

# Romans 14:19-23

Sunday 5/30/2010

Applying what the Bible says to your life will solve your problems, and that is what we try to do here. I have broken down the book of Romans for our folks, just like we do every other book in the Bible, showing them a natural outline that is easy to follow and study. I have showed them how every section in Romans has had a different emphasis and how it applies to different aspects of our Christian life. Some of the great doctrinal teachings in the Bible that really everything else in the New Testament for your life and my life that we have to follow is founded in the book of Romans, and that is where we start.

We have been coming through those sections, and we got into chapter 14 a couple of months ago. I told you how chapter 14 deals with how we get along with each other and how we should get along with each other. Chapter 14 and chapter 15 are probably the two greatest chapters in all of the Bible that show you and I what the bottom line of Christianity is, and that is to help each other and to encourage each other. We have been talking about our relationship with each other, talking about the unity of the body and the ministry of reconciliation. We are to be able to solve problems as Christians instead of cause them. There should be nothing that two Christians cannot work out together. You have the Holy Spirit of God living inside you and all of the things that the Word of God and the principles. There should be nothing that two Christians cannot sit down and work out, but you know how that goes.

I have been talking about how out of chapter 14 it is teaching us to choose our battles. It is not about who is right or wrong. It is about God getting the honor and glory out of everything in our life, including the bad situations that we have to go through. You will remember the last three weeks right in the middle of this chapter we talked about the great doctrine of the judgment seat of Christ. I kind of took three weeks and laid that great doctrine out because everybody needs to understand if you are saved about the day that you and I are going to stand before the Lord and give an account of our liberty in Christ. Now we are going to today close chapter 14, and next week we will move into chapter 15, which is an incredible chapter unto itself.

I want to begin reading here in Romans chapter 14, verses 19 down through the end of the chapter, and then we will make some comments.

*Romans 14:19-23*

*Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.*

*For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence.*

*It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.*

*Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.*

*And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.*

Now Father, we thank You today, and we ask You to help us as we put this chapter together and lay out all of these great concepts that we need to see today. Thank You, Father, for those that have come. Thank You for this our church and for the Word of God that You have given us for the visitors that are here today. May their lives be blessed. We pray You will bless the rest of this day with all of the work that has to go in for such a good day tomorrow. Father, You will bless us tomorrow and give us a good day of fellowship around You and each other that we may affirm our love toward each other in the things that we do. We will thank You and praise You in Jesus' name for a sake we ask it. Amen.

## I. The Concept of Faith

Now you know in Romans 14 that he has been using the issue of somebody who is a vegetarian and thinks that they cannot eat meat because there is something spiritually wrong with eating meat versus somebody who understands that you can eat anything. The whole chapter has been built around a weaker Christian who does not understand that all things that God has cleaned that you can eat anything that you can thank God for versus someone who is a weaker Christian who does not understand that. The whole concept of this chapter is that if you and I are mature spiritually and we understand that we can eat anything that will not eat us first, so to speak, that we, because we have that liberty, we understand that if I see a younger Christian who does not have the grace or the faith to be able to do that, I am not to let that become a stumbling block for them. It really is the concept he uses food and he uses things that we do, but it is a much longer, larger concept than that as we have been talking about in Romans 14.

Today we come down to probably the single greatest concept about your life and my life. The single greatest concept in the context of this chapter not only pulls the whole chapter together but really sets down the number one thing in our life that we ought to have, and we are going to talk about the concept of faith today.

Now look at verse 19 and 20 and just follow along here as we move down. I want you to understand these verses because I know many of you are putting notes in your Bible here, and the context as you know now is Christians dealing with other Christians.

*Romans 14:19-20*

*Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.*

*For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence.*

I have told you that we are not to choose our battles. There are some things in churches that you have to take a stand on. There are some things in churches in the ministry that you have to, if it is a controversy, it needs to be dealt with. But many times, many times people get into the biggest messes over the littlest things that you are ever going to get into that really do not matter. This is

what this chapter is saying, and it is saying, "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace," because at the end of the day, the bottom line in ministry, as we all know, is reconciliation.

Verse 20 says, "For meat," something that you eat. Here again, going back to somebody understanding what they can eat and somebody else not wanting to eat it. "For meat, destroy not the work of God."

*Romans 14:21*

*It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.*

Just to sum this up, you remember that I gave you five things in this chapter that you should remember about anything that you and I do that kind of put this chapter in a context before we get to the last verses here that deal with faith. I told you this a couple of weeks ago.

- Five things you want to remember about your liberty in Christ, dealing with younger Christians and watching yourself as we talked about the Bible says, "Let not your good be evil spoken of," abstain from all appearances of evil.
- Five things that I gave you that you ought to ask yourself or at least consider yourself before you engage in them. Before you do something, you ought to consider what you do as its influence on younger Christians. Romans 14:7 Before we do something, we should make sure that it is not a good thing that is done in the wrong manner. Romans 14:12 Before you and I do something, and this is what we have talked about the last couple of weeks, we need to look at it in light of the judgment seat of Christ. Romans 14:10 Before we do something right or wrong, we need to make sure that it is not a stumbling block to a younger Christian. Romans 14:21 Whatsoever is not of faith is sin. Romans 14:23

Now it is in these last two verses that close out this chapter that I want to focus today.

*Romans 14:22*

*Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.*

It simply says this, it asks the question, "Hast thou faith?" Somebody says, "Well, yes, I do. I am a mature Christian. I have been around for a while. I know my Bible. I have a pretty good handle on life and things." Well, then he says, "Hast thou faith?" And he says, if you do, keep it between you and God. What he is saying is, do not condemn yourself with what you can do because you are a stronger Christian. What he is simply saying is there that if you have faith, not only in just eating what we are talking about here, but if you have faith to trust God for most of the things in life, or maybe all the things in life, that is a good thing. But allow that but between you and God. Do not take a weaker Christian and beat them over the head because maybe they are not where they are at spiritually.

We know in our church that, or I know, and many of you know that when somebody comes into this church, there are all kinds of spiritual levels. Some of you have been around for seven or

eight years now, and you have been through the Bible Institute, and you have really got a good handle on the Bible. Some of you have been around half that time or so, and you are beginning to put it all together. Some of you just came in the door in the last year, maybe the last couple of months, and you are putting it all together. We do not care where you are at. What we want to do is help you get where God wants you to be. But we cannot ever forget that because we may know the Bible and have a good handle on the Bible, we cannot ever forget that there are people around us all the time that may not understand the Bible like we do.

There is not a time that I do not preach on Sunday morning, and boy, this is certainly true on Thursday night, that I am not aware of my crowd as far as what I say and how I say it, that I do not cause some young Christian to say something that they may not grasp or understand. This is why years ago I came to the conclusion that if you are going to be a good pastor and you are going to really minister your people, your people have to have access to you. That is why I have had a standard policy all of my ministry that if you want to spend an hour a week, come over to my home, or an hour every other week, or once a month, or every other month, or once a year, on your birthday or Christmas and New Year's, I do not care. To come over and sit down and say, "You know, help me understand this. What does this mean?" Many of you do that, and I think that you see in an hour's time, you go through five or six things. You probably accomplished in an hour what would take you maybe six months to figure it out on your own just because you have that concentrated time. It is my job, our job here, to help you get to the point where you grow.

So he says, if you have faith, keep it to yourself. That is between you and God. Do not condemn yourself in something that you allow. In other words, do not use that liberty to help make another young Christian struggle.

*Romans 14:23*

*And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.*

Boy, I will tell you what, there is where you have to watch some of them words in the Bible. I have read people say, "Well, if you do not eat, if you do not do stuff by faith, you are damned, you are going to go to hell." That is not talking about the damnation of hell. That is talking about the damnation of going through life with a lot of problems in your life. Two kinds of damnation. There is a damnation of your flesh. That simply means that you just spend your whole life in problems and issues, and you are, you know, we say the phrase, you know, many times we get an unworkable situation. You are damned if you do, you are damned if you do not. That is the damnation of this world. Then of course, there is a damnation of eternal hell separated from God. That is not what they are talking about here.

What he is basically saying is this. Verse 22, he is saying if you are a strong Christian and have faith to do anything, that is okay. That is a good thing, but you will want to be careful. Verse 23 says if you are a weaker Christian and you cannot maybe have the faith that somebody else has, that is okay too. As long as you do not stay that way because everything in the Christian life, and this is what we are going to focus on today. Everything in the Christian life is built on the

concept of faith. Right now it might be all right for you not to have the faith because you are growing, but you cannot stay that way.

You would think it would be pretty weird if you went back and you have a little baby and it is back in a baby nursery back there. They are all crying around on the floor. You would think it is strange if you walked in there to get your child, looked over in a crib, and there was a guy that was 22 years old. He does not even fit in his crib. His legs are hanging over the end, and he has kind of got his head popped up, and he was sucking on a bottle and got a pacifier around his neck. Would you not think that is a little strange? We are like that in churches all the time because you cannot stay weak. He is saying take that younger Christian and allow them to be that way and do not hurt them. But at the same time, you have to understand, folks, that growing in faith and trusting God is probably the number one thing in our lives that we need to do.

You know what the ministry is? Some of you young men, young ladies will be in the ministry down the line, and you will be out there in a church someplace doing something. Let me tell you, you know what 90% of the ministry is? It is having faith for people in tough times because they have not grown spiritually to have faith in their own tough times. That is a lot what the ministry is. A ministry is helping people who should have grown but have not grown, and they have been saved 5, 10, 15, 20 years, and they are no more able to trust God now than they were the day they got saved. So every time a problem goes into their life, somebody with more faith has to step in and try to help them through it. That is okay when you are just a young Christian, but you do not want to be that 25-year-old in a crib. You want to grow up to be able to handle everything that God has for you in life, and the concept of our Christian life. We are going to talk about it today is faith.

He says, "whatsoever," think about that. What a damning statement this is. "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." You see, when we think about sin, we think about murder, do not we? Bank robbers, adultery, idolatry, drunkenness, gossip, showing discourse, somebody lying all the time. We think of that as sin, but man, we are not even close to that. He is saying, the Bible is saying that in your life and my life, whatever we do in life that we cannot 100% exercise faith in to trust God, it is sin.

Now let me explain that. God allows you and me as young Christians. Some of you come to the point where you are just, you are just, you are just got into this, and you are growing, you are learning, and you cannot trust God for everything. That is okay. God understands that. God is not going to come down and whack you because of that. You need to know that. But what I am saying is this, there needs to be a process by which you and I come to the point that there comes a time in our life that we can trust God for just about everything in our lives. We can use the terminology all day long, spiritually mature, being a leader, whatever you want to call it. But at the end of the day, it simply means you have grown to the place that whatever comes into your life, you now have the grace and the faith to be able to trust God for and through it. That is the key.

## II. Defining Faith

Now let us look at this and let us define first of all faith. I think that is very important because I think most people do not understand really what faith is because the Bible says that everything we do as a Christian is based on it, and it is not, it is sin according to the Bible. Now what is faith? All the time, all my life. I have tried to witness to somebody, and I am sure you have too. That person says, "You know what? I am not going to trust anything I cannot see." I have had people tell me, "Oh, you Christians, you know? Yeah, you just blind faith. You just step out by blind faith and just hang on to something you cannot even see." That is what the average Christian really thinks faith is in the Bible. But that is not Bible faith. That is not Bible faith. Bible faith is never based on blind faith.

I mean, when you start out and you begin to grow, it is a process of growth. The Bible says in Romans 12:3 that when you get saved, you know what God does? He gives you a measure of faith, just a little squirt, just a little dab. He gives you just enough for you to get saved. But then what do you do with that? You have to do something in your life to grow that that faith grows. I think people think that you get saved, and you just lay around the house for a while and watch television, and hang out and do not do a lot of crazy things, and one day God comes down and just makes you spiritual. There is a process to you and me coming to the place where we can understand that whatsoever is not of faith is sin and have the ability to trust God in everything in our life when it comes down. That is the process we are going to talk about today.

I read over in Hebrews 5, when I read that, I see so many Christians. Hebrews 5, down around verse 12, I think it is, he says simply there is this, he is talking to Christians and he says,

*Hebrews 5:12*

*For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.*

He is talking to Christians and he says, "For what time you ought to be teachers and teaching somebody the Bible?" He says, "You know what the deal is? Somebody again has to begin to teach you the basic fundamentals." You know why that is? Because people do not grow. If you are, there are people in this church that, that in any church that if you do not grow, if you do not get into a process by which God exercises your senses and helps you get to the point where you, you trust God in everything that you do, you too will be like that 26-year-old guy in the nursery.

Bible talks about in Philippians 4:13, I think it is one of the greatest verses in the Bible. It simply says,

*Philippians 4:13*

*I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*

It simply means that it is not Christ that comes down and strengthens you. It says, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." It is the things that you do for Christ that God takes and strengthens you and gives you faith. You know what faith is? In my life? You know what faith is in my life? There are things out there tomorrow. There are things out there next

month. There are things out there next year. There is something coming my life down the road that I do not see, that I know nothing about that is going to blindside me just like it is going to blindside you. There are things that are going to happen to you in the future that you are not even expecting today. The average concept of faith is that you just step out blindly and trust God. I never do that.

You know how I know God is going to come out, take care of me tomorrow? You know how I know that God is going to take care of me next week? Now I know that God is going to take care of me all the way down the line maybe five years from now. You know I know that for sure because he has taken care of me the last 40 years. You see, faith is looking back and seeing what God did and then knowing that if he did that for 40 years, what are the chances he will be there tomorrow? Pretty good. Pretty good.

I had a guy one time that was going into the ministry, and he felt the same thing that most young guys do when you get close to that point. You start to second guess yourself. He started to struggle, and he came in to see me, and he said, "Bob," he says, "I want you to know I am really scared." He said, "I am stepping out into something that I have never done before." He says, "It has been easy to minister here under you because you made all the decisions and did all the hard stuff. Now I have got to step out, and I have got to do that." He says, "I want you to know very frankly, I am scared to death. I do not even know if I should be doing this." He started getting to that thing where he just worried himself to death.

You know what I told him? I said, "Look at it from my perspective. I watched you when you came into this church about six, seven years ago. I watched you when you were so stupid about the Bible, you not only did not know anything, you did not suspect anything. I watched God take you, and I watched God mold you, and I watched God get a hold of your heart. I watched God bring your wife into the equation. I watched God build you, and I watched you in the first time you preach and everything that God did in your life. For the last eight or nine years, he has done this and he has done that. Now you are stepping on a place where you are going to step out now, and you are afraid because you think you are going to step out there by faith of the unknown. No, the same God that took the last eight years to prepare you for this very day did not bring you here to drop you now."

You know what Omel Subakah, my father, the Lord used to tell me? He used to say the best position, you want to learn how to trust God? He said the best position a Christian can ever find himself in is up in a very high tree out on a very weak branch and looking back and seeing God with a hacksaw in his hand and a smile on his face. That is how you learn to trust him. But if you are not willing to put yourself into those scenarios, if you are not willing to put a process in your life, faith is not based on your blind just trusting God. Faith is based on what God has done in your life to bring you to this point right now.

I look across this room, and I will see, I see so many of you who God has done things, put things in your life, got you where you are at right now. Tomorrow or next week or down the line, something will happen bad in your life, something will fall you in your life, something will catastrophe will come in, and we will lose sight of what God did because we are scared of what

is out there. Same God that got you through to this point, same God is going to get you the rest of the way home. That is faith. That is the definition of faith from the Bible standpoint. Like I said, 90% of the ministry is having faith for people who have been around long enough who should have faith, but they do not.

### III. Abraham and Moses: Examples of Faith

Now I do not know, I want to give you this too. The definitive passage on faith in the Bible is found in Hebrews 11. This is commonly called God's great hall of fame. You will find coming down through here if you want to study it sometime that there are 17 men or women who really give you a composite of what faith is. These are people who got to the place in their life where they went through some tremendous things. It is the passage in the Bible that really lays out faith. But if you are a Bible student and you really look for things in the Bible like I tell you to do, when you read this chapter, you are going to find that there are two exceptions here. Notable exception. The Bible showcases two men here in this great chapter that we can really see the process of their spiritual growth.

The Bible says in 2 Corinthians 5:7 that we are to walk by faith and not by sight. I think that is a great verse. You see that in the men in the women's lives in Hebrews 11. Romans 4:12 is another great verse that I really love, and I think it even says it even better. It talks about their walking in the steps of faith. Faith you take one step at a time. As you look at chapter 11, you know what jumps out at you if you are studying it? Two men.

Now let me just give you a little key on the Bible. Anytime you are studying something in the Bible or you are coming through the Bible and you will find that great, great emphasis is put on this person or that person more than this person or that person. I am telling you right there at that particular point God is trying to show you something. Now this great chapter, Hebrews 11, has 17 people in it. But there are two men. The first one's name is Abraham. When you come down through this chapter, you will find that there are 12 verses devoted to his life, more than anybody else in there. Moses is second in the list, and he has seven verses. These two men predominantly are the two key men in this chapter on faith. You know why that is? Because when you go through the whole Bible and you study their life, these men picture in their lives what they go through, what they struggle with, where they start, where they wind up, they are the exact process that you and I can study in every detail. You can read these men's lives and write your own name in there from the time you got saved right up to the point where God gave you the faith to be everything that God wants you to be.

Moses, he will show you a picture of a man's faith as he grows to the aspect in ministry. Abraham will be a picture of our process in faith in our daily walk with God. You see the key, ladies and gentlemen, to any relationship is faith and trust. If you are dating somebody and you are going to marry them down the line, let me just give you a little bit of advice. If you do not have faith in their spirituality, 100%, and you do not have trust in their relationship with God, you are probably making the biggest mistake you are ever going to make in your life because the very two fundamental concepts of any relationship is faith and trust. Yet it is the same two fundamental aspects of our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Only two men in the Bible that God ever called his friend. You want to be God's friend? Do you really have a desire in your life? Maybe you never even thought about it. Maybe you thought everybody was God's friend. That is not true. Maybe you thought the moment you got saved, you became God's friend. Well, the moment you became saved, you became God's child. But that does not mean you are God's friend. There is a process to become God's friend.

*Isaiah 41:8*

*But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend.*

*James 2:23*

*And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.*

*Exodus 33:11*

*And the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he turned again into the camp: but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the tabernacle.*

These tell us that Abraham was God's friend. Exodus 33:11 tells us that Moses was God's friend. They are the only two men in all of the Bible. Now I know for a moment, I do not think for a moment that they are the only two men in the Bible that were God's friend. I am not saying that. I am saying this. When God puts your attention to something and out of all the people in the Bible says that two men were his friend, if you want to become God's friend, I will give you a little insight. Study those two men's lives. In their lives will be everything that you need to get to that point.

*Hebrews 11:6*

*But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*

Both of these men get called out. They both start with absolutely nothing in their lives, just like you and I do. Both grow through their experiences as God has his hand in their lives to become the two men in the Bible that are probably two of the greatest old men, two men in the Old Testament. You people have a hard time with this because they struggle and they make mistakes. Sometimes because we do struggle in life and we have things that we maybe cannot get the victory over that we think there is something wrong with us. Let me tell you something. When you read your Bible, you will find one great thing. Every man and woman in that book had issues and struggles all through their life. You are not alone in it. The bottom line is you do not want to stay there.

How do you get out of the problem that you are in? You get out by the same way you got in. You cannot solve the problems in your life with the same thinking that got you into those problems. You have to walk out just like you walked in, but you have got to go out with God in your life and the faith that they have to get you through it.

## IV. Abraham's Journey of Faith

Now I want to deal with Abraham today. We do not have time to do them both, and I am not sure I really would anyhow. We will do Moses later. Moses deals with ministry. Right now I am more concerned with some of you younger Christians and helping you get your walk before God and help you get to that place where it needs to be in your life. But let me ask you a question. Do you want to be God's friend? I mean deep down in your heart, do you? The Bible says Abraham, the friend of God. We have a song in our hymnal that we sing every once in a while, and it is a great song, and it simply says, "What a friend we have in Jesus." Every time I sing that song, I always think what one kind of friend he has in me, and that is the real question. I am not worried about God's friendship to me. I am worried about my friendship to him. We are going to look today, and we are going to talk about what God looks for on your part to become God's friend to get to the place in your life, and remember now the Bible says, "whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Get into the place where you can trust God in your life and everything that you do.

Now I am going to walk you through, it is going to be very quickly, I am going to walk you through an outline basically. I know that I am not going to take the time to go through it in great detail because probably half of you will not do anything with it anyhow, and the other half that will, you will take it home and study it out, and I would like to see what you find yourself. But I am going to walk you through a little outline today. I am going to walk you through a man's journey in his life that parallels your journey and my journey in life and brings us to the point where we start out with nothing. We start out where we cannot trust God for anything. Do we get to the point where we trust God for everything? As we go through this, I am going to show you that there are three areas in Abraham's life that need to be the three areas in your life that you grow in faith in. This thing is an incredible picture of your life and my life. We are going to walk through this together.

The first thing I want to tell you is this, and you better, let us set the context here so we know where we are going. Let me give you the first principle. This will be a little rough for some of you, but that is okay. God wants everything in your life. God will not settle for second place in your life. God wants everything in your life. Now let that soak in for a minute because that is where we are going today. Now that is not a popular message today because we like to keep things to ourselves, do not we? But the bottom line is that God will not take second place in your life to anything or anybody. The Bible says that he is a jealous God, and he gets jealous when we put somebody else or something else in front of him. He wants your undivided attention. He wants you focused. He wants you ready to go for him. He will not, listen to me again, he will not settle for second place in your life, and he wants everything you have. Let us start with that. A journey to become the friend of God.

Now the first thing I want you to do here is turn back to Genesis 12. We are just going to kind of walk through this. This will be a basic outline that I am going to give you the headers. I am going to give you some stuff to bring you through a process very quickly that you can go home and you can get this thing going. This would be great stuff to talk about on Thursday night or even better stuff one on one when you come over that we can go through it. But this is some incredible stuff here.

Now I want to show you a man's life in the Old Testament. The Bible says over there, I think it is in 1 Corinthians 10, the Bible says that these things that happened in the Old Testament are for our examples and for our example. Now what is the difference between an end sample and an example? Well an example, you need to know this. An example is something that you do. An example is something that you do. But an end sample is something that you are. When you understand how those two concepts work in your life and we are now going to walk through this man's life, Abraham, you are going to see the parallels. That Bible says over there in 1 Corinthians 10 that all those things that happened to them were for our admonition that we could learn from them. So every story in the Old Testament has something that it gives us for our relationship.

You want to learn how to walk with God? You want to learn the process of having faith in your life to the point I do not care where you start. I do not care where you are at today. You may not be able to trust God for anything. That is okay. Everybody in the Bible started that way. But there has to be a process to get you to the point where you trust God for everything. That would be Abraham. Watch this. We will just come down and break these things down.

- The Calling Out of Abraham Look at Genesis 12:1. The calling out of Abraham. Let me just tell you, God had something he wanted Abraham to do. He called Abraham out to do it. Now do you know where he called him out from? He called him out from the Ur of the Chaldees. That is modern day Babylon, Iraq. Ur of the Chaldees is a picture of the worldly system. That is Babylon. When he called him out, he called him out of Ur, a picture of the world, to go to a place that Abraham had never seen. He wanted Abraham to leave that country by faith and go to a place that he had never seen. Why? Because God had a plan for Abraham's life. I am going to stop right there and say this. God saved you and called you out of the world for one reason, folks. One reason only. And you better get it. God saved you and called you out of this world for one reason. Because God has a plan for you. Just like he had a plan for Abraham, he has got a plan for you. Just like Abraham struggled in his initial concept of that plan, so do we. But here is a man who started out, and when he finally wound up, the Bible says became God's friend. A man who could not start, trust God for anything and wound up trusting him with everything. What we want to see is to put point A and point Z and then follow that journey in between. God called him out. God called him out. Here is what he said to him. I know you are reading right there. Genesis 12:1-2

Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:

And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: He says, "Get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred and from thy father's house." Now notice verse two. There is a condition here. "And I will make thee a great nation." See the condition is you have got to get out of that country, out of your family, out of all of those things, then I will make you a strong and mighty nation. Now here is where his lack of faith comes in. Just like mine when I was a young Christian and even today in many things and yours too. Genesis 12:4

So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran." So Abraham departed

as the Lord had spoken unto him and Lot went with him." Whoa, timeout. Lot went with him. He just told him not to take anybody with him. You see there are some times in your life when God wants you to step out by faith and do it yourself, but because we do not have the faith, we have got to have somebody with us. Lot was a bad choice. We are going to see as we go on down through this thing that Lot was one of the main sources of his problems. In his early years, we are going to see that God wanted him to leave his kindred, his father's house and all of his brethren because he did not want the mister of the world, Ur of the Chaldees, going where Abraham was going. But Abraham, like you and I, he did not have enough faith to trust God. So he said, "Well, I am going, but I am taking Lot with me." Many times in our lives, many times in our lives, we cannot separate ourselves totally. We have got to realize that God is enough. You have to come to the point that Lot is the source of Abraham's problem all through his early years. The fact that he did not have enough faith just to leave it all is a picture of you and I not having enough faith when God calls us out to do something.

- Going South Look at Genesis 12:9. From here, it gets worse. Because it always gets worse when you cannot just get through the process in your life that God wants you to just to trust him. Here is where he goes into Egypt. There is a famine. So he goes into Egypt. Now, Egypt is the type of the world. You know what the picture of? This thing is a picture of the first time God calls you and me out to do something. The first thing that happens, we run right back to the world because we have not learned to trust him yet. Oh, how many times have we done that? I love Genesis 12:9. I love the way the Holy Spirit of God. Genesis 12:9

And Abram journeyed, going on still toward the south." And Abram journeyed, going still south." He is going the wrong direction. If God called him out of Ur of the Chaldees, he used to go over to the Promised Land. That was west. That is the good direction in the Bible. He is going south. Now, you know what? When you go south from God, everything in your life goes south. That is the wrong direction. When he gets down in Egypt, things continue to go south in his life. They always will when the world and God are involved in your life. Hey, at some point in your life as you grow, maybe not today, but just so you understand at some point in your life when you grow, you have got to let the world go. Now, you have got to let the friends of the world go. Sometimes you have got to let worldly Christian friends go because they will always take you south. They will always take you south. You know in the Bible, north is the direction of God. You know that Psalms 75:6. You know that north is the direction of God. You know that south is the direction away from God. Over there in Ecclesiastes it says, "whether a tree falls in the north or the south," you know a picture of a man either going to heaven or going to hell. North is always the opposite of south. There will be people in your life that will always take you the opposite way that you need to go as a Christian. Well, you know what happens? He gets down there, and Pharaoh sees, Pharaoh sees Sarai. She is a beautiful woman. Sarai comes to the place where she is Abraham's wife, but Abraham knows what is going to happen. Abraham knows that it is typical that if he says, "Well, she is my wife," and Pharaoh wants her for his wife that some night while Abraham is sleeping somebody will sneak in and cut his throat, and then he will not have a wife anymore. So he pays the safe route, and he says, "No, she is not my wife. She is my sister." Now that, I have got to tell you, that is a half truth because she is his sister in a line of, if you

study the genealogies, but it is a half truth. The bottom line is this, Abraham does not have enough faith because he is in the wrong place. The farther south you go from God, whoever gets you there, the less faith you are going to have. It is just that simple. But I love this. Genesis 12:17

And the LORD plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai Abram's wife. You see, God has a job for Abraham to do, and the hand of God at this time is on his life. God intervenes to save him from making a huge mistake. I cannot tell you, maybe you cannot grasp it, I do not know. I cannot tell you personally what something like that when I read it means to me. Maybe it means nothing to you. It means to me that God loves me so much, and he loves you so much that when he has a plan for you, he understands that we are going to do some stupid things. But as long as there was a process of moving in the right direction, God intervenes. Do you know what a disaster it would have been that if Abraham would have got killed or they would have taken her and Pharaoh would have impregnated her and where the promised seed was supposed to come? You know how that would have fouled everything up in God's plan? God intervened. Now I want to show you something. What I am going to show you, I do not understand. I believe it, but I do not understand it. You could ask me for the next 10,000 years, and I could never answer this, but I know it is true. I see it. God saw something in Abraham he did not see in other people. Yet I see that in my own ministry all down through the years. I have seen young people come in, young couples come in. Their moms and dads were unsaved. Their lives were a mess. They come to the point where when I watch them grab the Word of God and watch God do something in their life. I think to myself, there is no way on this planet with how they were raised that they had no spiritual upbringing, nothing in their life spiritually. They ought to be out in the world, and they ought to be swallowed up in it. They ought to be drug dealers. They ought to be drunkards. They ought to be out there in the world. How in the world did that person get to where they are at when they had nothing in their life from God down through life? You know what it is? God saw something in them. God saw something in them. Then I see other people whose parents brought them to church all their life. They grew up in Sunday school, and the Bible was everything in their life, and they wound up being worthless. I do not know how to explain how that God looks down in your heart and my heart, but I do believe this. I believe the day you get saved, the day I got saved, God saw me in a finished form. I believe with all of my heart that every, from that moment on, God started putting people, things in my life. God looked down in my heart to see how I will respond to those things. This may not mean nothing to some of you, but maybe it is too young for some of you, too young to grasp it, but I am telling you something. When I look at this thing and I see how God, he said about him, he said in Genesis 18:18-19, God speaking to himself. How many times I have wondered when God looked at me and spoke to himself about me what he said? Genesis 18:18-19

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 know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him. That is an incredible passage. You know

what it says? That thing was written right in the middle of Abraham's growth process, and yet God saw something in him that he did not see in somebody else. To ever see a child of God who you know saved, this thing bothers me tremendously. I never say anything about it, but it bothers me tremendously. Because when I understand that God has a plan for you and a plan for me, and I look down and see how God chose Abraham out of that whole thing, and I know he saw it based on Abraham's heart, and then I look around and I see in my own life and my own ministry down through the years, the thing that bothers me, did you ever see a child of God that walked away from God? God just let him go. That is the scariest thing in the world for me, for me to walk away from God and God just to say, "Well go ahead Bob, do what you want to do. I cannot use you." That is the most scariest thing that anybody could ever say to me as a child of God. The job of a good pastor for those of you that will ever pastor someday is to look at people and not see what the world sees, but try to see what God sees in that person. To try to look beyond. So many people get caught up in all of the things that you have got in your background or what you did or what you did not do. They fail to see that, you know what, we are all a work of grace and progress, and you have got to see that thing and look down inside and see the thing that God sees, and that is a man's heart.

- Conflict and Growth Look at Genesis 13:1. He keeps going south. He cannot get to where he needs to be because he cannot trust God 100%. Remember now, folks, whatsoever is not of faith is sin. Now if you have, I do not probably have not skimmed it that much, and you maybe have not read it before, but if you read this, you will find out glaring that there are two problems that he has. The first problem is Lot is still with him. The second problem is God found in Genesis 13:2, "And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold." Those are the two things right there that will kill you every time in your walk and your progression of trusting God, bad friends and worldly possessions. Putting that emphasis in your life over God because God will not take second place in your life. God wants everything you have. Abraham had not got to that point yet. Oh, he is going where God wanted to go, but he is bringing his gold and his silver and his cattle and Lot. Let me tell you something. As a child of God, God has a plan for your life, and there can never be a plan B. This will not be that way. Abraham is doing what so many of us do. Oh, he is going. But he cannot trust God to leave everything behind, so he brings Lot for whatever reason. He brings his cattle, his silver, and his gold just in case God does not come through, you have got a plan B. Never work with God. Never work. You and I have to come to the place in our life where we trust him with everything we have because if whatsoever is not of faith, it is sin. Boy, that is what he closes out that great chapter. He has not learned totally to separate himself from the things of this world. God brings him now down through here in the same chapter. God brings him into conflict between Lot, and finally, you know what happens? He separates from Lot, and they go their separate ways. Now I am going to talk to you about that. You know why God, now I realize that sometimes we get into conflict because we just do dumb things. I know that. I do dumb things, get into conflict. You do too. But my point here is just that I want you to see in this study of a man's journey that so mirrors your life and my life in getting to that point from where you cannot trust God for nothing, you trust him for everything, is the fact that when you look down through here, he says simply that to get Lot out of his life there had to be a conflict. You know what? Sometimes God will bring a conflict in your life to get the things

out of your life that he does not want in there. Do you ever stop and think about that? No, we do not think about that because we are so caught up in a world. Somebody said, "Well, I lost my job. I guess it was the economy." Really? I mean, I am not saying this is the reason, but maybe God took your job because you were not doing what is right when you had the job. Oh, we never think about that, do we? "Well, I had a boyfriend or a girlfriend, and you know what? And he dumped me or she dumped me. I am all down in the dump." Really? Well, I am not saying this is true, but I am saying it could be true. Maybe God knew that that person was not going to be what you needed to be, and God has got a plan for you, and they are not part of the plan. Sometimes oh, God made the conflict. We cannot think like that. That would be too biblical. But here is a case where God tried, told him, "Leave Lot, go, get away from it. Leave everything. I want to be the sustainer. When I have ordained Abraham, I will sustain." "Okay, Lord, I am going." Get Lot, get the gold, get the silver, get the cattle. God said, "That ain't going to work." So a conflict comes in, and many times when a conflict comes in your life and my life, why do we always just think it is the devil? I mean, why do we, I mean, Flip Wilson has been dead now for many years. Most of you young people do not even know him. The guy that went around saying the devil made me do it. He blamed half the world's problems on the poor old devil. I have got news for it. Devil did not even make me do anything, nor he did not make you do it. We will just do it ourselves. God's kind of people we are when you do not walk by faith and you walk by sight. Abraham was called out. He is on his way, but he is walking by sight. He is not walking by faith. So a conflict comes in. But I have got to say in the process of this, we see some growth in his life if you are paying attention. You see, God sees us in the final form, and as long as we keep growing, it may be only one step at a time. It may be three steps forward and two steps back. But as long as in our heart we have the process that we are going to grow, and we want to trust him, and we walk by faith one step at a time, God always sees us in the final form. Our job is to transform ourselves that we see the final form also. Now in this chapter, there is a, we have what we call in Bible study, the law of first mention. That is the first time you find something in the Bible. It always means something. It is a definitive thing. Yet I do not know of another character in the Bible that we could study today that you do not find so many first time things popping up. First time in the Bible pops up in this story. You know the first thing it pops up in Genesis 13:13? First time you find in your Bible, the word Hebrew. God is going something. God is developing something here. We may see Abraham stumbling and making some mistakes, but he is still got the concept, and he is going in the right direction in his walk with God even though he is having a tough time and he is stumbling and making mistakes. So the first thing we see the first time in the Bible, the word Hebrew, that is going to be the nation. He just said, "I am going to make thee a father of many nations." That is the nation, the Hebrew nation. God sees something here that we do not see. We see in this chapter one of the greatest aspects of his growth and his concept of his giving back to God. Look at Genesis 14:18-20. There is a great battle takes place. Coming down through there, he meets a man named Melchizedek. The Bible says down there in verse 20, and here is the first time this word shows up in your Bible, that he gives tithes to Melchizedek of all that he had. You know what Abraham is starting to do? He is starting to see that everything he does have does not belong to him anyhow, and he would not have it if God did not give it to him. God wants everything

you have. He wants every diamond of bank, every car in your garage, every boat in your driveway. He wants everything you have got. He wants it for his honor and glory. Now every time you start talking about the word tithe, you know, people get nervous, you know. People told me all the time, you know, guys do not tell me, "Well, you know what, tithing is not scriptural in the Bible." I said, "Really? Why is that?" He said, "Well, it is under the law in the Old Testament." I said, "Oh, that is really good." That is where he said, "Yeah, it is not in the New Testament. It is under the law in the Old Testament." I was taking it back to Abraham. Abraham was tithing 500 years before the law was in effect. We can just scratch that out of your Bible. Exacto-cutters work really well. You sell them in the bookstore back there. This is for those who want to get rid of the verses that you do not like. He is starting to learn that what he has been given to him by God. The Bible concept of, you know, there are three things here in his life that come out that show you to God. The first thing that grows that we are going to study here as we come through this is he grows in faith in his attitude toward God and his relationship. The second thing that you have got to realize that everything you have belongs to God, and you have got to have faith to trust him. Somebody says, "Well, I will start tithing when I can afford it." You do not tithe when you can afford it. You tithe when you cannot afford it and trust God to bring you through the concept. Oh, that is so foreign today. But then that is why we are not God's friend. Remember Abraham, gold, silver, and cattle? Do you know why you do not give anything to God? You know why, do not you? I mean, sure you do, do not you? I mean, you may have whatever excuse you have in your mind, but you know the bottom line is why you do not give anything to God, period, financially. You know what the bottom line is? Because you do not trust him. That is why. I mean, it is simply that. You do not trust him. It hurts you every time you are reminded of it. I do not care. Your giving is not the benefit of anything other than you. People think that they do not give their money, you know. The angels will come into God and say, "We are going to have to turn the lights out, Lord. We cannot pay the power bill this month." God does not need your money. You are trusting God and giving him everything because he knows. Somebody says, "Well, I think it is this or I think it is that." I think it is Matthew 6:21. Matthew 6:21

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. In his life, we see him grow in his giving. We see him understand through this process. In Genesis 14, he has been in the tithe. In Genesis 18, he graduates from that to an offering over and above. In Genesis 22, he gets to the point where he understands sacrificial giving. We will talk about it when we get there. Our next Iron Man class, we are going to talk about, we have laid some foundations. Now for this next year and probably the next couple of years, we are going to go to work. I am asking every young man and every young lady who wants to be a part of the future of this church to make this ministry work, and you are going to count yourself a part of it, we are going to begin to take this ministry apart piece by piece and teach you how it works. You need to know and understand how this thing works. Any work will always be done by the minority. It will never be done by the majority. I do not care what it is, where it is. It is true all the way through the Bible. You need to understand that the people who get the job done will always be in the minority. I am going to show you why people do the things that they do. I am going to show you the plan to dynasize this church when things come to the point that

we have to do it. These are things you need to learn and understand. Things are never what they appear. Some of you may know the Bible pretty well, but now it is time for you to know every piece of how this church goes together, every bolt, every nut, every washer, every aspect of it. It has to be built on faith.

- The Promise of Isaac Genesis 16. I think Genesis 16 is a great chapter because it shows you, this is a bad chapter in Abraham's life, by the way. I think we all have bad chapters in our life at some point or the other. But he has his two. You will have yours. I have mine. But here in Genesis 16 is something that I want to focus on, not what happened to him as much as I do, is behind the scenes. Because this is a great example in the Bible, and I know this to be true, it shows you that when you start to grow and you start to do what is right in your life, the devil is going to come after you because he wants to stop God's plan. Just that simple. You want life in a very simple format. Here it is. God has, if you are saved this morning, God has a plan for you, something wants you to do. He will put everything in your life to get it done. Devil wants to stop it. He will put everything in your life to stop it. That is simple. Here is where Abraham gets stopped. It is the great chapter in Genesis 16 that deals with the promise of Isaac. Now we know who Isaac is. Isaac is the promised seed, from Isaac is going to come Christ. You will find here the problem is that when he comes down and tells them this, you have got to understand it is kind of a tough deal. When he comes down and finally tells Abraham, "I am going to give you a son," Abraham is 86 years old. Sarai is 77. Now there are not too many couples, 86 and 77, who are having children, but the great principle there is God always does his work through impossible situations, but it takes faith on our part to trust him through it. Can you imagine when they walked in babies or us started order a pack and play or a packing or whatever they all and order this and order that and somebody says, "Oh, somebody in your family having a baby," and Abraham looks over and says, "Oh yeah, Sarai, she is with child." You see, here is the, get this folks. This is what I am talking about. This is faith. The whole world saw an old couple ready for John Knox village. The whole world saw an an 86-year-old man and a 77-year-old woman that was ready for the old folks home, but God saw the nation of Israel. See, you look at yourself, your friends look at you, and you see you and whoever you are and what you do for a living. You know what God sees? God sees the finished product that he wants to do in your life and my life. The problem is we cannot see it. We do not have the faith to see it. So what happens? Romans 4:17

(As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. There it is. That is what God wants you to do. He wants you to see something that nobody else sees and call it for what it is when you see this God sees it. That is what I do with you. How many times somebody said, "I do not waste any time with him. He is an idiot," but I see something in you that maybe they do not see. Now sometimes they will say, "Do not waste any time with him. He is an idiot." And I said, "You are right. Let us move on to somebody else." But the bottom line is is God sees something in you today. You know what the problem is? You do not see it yourself because there is no process of you growing in faith. So what happens? See faith is seeing what God sees when nobody else sees it in your own life. If I would have listened to the people when I first surrendered to preaching the ministry, what they told me, I never would have gotten in the ministry. My own mother

told me it was a waste of time, but I had never listened to her anyhow. So why should that start now? People, everybody told me, "You ain't going to make it. You are not going to make it." Maybe I did not make it, but you know what? I saw what God saw, and I did not care what anybody else knew. I still would like to think today. I mean, it is just the way it is. But here is the problem. You need to see this. This is a bad chapter in Abraham's life, but then we all have bad chapters in our life. In Genesis 16:16 it says he is 86 years old when he makes this terrible mistake and takes Hagar and produces Ishmael, and he becomes a problem in their life for the Jews today in the Middle East are struggling with that mistake that he made. Then in Genesis 17:1 the Bible says he is 99 years old. That is 13 years later. Between those two times, there is not one mention where him and God have any conversation. Because of that bad decision, he gets set back 13 years, and him and God have no concept, no talk, no fellowship for 13 years. But God is not done with him because God sees something. Boy, I cannot even think. I pray that there would never be a day that you would let me walk away from the ministry or my responsibilities as a Christian and just leave me go. I would not care if you cut off my legs, cut off my head. Well, do not cut off my head, then I cannot do anything. Cut off my arms, whatever you have got to do. Do not ever let me get to the place where I just walk away from what I once did. Walk away what I do. Walk away what I know is right. And you just say, "See ya, see ya, see ya. Hi, have a nice trip. See ya, see ya at the Dublin seat. See ya, go on, go, go, go." Then in Genesis 17, after 13 years, the great silence is broken. Genesis 17:1

And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect." And when Abraham was 90 years old and 99, the Lord appeared to Abram and said unto him, I am the almighty God. Walk before me and be thou perfect." Indication is that he was not walking before him, and he was not perfect. The great silence is broken. Fellowship is restored. Then what happens? The process goes on. You know what happened in this chapter? I have been calling him Abraham, but his real name up to this point has been Abram. Sarah, her name was Sarai. What happens in this great chapter after the 13 years out of fellowship and a great regret and passion in his life, God brings him back, and then God changes his name. I would dare him to say it in those 13 years. You know what, you know why God does not tell you what happened in those 13 years? I will tell you why. Because those 13 years, we can all put ourselves in. We, he learned some things in those 13 years. When God started speaking to him again, brother, he was ready to get the thing going. So you know what God does? God changes his name. Abram means high father. Now it is changed to Abraham, the father of many nations. Sarai means high princess. But Sarah means I will bless her with many nations. Now, I do not know if you know it or not, but in the Bible, God changes the names of seven people, seven of them. In every case, it is a picture of them moving to the next spiritual plateau of getting where God wants him to be. It signifies the place in their life where they are never going back. That signifies the place in their life when they are never going back. I have watched in some of your lives, believe it or not, never said anything to you. I have watched in many of your lives when God changed your name. You did not see it. I do not think you did. I saw it. I watched in many of your lives. You come into this church, you struggle, you work through some things, you get yourself to the place where you finally

get, and you get some things under your belt, you finally learn some things, you go through some bad experiences in life. Then you know what? It is almost like I saw you on Monday. When I saw you on Friday, you were a different person. You know why? Some place in the process, you passed that portal, and now you are at a place where you are never going back to the world or anything in it again. You may not be perfect. You may still have some problems. He did, but it was no going back. The process, the journey of his life is the journey of your life and my life. The God changed your name. The God day God changed your name. Then in Genesis 18 and 19, boy, it really picks up speed pretty quickly because now we see a difference in the fellowship toward God. Now we see where he gave the tithe back here. Now he is giving an offering in Genesis 18:5. Now is where he is, when the Lord and two angels show up, he is coming to the point where he prepares. He lifts everything out, a fatted calf and all the things that he does. He puts on a great spread, and then he stands there and he says, "I have just given a little morsel of bread." He does not even eat it himself. He stands back and he allows them to, you know what that is a picture of? That is a picture of over and above what he is given back to God. Over and above. I always thought it was a great contrast because in Genesis 19:5, you see the counterpart to Abraham was Lot. Now Lot represents a wicked Christian, a worldly Christian, where Abraham represents a godly Christian who wants to do God's plan, Lot could care less. When the angels and the Lord go before Abraham, he puts out this great spread, and he just says it calls it a morsel of bread. But when they go to Lot in Genesis 19, Lot gives them unleavened bread. Have you ever eaten unleavened bread? It is the god-awfullest stuff you ever ate in your life. You see when Abraham, he prepared a great feast, and he stood back, would not eat and said, "This is just a morsel of bread." But when Lot, he gave them unleavened bread, stood back and said, "That is a feast." See their perspective on what they give? Incredible. This is a great study on a great journey because remember, whatsoever is not of faith is sin. Genesis 18 and 19 shows us he has learned how to pray because in Genesis 19, again, another first, the first time you find the word prayer in the Bible. He is learning how to pray. The example is that in Genesis 18 when he stands there before the Lord and he prays for Lot, he is getting concerned now. The three aspects, his attitude toward interrelationship with God, his attitude toward giving, and his attitude toward other people, he is growing in faith. We get into Genesis 20, we still see he lacks faith in some areas because he gets in a little mess with Abimelech again, but he is moving on. Then I think the greatest chapter here is Genesis 21. Now you are probably thinking it is the great chapter because it is the birth of Isaac. Finally the seed gets brought into this world, and Isaac becomes Isaac. Isaac has Jacob and right on down the line, and we have Jesus Christ in the line of Isaac, the light of Abraham. But that to me is a great thing in this chapter, but that is not the greatest thing. His birth of Isaac overshadows what I think is the greatest principle, and it is stuck down there in Genesis 21:25 and 34. It is really the thing that we are looking for because since God changed his name, everything has changed, man. He is moving on down the line. He is not perfect. He still makes mistakes. But boy, when he gets down here and God brings through the promise seed, the thing that really stands out to me is in Genesis 21:25 and 34 because the Bible says that he had dug a well. Now I do not know if you know it or not, but a well is in the Bible or a picture of your ministry. You have got to take a study sometime in your Bible for the people who give water in pitchers, jars,

vases, whatever the case compared to where they get water out of a well. You see the pots, the vessels, the pitchers, they are only a few can drink, and it runs out very quickly. But when you have a well, when you dig a well, everybody can drink for as long as they want, and it is a picture, it is a picture of what a biblical ministry should be. You know what most churches have? They just have little pitchers, and it runs out very quick. You do not get anything, and not everybody gets anything. This church needs to be a well. This church needs to be dug deep in the rock, and the water coming out, everybody has everything they want to drink. Your life and ministry should be a well. That is why I think it is so important here because he digs a well. You know what happens? Abimelech, a picture of the world, wants to share the well with him. He tells Abimelech to take a hike. He has learned some things. He has learned that when you dig a well, your ministry, you cannot have any association with the world in it. He tells Abimelech to take a hike. He is learning some things. He is learning some things. You see, from your well should come the water of life. Your life ought to be a well from which people can drink spiritually, and it never go dry. Say what is wrong with me, Bob? Tell me in one small phrase what is wrong with me. Somebody poisoned your well. The waters are bitter today. They are not fresh. They are not sweet. It is not cleansing. It is not thirst giving. Bitter is wormwood. Somebody in the world got into your little life, and you know what they did? You who once was a bubbling fresh well. You know what they did? They poisoned your water. That is what has happened to you. His people would drink from this well forever. In John 4 you have the famous woman at the well. Remember her? It tells you right there that they are drinking at Jacob's well. She says, "Our fathers have drunk here. This is Jacob's well. Our fathers have drunk here." For 1900 years they drank out of that well. Wells last forever when you dig deep enough. Well water comes out of the rock. Picture the Word of God. Living water, your ministry, your ministry. Then Genesis 22. Wow, what a chapter. In Genesis 22 Abraham has now come to the place where he is really everything that, everything that he is there now. We have watched this man's life from where he could not trust God for anything. When he left the Ur of the Chaldees, he had to bring his gold, his silver and his cattle in Lot with him to a man now that is ready to go anywhere God wants him to go. God has changed his name. We have watched the process almost chapter by chapter when I have given you an incredible outline. Now we come to Genesis 22 where he could not trust God to come out of Ur of the Chaldees without bringing everybody with him. Now if you study the passage, God calls him to go to Mount Moriah, the land of Moriah. Now I do not know how much you know about the Bible, but Moriah, the land of Moriah, that is where Jesus Christ was crucified. Mount Moriah. That is Calvary. Here we learn the process that now he understands what giving sacrificially means. We saw with the tithe, we saw with the offering, now we understand that he has understood what sacrificial giving is. Sacrificial giving is defined in 2 Samuel 24:24. You have heard me say it many, many times where David wants to buy the threshing floor to make, put an offering or put a sacrifice, and a guy who owns it says, "You go and take it." He says, "No, I want to buy it." He says, "No, please take it." He said, "You do not understand, I have got to buy it." Guy says, "Please David, take it." He said, "Look, I want to make a sacrifice to God, and if I am going to make a sacrifice, it has to cost me something." Foreign to us, is not it? Foreign to us. He had waited so long for that boy, and now God tells him, and I want you to read it, not now but read it the

rest of maybe sometime today or tomorrow when you get a chance, but I want you to read that. This time God tells him to go to land on Moriah. He takes that boy, people go with him, but when he comes to the point that he is got to go to the place where he is going to offer his son as a sacrifice, I want you to notice he leaves everybody behind because he has come to the place in his life now that the real place of sacrifice has to be just you and God, and nobody else comes, and you know the story. He waited for that boy. He longed for that boy. That boy was the apple of his eye, and now God says, "I want you to take your son, and I want you to put him on an altar, and I want you to offer him up as a sacrifice to me." People think, "Well, that is a pretty wicked thing." Yeah, you probably would think that when you have lost sight if God asked did that for his son, what is wrong with him asking you to do that for your son? You think you are something special? He did not ask Abraham to do anything that he did not do to his own son, and yet he did not let Abraham do it, did he? All the parallels. Isaac carries the wood on his back just like Christ carried a cross on his back. You have the fire, God's judgment, the knife, the Word of God, and I love it because the young boy looks up and he says, "Daddy, here is the altar, and here is everything we need, there is the fire, there is a knife, but he says, Daddy, where is the lamb?" You know what Abraham says? Abraham had learned to see what nobody else could see, and he said to that young boy, "Do not worry, son, God will provide himself a lamb." Somebody said, "Yeah, he did a couple verses later." No, no, no, you better read it, that was a ram. See how the Lord did that thing? He did not want you to think that when he said God is going to provide himself a lamb, he was talking about the animal in that same chapter, the animal in that chapter was not a lamb, the animal in that chapter was a ram. The lamb that he is talking about was a sinless son of God for which was going to come through Isaac's seed that was going to become the salvation and the sacrifice for all people. You see he had come to the place that he learned that a sacrifice had to cost you something was by faith. Here is a man who could not trust God for anything, and now he is laying his son on the altar, and he took that knife and put it up, and if God would not have come down and stopped his hand, I believe with everything that is in me he would have plumed that knife. Why? Because he had learned to trust God through everything in his life through a process and a journey. First time you find the word love in the Bible found in Genesis 22. God always tries us, ladies and gentlemen, you might as well know this, God always tries us with what we really love the most because God is a jealous God, and he will not take second place in your life in my life, and God wants everything you have, and without faith it is impossible to please him, and whatsoever is not of faith is sin. Abraham passed the test. God started a process in his life the day God called him out just like God started the process in your life and my life today God called us out. He struggles, he fails but he grows. He grows in faith in his relationship with God. He grows in faith of understanding everything that he has God has given him, and he grows in his faith and the fact that his attitude toward other people, and now the gold, silver and the cattle mean nothing to him anymore. It is only God's plan through his son, and now he is God's friend by faith to trust God in every aspect of his life. You know I have learned this, and if you do not hear nothing else I have said today, hear this. We all make mistakes in life just like everybody in the Bible made mistakes. I have seen God's hand come down in people's lives in my own life and people's lives I have seen God's hand come down in people's lives in the Bible. But

you know what really matters? The only thing that really matters is what God says about you at the end of the day when it is all said and done and it is all over. That is all that matters. We get so caught up in the mistakes that we make or somebody else make or the sin people get into, and I realize that some people want to continue in sin, and that is just the way it is, but everybody, every good person makes mistakes just because a good person makes a bad mistake does not make them a bad person. But in the process of going through life we learn and we understand that is not about what it is like in this life, it is about what God says about us when we die. You know tombstones are always a great thing. I love going to old cemeteries. When I used to work down Osawatomie, you know there was a couple of really old cemeteries down there. They were buried there in the 1600s, and I have been places, you know Kansas City has got some great cemeteries. I mean if you are bored, you ain't got no place to eat in them, but I mean if you are bored and you want to go, I love the little things on them. I have seen some great things. I have got a little catalog at home of some of the most memorable things I have seen or people have said about somebody or a little poem on there which I think is really good. I stood there one time and read something that some young guy must have lost his wife, and he wrote one of the most heart touching things on there. I got it written down someplace, and then you know one other time I saw somebody that I do not think they had very good relationship. Honest to goodness it said on there to follow it said here lies John or someone to name was. Here lies whoever. To follow you I am not content because I am not sure which way you went. I thought that does not say a whole lot about that relationship, but I enjoy that. They call those epitaphs. When God writes at the end of our life our epitaph, what will he say? Well in James 2:23 he wrote Abraham's, and I cannot think of a finer epitaph that you and I could have at any time in our life. James 2:23

And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Romans 4:17

(As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. Romans 14, close it out like this, two aspects of faith. If right now you are a mature Christian and you have faith, then do not use it to be a stumbling block to somebody else. If you are here this morning and you do not, you are saved but you do not have enough faith to grasp everything, that is okay, that is okay, but you cannot stay there. You have to get a process in your life that you begin to grow. You have to begin to process in your life that you begin to walk by faith not by sight and walk in the steps of faith in whatever you do because I am telling you, I am going to say this and I am done. God will not be number two in your life. You hear me? You hear me? He will not be number two in your life, and he wants to be in possession of everything you own. If he is not Lord over all, then he is not Lord at all, and he will not have a plan B for you. Learn to trust him. My whole week is spent on helping people get a plan to get that thing accomplished in their lives. God wants you to grow. He wants you to become everything that he wants you to be. Abraham is a great study. Sometime down the line on our Saturday deals, I will take some of you young men and young ladies, and I will show you Moses. Great study of faith in the ministry, but right now today we just need to understand our walk with God. Now I am going to pray, and we will be dismissed here in just a second. Please ladies get right to your draft. Please we are going to

pick up the we are going to head right out of here and go get the meat. Be at my house a quarter to two, if I am not there just wait for me, I will be there quickly, and we will get that all passed out.