there's a consolidation, there's a focus of blessing on this family. The Lord is saying, I'll give you everything you need to be a great nation.

I'll give you material prosperity. I'll give you children. I'll give you victory. And the promise is for everything they need and it's a promise for the whole world.

[25 : 35] In you, all the families of the earth will be blessed. Now, you've got to imagine Abraham received this promise while still in Ur. The Lord said, what I'm going to do with you is going to reach the end of the earth.

He's like, man, that was a good day. You know, I mean, it's amazing. The Lord says, I'll bless those who bless you.

I'll curse those who curse you. We see this immediately happen. The Lord blesses Melchizedek for honoring Abraham.

He curses Abimelech for taking Abraham's wife. We see it in the family of David. Remember, David is opposed by Nabal.

He protected his men. He goes and says, my men need some food. And Abraham, Nabal says, who are you? Why would I give you food? And Abigail comes and serves David and his mighty men just before they're about to strike down Nabal.

[26 : 44] But you know what happens to Nabal that night? His heart turns into a stone. It doesn't seem like that happens anymore when Christians are despised and persecuted.

It seems as nothing's happening to those who despise believers who flee Russia and protest or persecute believers in China or cancel believers for standing on biblical convictions.

Christians. But let God be true and every man be a liar. The judge will write all the scales. It's a worldwide promise he's making to his people.

It's a promise. It's the first step in God's plan of redemption. Last week, we studied the Tower of Babel. Mankind continued to refuse to worship God.

They refused to gather together to call on his name. So the Lord divided all the people into different peoples and nations. Well, now the Lord is unveiling his plan to unite a people for himself to call on his great name.

[27 : 46] The rest of the Old Testament tells the story of this promise. God gathers a people in Egypt where they're under slavery, but there they multiply. Then God leads them out to the Red Sea and to the mountain where they receive the Ten Commandments.

They learn what it is. That is their Magna Carta, if you will. That is their law. And they get that from the Lord. Then the Lord leads them into the promised land after a few fits and starts.

But the story of the promise continues further. Ultimately, the Bible says, the story of the blessing of Abraham comes to us through Jesus Christ.

Look in Galatians 3. The Apostle Paul writes, Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham.

Now, that's a loaded phrase. Saying, in you shall all the nations be blessed. So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

[28 : 55] Saying, 4,000 years before Christ came, the Lord preached the gospel. What's the gospel? the good news to Abraham that God was not done. The Lord was going to continue his work of redemption.

The good news that God is going to gather people from every people and nation to call on his name by faith. Beginning with Abraham and Ur of the Chaldeans and it's now that wonderful message that has come to us.

Point three, an impossible promise. An impossible promise. After unveiling the promise to Abraham, the story of Genesis details his immediate response.

But carefully tucked into this whole passage are the many difficulties that Abraham must face to believe in the promise of God. First, as we pointed out, Abraham is commanded to leave his home country, his family, his father.

commanded to renounce his citizenship, so to speak. But we know from Acts 7 and from these verses that he received the promise while he was in Ur.

[30 : 12] Now follow me. Then he goes, but he doesn't immediately go to the land of Canaan. He goes to Haran and stops there. He goes with his father to Haran and stops there.

It seems that Moses, I mean, Abraham didn't have the courage to follow God, to go further than his father did until he died.

Sadly, one of the greatest obstacles to following Jesus Christ can be your family. Do you remember what Jesus said to the man who said, let me go bury my father and then I'll follow you.

What did he say? Leave the dead to bury the dead. What's he mean by that? Leave the spiritually dead to bury the physically dead. Follow me.

He says, anyone who does not deny his father and mother cannot be my disciple. So Abraham's having this wrestling. Abraham is also promised children, but we've already learned that his wife is barren.

[31 : 21] Look in verse 1130. Moses carefully underlines this. Now Sarai was barren. She had no child. Two ways of saying the same thing.

She was barren. She had no child. Now it's one thing if the Lord had said the Olsons, he's going to make a great nation out of them. They're halfway there. But what about a family trying to get pregnant?

with no luck? What we're going to see is the barrenness of Sarai's wound and the temptation to give up on the promise of God are a persistent, nagging problem.

Not only that, Abraham is promised land, but when he finds it, the Canaanites are in it. Look at the way Moses underlines that for us in verse 5.

When they came to the land, Abraham passed the land of Shechem to the Okomorah. At that time, the Canaanites were in the land. So what's going on? As we know also from the rest of the Old Testament, that is a problem.

[32 : 37] And they don't quite kick them out when they should or in the way they should. It's impossible. This promise is not coming to pass. Are you kidding me?

The satire news site, The Onion, ran an article one time with the headline, Area Dad Knew That Play Would Never Work. I just love that.

Area Dad Knew That Play Would Never Work. It continued groaning and pounding his fist on the side of the couch as running back James Conner was tackled for a short two-yard gain.

Area Dad Joseph Meachin announced during Sunday's game that he knew that play wouldn't work. He continued, How stupid can you be?

You run this play, dumb play, a hundred times a game, said Meachin, who claimed that you could see the second the screen pass left the quarterback's hand that the play was going nowhere and that any idiot could call a better play.

[33 : 37] I could see that call coming a mile away and so could the defense. article continued, At halftime, Meachin was admonishing a failed slant pass call on second and nine and claiming the Steelers should be running it more.

Give it up for area dads assuming their position on the couch to do what they need to do. They were busy last night. Not getting the council across, I guess.

Well, anyone following this would say this is not going to work. This promise is not going to work. So what's going on? Why this underlining of the impossibility of this promise?

Moses is helping us to see that following the Lord is not easy. one of the most important things you can do in proclaiming the gospel is proclaiming the cost.

You want to follow Christ? Take a look at his life. Take a look at how well it went for him. many in the Christian world want to make out conversion, want to make out the experience of beginning to trust in Jesus Christ as little more than saying a few magic words.

[35 : 06] Knock, knock, knock, knock, please, open, come into my heart. But it's not that way. My conversion 22 years ago, there were a few more uncertain seasons in my life.

Everything was turned upside down. All the things I used to love, I didn't love, but didn't know what I loved, didn't know how to relate to my friends and all these things. One of the most helpful stories of conversion in our modern culture is the story of Rosario Butterfield, a former lesbian and feminist activist who comes to faith in Christ through the ministry of a simple 70-year-old pastor and his wife. She captures conversion so well when she says making a life commitment to Christ was not merely a philosophical shift. It was not a one-step process, wasn't any magic words.

It did not involve rearranging the surface prejudices and fickle loyalties of my life. Conversion didn't fit my life. If conversion fits your life, you may not be converted.

Conversion overwhelmed my soul and personality. It was arduous and intense. I experienced with great depth the power and authority of God in my life. In it I learned and am still learning how to love God with all my heart, soul, strength, and mind.

[36 : 44] When you die to yourself, you have nothing from your past to use as clay out of which to shape your future. So helpful.

Met with an evangelist this week who said in this culture, he said it takes a lot longer for people to become Christians.

Obviously you become Christian by trusting Christ by faith. But what he's saying is pulling off, it's like an onion, unwrapping the layers of lies and unbelief to trust in Jesus Christ.

So many ways. We want this to be a safe place where you can kind of discover what's going on.

You know, I tell people, you don't need to know the day you become a Christian. Who cares about the day you become a Christian?

What you need to be pressing into is do I trust Jesus Christ? Have I leaned on him? Have I renounced everything to trust in him by faith?

[37 : 52] Well, the wonderful thing, so in this passage in which it underlines the impossibility of this promise, it underlines the faith of Abraham. In verse four, so Abraham went as the Lord had told him.

That word went is the same word for go, so what Moses is telling us is that he obeyed God. He embraced the cost and the commitment of following Christ, and he obeyed just as the Lord told him. We think of faith as a gift, as an empty hand, but faith is, according to Abraham, an obedient act. faith, it is the obedience of faith.

It is continuing to obey the Lord, stepping out into the impossibility of his promises by faith, by trust, and that's what Abraham does.

I love the way it just captures, I mean, this passage with this massive promise just kind of meanders along. So Abraham loaded everybody up, his wife, his nephew, all their possessions, they made their way to Canaan, then the Lord appeared again, said, I'm going to give you this land, so they

built an altar.

[39 : 10] Then he keeps on going in between Bethel and Ai, which we're going to learn more about Ai in a little bit, he builds another altar. I love it, he's building altars in obedience to the Lord.

Remember Cain building an altar to himself? Remember the Tower of Babel, this massive altar to human pride and arrogance? Here is Abraham just wandering along, building altars to the Lord by faith.

One author says that really what's going on with Abraham, he's not, you know, we look at Abraham like, man, he is in I'll never be there territory, but really what's going on with Abraham, as we're going to see, Abraham's entering the school of faith.

He's going to move up from he's going to matriculate from the elementary years to the middle school, middle school to the high school, and the great saint that we love. But he's going to do it by obedience.

Martin Lloyd Jones famously says, faith is the refusal to panic. Now that, we'll preach. Faith is unbelief kept quiet, kept down.

[40 : 27] Faith reminds itself of what the scripture calls the exceeding great and precious promises. Faith says, I cannot believe he has brought me so far, he who has brought me so far is going to let me down at this point.

It is impossible. That's what's truly impossible. What's impossible is not what the Lord has commanded us to do. What's impossible is the Lord would ever let go of those he's commanded to follow him.

I love that. It is impossible. It's inconsistent with the character of God. So faith, having refused to be controlled by circumstance, reminds itself of what it believes and what it knows.

What do you know? I don't know what the obedience of faith is requiring of you right now. But I know it's requiring something. The fig tree may not be in blossom.

Fruit may not be on the vine. Promises may not be seen. What's the hardest thing with parenting? Trusting God for the promises.

[41 : 36] Oh, Lord, I want to train them up. You promised, Lord, I pray, accompany your promise that when they're old they will not depart. The marriage may be hard.

Still hard. After counseling and so many things. Hopes may still be deferred. What happens to hope deferred? Hope deferred makes the heart sick. The job may be so frustrating.

The pain may still be there. But you have to cling to it by faith. It's the word of God.

The wonder of Abraham is not that he clung so hard that he got what he wanted. But that God kept him to persevere and cling to what God said.

The promise of God depends on faith that leaves everything to follow. So who are you? Where are you from?

[42 : 43] Where are you going? What are you all about? What are you after? What do you want?

Reminded of a story about Albert Einstein, the great physicist that was circling social media a couple years ago. Einstein was once traveling from Princeton on a train when the conductor came down the aisle punching tickets for every passenger.

Now Albert Einstein is an unforgettable, his hair and everything, but he's punching tickets. When he came to Einstein, Einstein reached in his vest pocket and he couldn't find his ticket.

He checked his pants. He couldn't find his ticket. Couldn't find it anywhere. He looked in his briefcase. Couldn't find it. He looked in the seat beside him. Still couldn't find it. The conductor said, Dr. Einstein, I know who you are.

We all know who you are. I'm sure you bought a ticket. Don't worry about it. Einstein nodded appreciatively, but the conductor continued down the aisle punching tickets, and as he was ready to move on to the next car, he turned around and saw the great physicist still searching for his ticket.

[43 : 59] Conductor rushed back and said, Dr. Einstein, Dr. Einstein, do not worry. I know who you are. No problem. You don't need a ticket. I'm sure you bought one. Einstein looked at him. Young man, I too know who I am.

What I don't know is where I'm going. Do you know where you're going?

They said Abraham went out, not knowing where he's going because he was looking for a better city. Where are you going? Have you taken Christ by faith?

That's what I want to invite you to do, to receive Christ by faith. Up against the impossibility of this promise, she invites you to come to Christ.

The word of God says, if you believe in Jesus Christ, you will be saved. Calls you to trust in him. Calls you to place your faith in him.

[45 : 09] That you will be justified by faith. You'll be a child of Abraham, not because of your birth or your background or what you used to do growing up, but because you've trusted in him by faith.

And this is a promise for all who are far off. So I invite you to come to Jesus Christ by faith so that you too might know where you're going. The promise of God depends on faith that leaves everything to follow.

Let us pray. Father in heaven, we cast ourselves on you. We hide in you. Lord, we want to play it straight.

We don't want to play the charade. Lord, we want to know you truly. We want our life to be marked by sincere faith.

Lord, come. We know faith is a gift. We know faith comes by hearing hearing of the word and the word of Christ. We pray that you produce a faith that is unshakable, that's rooted on the finished work of Jesus Christ this morning for your glory and for your praise.

[46 : 28] We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. You've been listening to a message given by Walt Alexander, lead pastor of Trinity Grace Church in Athens, Tennessee.

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