

# Abraham Loses Sight

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. It is our prayer that you'll be blessed by the preaching of God's Word. Genesis chapter number 20, as we're going through the book of Genesis together as a church.

You know, it's so easy at times to recognize He's the God over the flood, but then other times it seems like it can just start raining a little bit and we panic. And I'm thankful that those kind of stories are recorded in the book of, in the Bible for us.

I was speaking with Jake Talby, a missionary of China, and I said, man, the Bible would be so much quicker if everybody was obedient. You know, all these stories would go by just real quickly. The story of Abraham would go real quickly. All the stories would.

He said it would be quick, but it would be really discouraging for me and for you. And so I'm thankful that the Bible takes time to record stories like Genesis chapter number 20.

We look at Romans 6 on Sunday morning and the verses are so deep in doctrine and you just can't hardly go just a few words and then you just have to stop and study. And in the same inspired word, we get a whole story in Genesis chapter number 20 where there's a repeated failure that Abraham had already had before.

[ 1 : 0 2 ] And just because it takes a whole chapter to tell the story doesn't mean that it's any less important. And I'm reminded of the fact that he's going to use reputation and tell another incident where Abraham messes up.

It encourages me to look at some areas of my life. And we know that the Bible is not a book of superheroes. It's a book of one hero and we find that again and again in Jesus alone.

So Abraham, he's going to move in the Philistine area here. We're not told exactly why after Sodom and Gomorrah, why he leaves, but we could see that he just wants to keep moving. And just kind of give you an illustration, moving in the Philistine area would be like moving into Turkey or maybe Iran and having your Jesus bumper sticker on your car or anything like that, walking through town.

He's going into an area that is not a friend of God. And in the old Western movies, it was always easy to tell. The good guy had the white hat and the bad guy had the black hat. And the guy in the white hat always won.

And they were predictable, but it was wholesome and good. And now today they try to convince you to cheer for the wrong guy, for the bad guy. And you don't, and there's no good guy oftentimes in a story.

[ 2 : 0 8 ] And I say that because in this story, Abraham seems to come into town wearing the black hat and he speaks to Bimelech wearing the white hat, which isn't really the case at all. But in this story, it seems so confusing here when Abraham makes a bad decision and an unrighteous man makes a moral decision.

So we must trust God even when it's hard because the only other option is disbelief, which is bad for the believer, bad for the unbelievers watching, and for God's global fame.

And we will find here that Abraham, he panics and he makes a poor decision based upon fear. Let me read a few verses to you in Genesis 20. Then I'll summarize the story to you and I'll pray.

And God spake all these words saying, I am the Lord thy God which has brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, that thou shalt have no other gods. That's Exodus 20. And some of you probably even knew that, right?

I was thinking, man, the Ten Commandments are about to show up in this story. And Abraham journeyed. Thank you, Abraham. I need you with me in this story. Journey from Vim's towards South Country, and dwell toward Akadis and Shurim and Sojourn and Gerar.

[ 3 : 13 ] And Abraham said unto Sarah his wife, She is my sister. And Abimelech the king of Gerar sent and took Sarah. And God came to Abimelech in a dream by night and said unto him, Behold, thou art but a dead man, and for the woman which thou hast taken, for she is a man's wife.

Second time, Abraham makes this mistake. He tells her the tale of what would be called a half-truth, which we know to be a complete line. And he tells her, When we go into the city, this is a favor I ask of you.

I don't imagine Jacob and Heather had a conversation like this. If we go into the town and nobody knows me, let's pretend that you're my sister. And so here she is, old and age, but he may be by fear of being hurt.

He says, When we go into a place that they know you're my wife, you're so beautiful, they may kill me to take you, so I'm just going to give you over. And that's a great idea, right? So they don't take you by force. I will volunteer you over to them.

And then he makes that mistake. And then God came to Bimelech in a dream by night and said, Hey, you're a dead man. This woman that you have and the harem that you have, they'll take you in. She's a married woman.

[ 4 : 14 ] And if you touch her, then you're dead. And nobody in the house could conceive until this right was made, this wrong was made right. Heavenly Father, I pray that you'll help us, Lord, as we look at the life of Abraham, and we'll look at, Lord, the application, the parallels in our life, Lord, and we'll leave here encouraged, Lord, that we are great examples of justification by faith.

Lord, we will also learn that even though we live by sight many times and not by faith, that we can take our eyes and put it back on faith and walk. And also, Lord, we are encouraged that the intercession and the prayer of righteous people availeth much.

And I thank you of reminding us these truths here in the moment, and a failure in Abraham's life. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen. First thing I'd like for you to look at here is though, even though Abraham panicked in the situation, he's a great example to us of justification by faith.

We read that in the New Testament, that we see that he saves us by faith. But could you imagine if we read a whole book of people in the Old Testament, all they lived was perfect lives and they never faltered. It'd be discouraging to us.

And also, it'd make us wonder what we're learning here. But here in this story, Abraham's an example of one justified by faith. And so we see moral versus righteous. See, Abimelech appears to be the better man in his story.

[ 5 : 28 ] He obeys God immediately when he's told what to do to preserve his life. The fear of this unbeliever is somebody who he honored what God told him to do. Abimelech said, I have integrity of heart.

Didn't mean he was a righteous man, but he said, according to this, I haven't done anything wrong. And God says, you're right, you haven't. You haven't done anything wrong, and I wouldn't allow you to do anything wrong.

And can I tell you in here, many of you may be just like me. Many of the unwrongs that you didn't, the wrongs you didn't do in life was simply God's grace in our life. He said, Abimelech, don't get too proud that you didn't do wrong.

I kept you from doing wrong. Can I tell you, some of us in here often get a haughty in spirit, and we hear somebody of another testimony. And can I tell you, with the lust that was in our heart, during our teenage and college years, we might have made some of the same decisions that they would have made, if put in the same area of temptation.

And we got to be reminded of that here in Abimelech. And we met people, and so Abimelech here is a person that fears what God has. And you may have met people like this before. They don't have a reverence, a love for God, but they have this fear of God.

[ 6 : 33 ] They fear the big man upstairs. It's kind of like he's border patrol, and they're hoping that he's sleeping when they die, and somehow they can slip into heaven, or that he's having a good day.

And so he has a fear of preserving his life. You know, if I ask, if you two, Ed, if you two will stand up here, and I ask these two guys to stand up, and I say, Daniel and Alex, all right, face off each other.

Daniel, stand by Alex. Y'all two stand beside each other. Man, no. All right, Daniel, stand by Alex facing these two. You two are on a team. You two are on a team. And I tell you tonight, that only two of you are going to get out of here.

Only one team's going to get out. It's a fight to the death. I didn't really have much of a sermon. This should help things. All right? All right? So it's a fight to the death, and this team's going to leave either together, or this team's going to leave, but there's not one of each.

They're going to fight. And don't you think Alex is going to fight for Daniel in a way that he wouldn't fight any other way? Just because he's willing to kill these two guys does not mean that he really loves and cares for Daniel.

[ 7 : 37 ] He's preserving himself. You guys can sit down. Abimelech did not have a love and a reverence for God. He just had a love for himself and a preservation. So he said, God, if you want me to not do this, that's fine because I really love myself, and if that's what you want me to do, I'm on board with that.

And that's where morality springs oftentimes in lives. God, here he has kept swimming. So Abimelech is living off of his conscience. In Genesis, we're told that we're made in the image and likeness of God.

Romans 2 tells us that we have a conscience excusing or accusing. Old cartoons tell us it's Jiminy Cricket in the back there telling us, let your conscience be your guide. And the conscience is so many people's guides.

And it seems to make a righteousness, but it's just simply a morality. Abimelech does not go to heaven based upon this decision he made, and Abraham does not go to hell based upon this poor decision he made because Abraham is righteous.

And so Abraham's a great example of justification by faith. Because when you look at this story, you're like, let Abimelech go and not Abraham. Can I tell you who's another great example of justification by faith?

[ 8 : 43 ] I'm staring at it, and you're staring at it as well. It's like, God saved me by faith and not because I was a good guy. And morality can be taught. The generation I'm growing up in, they say, well, if we're going to go to Sunday school and they're just going to teach me morality, then I can do that at the baseball park.

I said this a couple years ago when Luke was playing at the baseball field. It did not, it wasn't what I remembered of a baseball coach telling. And they weren't talking necessarily about grounding the ball or all that, and I'm sure some coaches were.

But this coach sounded like Oprah, okay? He sounded like he was preaching. They were talking about living for higher values, and they were talking about all these moral things, which is appreciated. But, you know, if we teach just morality here, the baseball team can replace us, and there's no reason that they can't have church on the baseball field on Sunday.

But we don't teach morality. We teach that we have an inheritance. We teach a sanctification. We teach that the Holy Spirit is doing something in our lives that we could not do for ourselves.

And so here we see a morality versus righteousness in these men. Abraham appears to be the carnal man. And we learn and we're reminded that believers do sin. Noah gets drunk.

[ 9 : 52 ] Moses loses his temper. David commits adultery. Peter denied the Lord. And Barnabas and Galatians 2, he's caught up in false doctrine. This should be a warning to all of us. Wherefore, let him that thinketh that he standeth, take heed lest he fall.

And that's in 1 Corinthians 10, 12. God still claims him as his own. And God here in Genesis chapter number 20, he not only says he's my own, but he says Abraham is a prophet.

We praise the Lord for that. In the midst of all of this, God does not deny him and say, Abimelech, I don't know who this guy is. I've never met Abraham. He says, this is not only my own, but he calls him a prophet.

The first time that a prophet here is mentioned. Then we also see a chastisement versus condemnation. Righteousness versus morality, then a chastisement versus condemnation. Abraham had the power to overcome, but he did not.

We saw that in Romans 6, Galatians 5, 16. Then I say, walk in the spirit and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. Abraham had full power to overcome this temptation, but he yielded a member.

[ 10 : 53 ] He yielded his mind over to the temptation. And we know that he yielded his mind over to it because this is a premeditated sin. We're telling the book of James that lust when it's conceived, it brings forth sin, and sin when it brings forth death.

I remember that was called the LSD verse when I was growing up. The pastor would always say that. LSD, lust, sin, and death. And so there it was, Abraham. He had lust in his heart, or he had this desire in his heart to preserve himself.

He made the plan with his life. He had an opportunity. Sin was conceived. And because of that, death will always come. And so Abraham kept together, a home that is kept together by a lie is a home that is in bad shape.

And so these two, Abraham and Sarah, they were bound together here in this lie. And we know that God looks upon the heart and not upon the words. That's why the fact that she is his sister, it might have held up in the court of law, but it wouldn't hold up in God's court.

Because God says, you can make all the pretty words you want, but I know what's in your heart right now. I know what you're doing, and you're preferring yourself over your wife. And Abraham, this is a sin.

[ 12 : 03 ] How many times have we twisted the truth in our marriage to reach a desire we both have? Can I say it in here humbly to you? As we covet as a couple, we premeditate decisions that we'll make financially.

Men, when we think about our wife in any way that says she's anything but God's best for us, we are premeditating an adulterous fall. Women, when you look to anything for emotional comfort and excitement and joy other than your God and your husband, then you're premeditating an emotional divorce, that you're making provision there.

And so we find here a premeditated sin, sin in the first degree by Abraham and Sarah, saying, when this occasion comes, we're going to do that. And through this, God takes care of the matter of the heart.

And Abraham makes the mistake here for the last time recorded. This sin is a symptom of a greater problem, which is disbelief. Sin should break our hearts. If you read Psalm 51, and you see how David feels about that, also you look again, I believe in Psalms 37, you see how it affects him spiritually and also how it affects him physically.

That's how we should feel about our sin. Abraham is carrying this in his heart. He's carrying this premeditated sin and now the opportunity for it to come. College guys, teenagers that are in here, can I tell you that as Bible believers, we ought to go to God and we ought to say, God, search our heart.

[ 13 : 22 ] And that was the prayer of David. Parents, that ought to be our prayer with our kids to say, I'm not going to wait for you to mess up and just correct your actions. I want to pray with you and say, God, search my heart.

What's in there? Because any decision made of stealing was first made in the heart when they coveted. And all these mistakes are made. A man falls into adultery because he's not satisfied with what God has for him.

And that's why this is a matter of the heart. We ought to read the word and ask God to search it. But Hebrews 12 tells us that, for whom the Lord lovetheth, he chastened us and scourged us every son whom he receiveth.

Verse 10, for they verily for a few days chastened us for their own pleasure. But he, for our prophet, that we may be partakers of his holiness. Here, Abraham was chastised because God loved him and wanted him to be a partaker of his holiness.

But Abimelech here, he was going to be condemned. He was a dead man. Because we're named righteous, our sin brings a chastisement. But because these other people, they may be moral and they may be good.

[ 14 : 23 ] And if we take a snapshot of our community, they may even appear to be better than some saved people. But there's a condemnation still for their sin. We're told in Ephesians 2, they're still under a deconence.

Abraham is an example of someone not only that lives by, but he's an example of justification by faith. How many of you in here are a great example of justification by faith?

Can I see your hands? And you know what? It would be okay to let your co-worker know that about you. It would be okay for them to know that it's only by God's grace and not because I'm a good person that I will someday receive that inheritance.

And they ought to know that about you. And then just quickly here, Abraham is an example of somebody who walked by sight and not by faith. In the book of Hebrews, he's remembered by the opposite.

You don't find this story in the New Testament because God chose to remember that about him. But here in this moment, he did as Peter. Peter has his eyes upon Jesus. He looks at the circumstances.

[ 15 : 23 ] He's like, I'm not supposed to be walking on water. And then he does it. All right? And he begins to sink. And here's Abraham leaving Sodom and Gomorrah, walking by faith. And then he gets to a point and he's in a situation and he says, I just don't know if I continue, if I tell the truth, if God can take care of me.

And he begins to stop walking by faith and he begins to set things up on his own. Remember that story when Elijah goes up into heaven, the chariot comes through, then the tornado takes him up.

I know the flannel graphs taught you the other way around, but I believe that's how it goes. The chariot splits the two of them across. And then the sons of the prophets say, maybe he's up in the mountains. Isn't that crazy to you?

He's like, he said, maybe the tornado did not take him, the whirlwind, did not take him all the way to heaven. Maybe it dropped him off in the mountains and we should go see if he's up there. Isn't that a crazy form of disbelief?

Enough belief to know that he can do something, but not enough to really trust him. So can I remind you, it's important that we look at justification by faith because now in our lives we come to places in life and we just say, God, I don't trust you.

[16:30] Abraham did not, we don't find a prayer here where Abraham said, God, I know you've done big things and I saw you bring fire and brimstone down upon this city, but in this circumstance, I really think that you're going to be outwitted by these men and so let me begin to compromise and tell a half truth.

And so he took his eyes off of faith and he put it on what was right there in front of him and he's motivated by fear. He didn't see the potential, but he only saw the problems and he says that in verse number 16, he says, when he gives his excuses unto Sarah, he said, behold, here in the verse it says, the 11, I'm sorry, Abraham said, because I thought, surely the fear of God is not in this place and they will slay me for my wife's sake.

You can circle right there and I thought and then take it to his action and we know why he did that to his wife is because he thought when he went into this town, this is a God forsaken town.

God can't work here. God's not going to do anything and he didn't see the potential of it. Brother Jeff told me a story earlier how family had got to the mission field. It was their dream and they had raised the support and their church was behind them and when they got there, they immediately left because they wrote back and they said, this place is way more wicked than I thought and I can't raise my young people here and my teenagers.

I'm not making light of the fact they wanted to protect their family but I wondered what they thought they were going to find on the mission field and I wonder what you think you would find if you really had a conversation with people in this community but can I tell you regardless of the circumstance we're in, regardless of where we're at that God is able to work and Abraham said, I thought something that I wasn't supposed to and he was motivated by fear.

[18:10] I could give a thousand examples of this and I pray that the Holy Spirit would lay that on your heart. Do you find yourself motivated by fear and our financial decisions we make and decisions about things we want to do launch out sharing the gospel?

There's a million times during the day that the Holy Spirit nudges and we feel like we ought to do something and fear wants to keep us there. When we were in Kenya this alarm went off because a dog got into the electric fence and he made the most horrible noise I'd ever heard in my life and John's a hero so he took off to help I think, I don't know, or to get coffee because that's normally what he does and so he left the room and Miss Phyllis took off and she was there but you know what I did?

I became a statue. I mean I just froze. I'm thinking there's nothing that I can do that will be better than what they do and I explained to them that's why Cornwall's have made it through many wars.

We're not, see we're not heroes but we've made it through all of them because in a bad situation we just freeze. Alright? And you should try it so that we don't lay down. I mean come on.

But we just freeze there in fear. Abraham froze in his walking by faith. He froze and he lived by sight. Man, how this story would have been different if he would have walked in there and said hey guess what?

[ 19 : 29 ] I'm a prophet. I'm God's child. I don't know how this thing's about to turn out but I don't think you're going to touch me because God said in a year from now there's a child promised to me and he's made wonderful promises to me and so let's just see what happens now in the Bible if I trust them.

And can I tell you I don't know what it's going to look like in our lives but if we would not live by fear and we'd live by faith the story would look so much different. Not only would it encourage you it would encourage me it would encourage this unbelieving community.

Can I tell you what that picture did for me up there Mark Tolson? It provoked me the good works because he had to overcome a lot of fear to get there and I dare say that lady probably had to overcome a lot of fear to sit down and sit with that man and that's an action photo you don't know it they're just sitting there but there's so much that happened for that but people overcame fear and they lived by faith and that God did something.

Brother Philip told us for himself that we all think about being faithful but the best way to think about it is living a life full of faith. Being faithful sounds boring it seems like something we kind of needle on a pillow right?

Be faithful. But living a life full of faith really expresses to us what we should do. And so can I challenge you every opportunity tomorrow when fear comes up know you have another option.

[ 20 : 45 ] Know that in the moment of it God still sees you as a son here he said Abraham was a prophet and who knows what might happen if you bust through that door in faith. If you take one more step in faith.

If you let that co-worker reject you one more time. If you make that decision that may seem illogical to others but you know in your heart that it's something God would want you to do and I can't apply it to you but I pray that the Holy Spirit will.

And then closing we see that Abraham was a man of intercession. I don't know why God chose to work like that. His womb had been closed but when he prayed for Abimelech all of it opened there. And in the midst of all this God listened to Abraham's prayer.

He was in as they say in Kenya Manzungu or something like that a wandering white man. Meaning so here's Abraham he just wanders up and Abimelech which is a title he's the ruler and Abraham's just the wanderer but who does God listen to in that story?

He listens to them and I don't care where you came from if you're a child of God he will listen to you. If our president's not a believer he'll listen to you over the president. If the king is not the president if he's not the president okay I'm getting my politics mixed up if the king's not a believer your prayer will be heard and Abimelech's will not.

[ 21 : 56 ] So that right there is a case enough for us to be in prayer simply because we can. Why else? Who's going to pray for the Tavi family? We are because people can hear God hears us and in all this story and Abraham's lack of faith God says I hear you and I'm going to answer your prayer because I want to show Abimelech that God's man is heard and he does something there.

This week don't let fear cripple you. Tomorrow don't let fear cripple you. Keep walking by faith and just trust him. We don't know what the next page is going to look like. Can I tell you though the story brings glory to God.

It's good for you. It's good for believers. It's good for our community. It's good for everybody. Heavenly Father I thank you so much for your word Lord. I pray tonight Lord that people will make decisions Lord to live lives of faith Lord and not to live lives of fear.

and I pray that you'll challenge every heart in here Lord maybe specifically Lord I don't know the life stories but you know exactly what's going on in their lives.

Help us be out there and show people how we're an example of justification by faith and that it's only because of your goodness and that we have failed you many times but we trust in you because you are faithful to us and let us never abandon the wonderfulness of intercession.

[ 23 : 11 ] We should speak to you Lord because we can Lord I want to speak to you more simply because you reminded me that I can. This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. For more information log on to [www.visionbaptist.com](http://www.visionbaptist.com) where you can find our service times location contact information and more audio and video recordings.

Thank you.