

Obey Without Delay

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[0 : 0 0] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. It is our prayer that you will be blessed by the preaching of God's Word. Please join me in Genesis chapter number 16 as we continue in the book of Genesis tonight.

Genesis 16, as we continue to look at the life of Abraham and the example that is given to us. As we said, Jesus walking on the road with the disciples said, He explained to them how the Old Testament was about Him.

And they also said, we're told in 1 Corinthians, that the Old Testament is an example. So on Thursday night we looked at the story of how Abraham and Sarah were in a moment of doubt. They made a poor decision because they lost sight of the promise.

They just wanted the product. They wanted a kid now. And now we're going to look at how the torch of the New Testament goes through the caves of the Old Testament and shines light on something that seems meaningless.

It has real significance when we can see it there. How many of you would say, when I count to five, raise your hand if you would say that you're an impatient person. One, two, three, four, and five.

[1 : 0 1] All right. Let's see. Most of you had your hands up before we even got the five. We're impatient people. Before, I was reading to my wife earlier in the day. And it wasn't in the morning message when I was making fun of my mother-in-law.

It was another time. And I was saying to her, I called her and I was in a panic. And I said, dear, you've got to come. Where are you at? I went to the garage to find some car seats because I thought I was going to be late for the volunteers meeting.

And I called her and I said, dear, you've got to come. I've got to be at the church at 4.30. And she said, 4.30? You didn't tell me that you had a meeting at 4.30? I said, what do you mean? I always have a meeting at 4.30.

She said, I've got to be at the 4.30 volunteers meeting. Then I realized, that doesn't sound right. It's the 5.20 volunteers meeting. And I had plenty of time. And I was like, I hung up on her.

I was like, oh, excuse me, and hung up on her. And then I called back and I told her I was sorry because I was just so worried about being late. And I was impatient. So 13 years had passed and Ishmael was born and there's still not Isaac.

[2 : 0 0] You know, that creates some impatience. God's made a promise. We said you can't rock a promise to sleep. You can't take pictures of a promise. Your promise can't go and have all these things happen. And so they only have the promise.

They want to find their identity in something. In the child. They want to see this promise start to happen. And so they're becoming impatient. And their impatience has created some problems for them.

And so the point that I was making last time. I believe that the text was making. Was the fact that sometimes obedience to God just looks like a normal everyday life.

Because that day that Abraham and Sarah woke up. And Sarah suggested, why don't you go in there and lay with Hagar. If she wouldn't have said that, that day would have looked pretty normal. So sometimes it takes great boldness.

And it's very risky just to be obediently doing what God's told you to do in life. And so we saw that. That's the example there. And we saw that our God was faithful.

[2 : 56] In verses 7 through 10 and 16. They sent Hagar out of the camp. Abraham told Sarah, do unto Hagar whatever you want. And I'm sure she had a mischievous grin on her face.

And Hagar knew it wasn't going to turn out good for her. She's like, I want you out of here. I want you gone. Your stuff packed. Get out of here. And you would think because she's such a small part of this story. The promises about her.

That we wouldn't find out what happened. But it said that the angel of the Lord. That God came to her and said, I'm going to take care of you. I'm going to take care of Ishmael. And we're reminded that no matter how insignificant our lives seem in the grand story.

That God sees us. And even Hagar says that. This is a God that sees. Ishmael will be called that God has seen my affliction. Goes back to Abraham. And Abraham calls the son Ishmael.

Which is to say that he recognized that God really did meet with him. And they're reminded in the story. Even though it's been 13 years. And it's just been normal everyday life. God didn't forget about the promise.

[3 : 54] And God still sees what's going on there. And they were not being marginalized. But God had a plan for them. And this tells us that no one's obedience to God. Is any more important than your obedience to him.

And any big deal. Any small decision. Any big decision. By anybody other than you. Your decision to be obedient to God. Can yield glory for his name. Which means that every decision is a big deal.

And as parents we know that about our kids. Right? That every decision they make. Because it's so important. Because it represents their understanding of authority. Everything's about principle. It may seem like a small thing. Dad why is this such a big deal?

Well it's a real big deal. Because it shows your relationship to me. And the authority structure. And that's the same for us as children of God. Every decision is a big deal. Because it can yield glory to his name.

Or sin is going to cause us trouble. And Abraham recognizes that God is in the story here. And that God is going to be faithful to them. They begin to play the blame game. As you would see in Adam and Eve.

[4 : 52] Sarah's blaming Abraham. And Abraham's kind of complacent. Hagar's bitter in the story. But God is faithful. You familiar with the story in Joshua chapter number 9.

When God's people, children, Israel went into the covenant with the Gibeonites. They made a covenant with this group of people. And they didn't really ask them where they were from. And they just made a promise to them. And they're like, oh I didn't realize who you were.

And then they were like, well it doesn't count. Because we didn't know who you were. But then even 400 years later. When Saul attempted to persecute the Gibeonites. God remembered. And he sent a plague against Israel.

Because of the persecution of the Gibeonites. And even though God's people failed to live up to the covenant. God is always faithful in the story. We're not always faithful. But he is.

So we see a God who will. So in chapter number 17. Where we're at tonight. He is called. It says here in verses number 1. And when Abraham was 90 years old. And the Lord appeared unto Abraham.

[5 : 48] And said to him. I am the almighty God. Walk before me. And before thou perfect. He is El Shaddai. The first time we see here. The almighty God. And he is a God.

It will be said of the I will. In the next few verses. Verses 6 through 8. We see that he says. Let me read that. It says. I will make thee exceedingly fruitful. I will make nations of thee. And kings shall come out of thee.

I will establish my covenant between me. Thee and thy seed after thee. And their generations. For an everlasting covenant. To be a God unto thee. And to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee.

And to thy seed after thee. The land wherein thou art a stranger. All the land of Canaan. For an everlasting possession. I will be their God. And it said in those verses there.

I will. I will. Make you exceedingly fruitful. I will make a nation of thee. And so God is making it real clear to them. That I am going to be faithful to you. In this covenant. I will be faithful.

[6 : 43] And we see God here in the story. Then in verse number 20. Of 17. It says. And if through Ishmael. I have heard thee. Behold I have blessed him. And I will make him fruitful. And I will multiply him exceedingly. Twelve princes shall he beget.

And I will make of him. A great nation. And so the wording here. Sounds similar to the blessing. That was given in Jesus 12. He is going to be a great nation. Who have twelve sons. Similar to the twelve tribes of Israel.

But that promise doesn't include the land of Canaan. And that he will be a blessing. To the other nations. That he is going to be faithful to Abraham. But he is also going to be faithful to Hagar.

Because he cares for him. But the promise isn't going to go there. That this thing done in the flesh. That Abraham and Sarah did. Even though God is going to help provide for them. It is not going to carry the promise.

That God's plan did not change. That man didn't interrupt it. And God says. Well let's just run with this idea. It is a few years ahead of Isaac. Let's get this story on the road. He doesn't change his plan there.

[7 : 39] But he does remain faithful. The Abraham. Despite Abraham not being faithful. And so we see that the meaning of it. In the New Testament here. We saw that Ishmael would be a wild man.

But God would find something. So as I said. When we read the Old Testament. We explore. We find meaning for it. Here in the New Testament. Abraham. The promise was going to be fulfilled. In such a more amazing way.

Isn't it something that God doesn't think. Or Abraham doesn't think. That God can provide a child. Because of their old age. But he doesn't even realize. Or maybe he doesn't even realize.

The fact. How big a deal it is. That eventually. God will be born in flesh. Through his line. That's a much bigger deal. You don't believe that I can give you a child. At your age. Well can you believe the fact.

That God is going to be born in flesh. Through your line. And that's a much bigger deal. And we're told in Galatians chapter number 4. Verses 21 through 31.

[8 : 34] In verse number 24. It says. Which things are an allegory. As you can imagine. I have problems with English. I have problems with English sometimes. And I think. Is this a metaphor? Is this a simile?

And I couldn't remember. Exactly what this story was. I mean I was reading here in Galatians. And it said. These things are an allegory. I'm like. Oh there it is. Alright. And so apparently. The story in the Old Testament. Is an allegory.

For something. But we'll start in verse 22. For it is written. That Abraham had two sons. The one by a bondman. The other by a free woman. And he who was of the bondwoman. Was born after the flesh.

But he of the free woman. Was by promise. Which things are an allegory. For these are the two covenants. The one from Mount Sinai. Which gendereth the bondage. Which is of Agar. And this is Agar. And Mount Sinai.

And Arabium. And answereth to Jerusalem from now. And is in bondage with her children. Down verse 28. Now we brethren. As Isaac was. Are the children of promise. But as then.

[9 : 29] He was. That was born after flesh. Persecuted him. That was born after the spirit. Even so now. So it is now. Verse 31. So then brethren. We are not children of bondwomen.

But of free. So we are learning a lesson here. And the mess that they made. We get some meaning here. Given the New Testament. So through this allegory. We get a better understanding. Of the seed of Abraham.

As recalled. In the Bible. Agar was a slave. And the old covenant. Enslaved us. In Acts 15. 10. Now therefore. Why tempt ye God. To put a yoke upon the neck. Of the disciples.

Which neither our fathers. Nor you. Were able to bear. They are saying. Why do you want to. Why do you want these new people. That are becoming Christians. Why do you want them. To have to perform all the law.

And to be circumcised. Don't you realize. We couldn't perform it. Why do you want to put it on them. Why do you want to enslave. These people. Because we are children. Of promise. So in the New Testament.

[10 : 22] As we read this story. We realize. We are the. We are Isaac. In this story. That we are the people. Of promise. And that we are not people. That are made of the flesh. That in here. Your salvation. Was not made.

By your outward performance. Your scheming. And planning. But it was made. By faith. And him. Sarah was a free woman. And Christ made us free. In Galatians 5. 1.

Stand fast therefore. In liberty. Wherewith Christ has made us free. And be not entangled upon. With the yoke. Of bondage. You see. Ishmael was born of the flesh. And Isaac.

Of promise. Ishmael was born of flesh. And could not. And could not be controlled. He was a wild man. Likewise. The law appeals to the flesh. But cannot change us. And we cannot control it.

And Isaac was being born. Of the spirit. So we learn a lesson here. That God took this story. And he used it. For us to read it. And see it. And that we are not the children of flesh.

[11 : 16] But we are the children of promise. Through Abraham. As I've said before. When we get to heaven. There's not diverse stories. You don't ask people. How did you get here? We all know how you got there.

The same way. It was because we put our faith and trust. In Jesus. There's not going to be people sitting around. And Jesus being glorified. And then little thrones setting up. And saying. I fed 3,000.

And I built this. And another person glorying what they did. We all came. Because we were people that received the promise given to us. By faith. And so it's not of the flesh. But then also in the area of sanctification.

In our lives. So this passage seems to go very well. With where we were at in Romans. We're told that it's salvation by faith. But then we're told that he's given us victory.

But what should we do in claiming that victory? We should recognize it to be true. And then we should reckon it in our hearts. We should know it. We should reckon. And then we should yield to it. So God has told us here.

[12 : 13] He says. I will. I will. I will. I will. Five times. And he says. I've made a covenant with you. But even though he didn't demand anything of us for our salvation. Our salvation demands a great deal from us.

Doesn't it? Even though it's a free gift. And there's no requirements on it. Faith. It's given to us. But when we receive it. There's so many demands upon our lives. There's so many things that we want to do.

And we see that exemplified here. We saw a work before. Abraham was working to fulfill the promise. And he said. Don't work like that. And then even though he said. Don't work. Then he says.

Now I have something for you to do. And so there's a tension there. Isn't there? And so it isn't do nothing at all. It says. Do nothing to try to earn. And nothing in effort to try to earn your salvation.

But it says. There are some things that you should do in obedience. And we see that in Genesis 17. When he gives the command for circumcision. So we should be obedient. So as I said. Many of us wrestle.

[13 : 08] With this nature of an unconditional covenant. The question that is raised. Is that if the covenant depends upon God. Why are conditions placed upon Abraham? And the answer is simple. Although God promises that Abraham were unconditional.

Abraham's enjoyment of the blessings. Was conditional. In other words. Within God's unconditional promise. There's some demands given to us. After salvation. To be obedient to him.

And that obedient. Is a fruit of the fact. That we are truly his. So we see here. He says. You will. So we've been told. He said. I will. I will. I will. But in Genesis chapter number 17.

He says. You will. So he said. Abraham and Sarah. You're going to leave your home. And your extended family. And you're going to go to a new land. That's chapter 12. He says. You're going to be a blessing to others. He says.

You're going to walk away. And be blameless. Here in verse number 1. Then he tells them. In verse number 10. It says. And this is my covenant. Which you shall keep. Between me and you. And thy seed after thee. And every man child upon you.

[14 : 06] Shall be circumcised. So he says here. That circum. The circumcised. The men of the household. As a sign. Of the covenant. So what was the purpose. Here in the circumcision.

It says that it was a sign. Of the covenant. Between God. And his people. If you look in Romans chapter number 4. In verse number 11. And if you take notes. In your Bible. You ought to put it here. In this passage.

Romans 4. 11 tells us. It says. And ye received the sign. Of the circumcision. A seal of the righteousness. Of the faith. Which ye had yet. Being uncircumcised. So Abraham.

In the chapters before. We see that he is a man of faith. And that God. He is a child of God. And this happens before. The circumcision. So I want to make it very clear.

Because the Bible makes it very clear. That this circumcision. Did not make him. From the child of God. This circumcision. Was not his faith. But it was a sign. It was a seal.

[14 : 59] Very quickly. You can think of. In the New Testament age. We were giving something to do. As a demonstration. Of our obedience. Which is baptism. And you know. That that is not your salvation. But you know.

It is simply an outward showing. Of an inward reality. And that is what they were having. In the Old Testament. He said. I want this to be a sign. I want you to do this. To show something.

To show people. That you are holy. And distinct. From here. So here are some specifics. About it. Every male. Regardless of whether or not. They were the family. Or a servant. Anybody that was among Abraham.

At least eight days old. The babies had to be circumcised. Basically. There within the first week. It is a covenant in your flesh. A physical act of obedience. Not just verbal or mental. It is an everlasting covenant.

And the covenant was to be observed forever. The consequences not being circumcised. Result to them being cut off. From their people. So it is a strong thing. That they ask.

[15 : 53] He said. I will. I will. I will. And then he says. As a sign. Of your obedience. This is what I am telling you. That you should do. And they were obedient. And we are told.

To walk before him. And to be perfect. Verse 17. And verse 1. And when Abraham was 90 years old. And nine. The Lord appeared to Abraham. And said unto him. I am the almighty God.

Walk before me. And be thou perfect. And verses 23 through 27. It stresses this obedience. So in chapter number 16. We find that he is a faithful God.

We find that no matter what he tried to do. In the outward flesh. He couldn't make the promise happen. And then God reminded him very clearly. That you are not going to earn this thing. And Abraham was trying to earn it.

And so many Christians. Or so many people that would say they are Christians. Are going about trying to earn it. Right? In our community. Not just here. But around the world. So after we get through 16. He is now saying as a sign.

[16 : 50] Or as a seal. I am asking some things of you. And so that is where we are at in our Christian life. And that grace. As Paul said. He said I understand grace. But I worked harder than all of them.

So it shouldn't cause you to go to a recliner. And kick up your seat. And say. Well there is nothing for me to do. Because God has done everything. But because of our obedience to him. Or believing him by faith. It demands some things of our life.

Doesn't it? It gives us a desire to please him. And that is what they were doing here in the Old Testament. They were just simply showing. This outward reality. This outward expression of an inward reality.

And that is why we emphasize. In here inside the church. In the New Testament age. We are told. As they were told in the Old Testament. We are told now. That an expression of our faith. Is a believer's baptism.

That you should be baptized. And so people desire to be obedient. So could a person. Obviously can a person go to heaven. And not be baptized. Of course. Because their salvation is not based on it.

[17 : 46] But can a person go to heaven. That has no desire to be obedient to God. Of course not. Because it is a reflection. Of the desire to please him. The one is the now. The Lord of our lives.

And there is so many things that we now do. In our Christian lives. That is simply signs of obedience. To him. Once you see three points real quickly. In the fact that biblical obedience.

Is complete. Abraham circumcised every male. In his household. The words all and every. Are used four times. In verse number 23. In verse number 27.

So when he told him to do something. He did it complete. Those of you that study your Bible. You understand how God feels about partial obedience. It is not obedience at all. Right? When he says. Kill.

Go into the land. And kill all the people. And the livestock. And they say. Why don't we just keep a few as an offering. He says. That is disobedience. And so we find here. In the obedience of Abraham. That he was completely obedient.

[18 : 41] God said. Circumcise them all. So he circumcised them all. Second. We find that biblical obedience. Can be risky. At times. Circumcision is quite painful. And disabling.

In Genesis chapter number 34. We find that it renders his family. Defenseless. They can't do anything. If an enemy was to come. They couldn't protect themselves. Because now they're just there. Waiting.

He trusted God to protect. And provide. For his family. In order to be true to what I read. In the scripture. I have to take risk. Sometimes our obedience. It feels risky.

Doesn't it? A wonderful example. We were given. The other day. In our connect class. Adult Bible fellowship. Philip was teaching. Before he went to Thailand. And I was so encouraged. By it.

Many of you might remember it. But he was talking about. How him and Laura just got married. And they were on deputation. And they were at a point. And Philip had a system in place. Where he would give. To the church.

[19 : 35] Of what had. God had blessed him with. And he came to his normal point. In his system. Where he got an email. You know. Philip. Everything happens. Through a phone. I'm surprised him and Laura. Didn't get engaged.

Through their cell phones. They're so techno savvy. But he gets this email. And he knows that some money. Had come in. Through some work. That he had done. Before he started deputation. And he got to a point. And he said. Well I need to give.

But I don't know. If it's the best thing I should do. Maybe I should wait. Until I get home. And he said. You know what. If I'm going to go to Thailand. And I'm going to trust God. I'm going to be obedient to him. Then why not do it right now.

And just trust God. And he went through his normal system. And he gave. And he talked about those few days. Where he just had very little money. And he didn't have much gas. He didn't know what was going to happen. And he came to the church.

And somebody didn't even know about it. They bought him some gas. And all that happened. But he just talked about realizing. At that point. That he was going to have to make a lot of decisions. Over the next couple of years. To be obedient.

[20 : 30] So he might as well do it right now. As he said last time. We don't mind being in control. As long as him being in control. Doesn't interfere with our desires. And it isn't risky.

When Abraham did this. It was risky. It wasn't like he was in a controlled environment. And he could say time out. You know. Somebody comes in to attack all of them. He can't say no time out. We're doing something right now.

Don't bother us. But it put them in a very vulnerable state. And sometimes obedience. Can be a very risky thing. So not only is it complete. But it's risky. And then I want you to see here.

In verses 23. And verse 26. And Abraham took Ishmael's son. And all that were born in his house. And they that brought with his money. Every male among the men of Abraham's house. And circumcised the flesh to their own foreskin.

And the self same day. As God had said unto him. Verse 26. It says it again. And that self same day. Was Abraham circumcised. In Ishmael his son.

[21 : 25] So that two terms were used twice in a row. Was that self same day. Abraham was obedient immediately here. In that self same day. Abraham did not say.

Alright God. I hear you. I know what you want. I'll do it tomorrow. I'll do it next month. When I have a little more leisure time. I'll do it after I do something else. I want. Abraham knew that the time to obey God.

Was now. I'm sure you parents have some kind of way of telling your kids that. That slow obedience is no obedience at all. And Abraham knew that. He knew that God had given him something to do.

It didn't make complete sense to him. It put him at a vulnerable state. But he wanted to be obedient. And this was an Abraham now that had got to a point. And God had brought to him a point. Where he wasn't acting.

Earning a salvation. But it was just a reflection of what God had done in his life. And so I just challenge you in here. That we should be very active about the ministry God has given us.

[22 : 21] People that aren't working for a salvation. Ought to be the busiest people in all of the world. Because our lives are freed up. As I said before. When I look at my to-do list for the week. I never look and say.

Earn your salvation. You know. Wouldn't that be a horrible thing. If you wake up tomorrow and say. Well I'm going to work. I'm doing this. But one of the big things I got to do. Is I got to earn my salvation. But we don't have that anymore.

And so we get to live our lives. Just saying. God you tell me what you want. And I want to be obedient. Because I love you. And we have these outward expressions. Of inward realities. He made it real clear to Abraham.

He said. I have something I want you to do. And Abraham said. Yes God. I'll do it right now. In the New Testament. We're told that in baptism. But we're told it in so many other things. I don't know where it is in your life.

Maybe it is baptism. Maybe you say. I need to be obedient. And baptism. Because I know it's clear in the Bible. That's taught. As in something that a believer should do. But there could be a million different things. In your life.

[23 : 17] That you've been wrestling back and forth with. And can you remember. What you know to be true about God. From Romans this morning. And Genesis. He's faithful to us. And that he is going to take care of you.

He's going to provide. He's going to lead you. Into what is best for you. So your obedience may seem risky. Or it may seem. Or it may be your obedience. Seems like just a normal day. But you're getting tired.

And you're in a moment of doubt. And we should continue to trust him. And we have that example. That as we see here. We aren't children of the flesh. We don't go about living our Christian life.

As fleshly people. But we simply trust him. To do what he did at salvation. He'll be faithful to complete. In our area of sanctification. Let's pray. Heavenly Father. I thank you for the example of Abraham given.

And Lord. We see obedience being complete Lord. We see it being risky. And we see it being immediate. I pray that you'll work in the heart of believers tonight. And if they have an area of obedience Lord.

[24 : 12] And that tonight. That they will do it. As just an expression of their love for you. As people not working for our salvation Lord. That you made a covenant with us Lord. You are faithful to us.

I pray that we will now show you. Our love through our obedience to you. I don't know what's going on in the hearts of people Lord. But we do. And I pray that you'll have your will and way.

And their hearts. This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. For more information. Log on to www.visionbaptist.com Where you can find our service times.

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