

There he walked the way of the cross. Brothers and sisters, today in our life it is the same just as Abraham was. If God has already given us his vision, he himself will do a work in our lives until that vision enters into the depths of our being.

And also to bring us into that vision fully, completely. But in the process, there are many crises we go through. Because in our lives we carry many baggages.

They are not suitable for this vision that we are to go forward. And those things, God will one day allow us to leave them one at a time behind us. Only the cross can convert vision into our vocation.

We know in Abraham's life how God deals with Abraham step by step to remove from him his flesh and his compromises with the world. Because of the weakness of his flesh, he negotiated with his parents. So his father took the initiative of taking Abraham and his wife-in-law and left the Oral Chaldeans.

But because Tara possessed no vision, and he did it because he loved his son Abraham, and so they settled in Herod. He did not walk the way that God intended for him to walk. But thank God! And God continued to work His grace into Abraham's life.

And so God removed Tara from them. And so it will allow Abraham to follow, to do the will of God. But Lot was still holding on there.

And also Lot now raised up circumstances and also removed Lot from his life. More than that, we noticed at that moment his faith was very weak. And so when there was famine, he went to Egypt.

Because he went to Egypt, in God's mercy, God rescued him from Egypt. But we can see the seed of sin is already planted there. Because Abraham was already living in that pilgrimage in the land for about ten years.

The Scriptures say, because of faith, he lived in a promised land as though he was a foreigner. But for ten years, his wife was not able to bear him a child. And so Sarah, out of good intention, wanted to help Abraham out.

And for Sarah, her move was indeed a great sacrifice. Because of her love for Abraham, she suggested and she was willing to give Hagar to Abraham as his wife. And we know Hagar came from Egypt.

It was the fruit of a fleshly weakness. But we see, it is what flesh tries to help God out. But God will not allow this.

So brothers and sisters, from the moment that Hagar bear Ishmael, at that moment Abraham was 86 years old, until he was 99, for a period of thirteen years, God did not speak to Abraham. We see that God did not appear to Abraham. As though God was not mindful of him.

These thirteen years are the most painful years for Abraham. Brothers and sisters, one who had once seen God himself, one who had heard God spoke to him before, who had lived a life before, up to a point, God's face was not seen by him anymore. He could not hear God's voice.

And he was still living in tents. And he was still not giving up his faith. And he still believed, he promised he would surely fulfill it.

But as though between him and God there was no longer that intimacy of fellowship. Brothers and sisters, God had already done much work in Abraham's life. But as though the work has not been completed.

We know, in our Christian spiritual life, as though at the very beginning, sin is a big issue. And thankful to his shed blood, he has dealt with all our sins, our past sins. And we assume that from that moment onward, we can never sin again.

As far as God's salvation is concerned, it is indeed true. Because our Lord not only bore our sin, he also took our old man and crucified with him. And so the man, that old man, is now already crucified.

He is dead to sin. And from that moment we can live unto God. But brothers and sisters, although God's salvation is now fully completed, but we have not entered into the fullness, the full provision of that redemption.

And so to a new believer who is living Lord Jesus, the biggest issue that he faces may be this sin issue. And oftentimes we have been enlightened within. And we know what is pleasing to him.

Because the Holy Spirit already resides in our hearts. And he will teach us in all things. Not only big things, and even small things.

And even though we think about small things, we see that the Holy Spirit is speaking to us within us. The Holy Spirit is working within us. He is a man of the Lord.

He knows what is pleasing to God. What is not pleasing to him. But where lies the problem? Just like Romans 7. I know what I ought to do.

But I have no power or strength to do it. I knew what I don't want to do. And from within I know I don't want to do those things.

But somehow I do them. Oh, I am rich that I am. And who can deliver me from this dead body? And so with us Christians at the first period of our spiritual life, the most important issue to us is the issue of sin.

Until we are being brought to a point, and we give up, we are completely disappointed with ourselves. Just like Paul put it. Thank God.

Through the Lord Jesus Christ. And he opened our understanding. And allowed us to see the Lord's cross.

The cross not only nailed our sin to that cross. And the cross also nailed the one who sinned, the sinner, to that cross. And so that we can be delivered from the power, the dominion of sin.

And then we will be able to obey God's will. But now we see, apart from sin, we encounter another problem. That problem is the world.

As though we have been delivered from the problem of sin. But we discover the world is still within us. Just like the Israelites.

Even though they were out of Egypt. But Egypt remained in their heart. And so we enter into some trial.

And they began to think about what they had back in Egypt. Right sisters? In our Christian life. Unconsciously, when we came out of the world, we brought much of the world out with us.

As far as God is concerned, he already delivered us out of the world. Outwardly, there seems to be a separation. But we do not know that the world has entered into us.

And so we see God gradually delivering the world out of us. This is also the work of the cross. Because the cross stands between the world and us.

The cross stands between us and the world. Just like in Galatians 4. As far as the world to me, I am dead. As far as I am with the world, I am dead.

Thank God. Right sisters? Apart from sin, apart from the world. And there is our self, the all-self.

This flesh, this self-life is still within us. Right sisters? Who is our greatest enemy? Our greatest enemy is not the world. Our greatest enemy is not even sin.

Our greatest enemy is our self. So Martin Luther put it this way. I am not afraid of all the bishops.

But I am afraid of the pope living within me. He was afraid of his own self. This self, this flesh is indeed our greatest enemy.

So in Abraham's life, in his life he delivered him from sin. He separated him from sin, from the world. And he refused what was offered by the king of Sodom.

So he was willing to continue to live in a tent. To live in a tent, to be a pilgrim. Because he was looking for a heavenly home.

But brothers and sisters, we can see that the work of God on him is the longest and the most strenuous to deal with his flesh. To deal with Abraham, the severest dealing with him is himself. It is dealing with the self-light in him.

Do not think that this self is all that evil. As though this self-light is all corrupted. And so it is so easy to recognize it.

It is true that this self is full of corruption. And how selfish, how self-centered we are. And how we love ourselves.

And how we always think it is about ourselves. But brothers and sisters, it is true. It is true that our self-light is full of sin.

Right. But in this flesh there is the good part of it. And the flesh, even in the flesh, there is such thing as loving God.

You remember Peter? And Peter said to the Lord, he said, all what depart from you, I will remain true to you. And I am even willing to die for you. And because of his good intention, the so-called good part of man, and also the flesh, its humility, gentleness, and also his humility, but we also see as long as a man, even how he is called, is the good, or the good intention, and God's side is all just like filthy rag.

So we see, in Abraham's whole life, the Lord's dealing with him in the good part of his flesh is more severe than all the other parts. And so when he accepted Sarah's good suggestion, and he took Hagar as his wife, and from that he obtained Ishmael. But, because of that, God was silent for 13 years.

So my brothers and sisters, God's intention is to convert our vision into our heavenly vocation. The object of his dealing with us is the good that is in the flesh. We can never take what is good naturally to take the place of that which is spiritual.

Good intention can never substitute the will of God. Scripture tells us we those who have obtained mercy and we are to do good in God's sight. But this good in the Scripture there is a definition for what is good.

What is good in the Scripture is not what human beings consider as good. In the world, in this realm, many things we say is good. So we don't commit sin.

And we come to serve God. And we come to do what they call the sacred work. And it must be good.

But my brothers and sisters, you remember the Lord said, you can call me Lord. And in my name he cast out demons. And demons were driven out.

And in my name he preached. And people were helped. But the Lord said, I didn't know you.

You, this evil one, depart from me. Why? Because you failed to do my will. So my brothers and sisters, in our following of the Lord, in this area his dealing will be most severe.

Our natural good. Naturally we are very gentle. Then God will deal severely with you in that one issue.

And he will bring us to a point our natural gentleness comes to an end. As though we think we are self-righteous. And God will raise up our circumstances.

And bring our good will, good righteousness to the end of ourselves. And if we are naturally, we have that humility. God will raise up our circumstances.

And as you bring us to a point that we can never humble ourselves the way we humble ourselves. Originally we are to be a wise person. We think we have the ability.

Not only we have ability in the world. In a spiritual, in a sort of psychic thing we also have our own ability. And God will raise up our circumstances.

He will bring us. And everything, there is no way out at all for us. Brothers and sisters, if God is dealing us in this way, it is because he loves us.

The silence of God. That we often think if God is silent to us, as though his heart changed. He does not love us anymore.

So he will not mind for us. Brothers and sisters, when he speaks to us, he loves us. If he is silent to us, he still loves us.

He deals with us with his silence. To bring us to an end of ourselves. So in his 13 years, and we can say these are the most painful years in his life.

But praise God, even though it is this way, and he still lived in tents, and he still had light on the altar. But in his feeling, in his experience, everything seems to be contrary. As though he missed the presence of God.

And his prayer only hit the ceiling. But praise God, God's grace was still on him, upon him. And did not allow him to go back to Egypt.

And did not allow him to go back to where he came from, the old Chaldeans. And did not allow him to build his own house within the promised land. And he still lived a life of faith.

Even though there was no faith in him, remaining in him. And God was still leading him. Brothers and sisters, I am not so sure if the Lord let us this way.

Just like Jacob. Jacob had a heart to our God. He longed for God's blessing.

And he was willing to sacrifice something that is earthly. If he can gain that birthright, if he can gain the blessing of the birthright, he was willing to make all sacrifices. For brothers and sisters, God knew what was in his heart.

So God was dealing with him. He was very wise. He is very capable.

And he is always at his way. He is always on top. And it took God twenty years and let him wander away from home.

And for all his life, he never saw his mother again. God used all kinds of means in dealing with him. But he was so strong.

He thinks he knows all his ways. He will not accept defeat. And he is still the old Jacob.

And when he left Lebanon, he was still the same old Jacob. More than that. And he has a big family and he has much possessions.

But when he returned from his wandering, he wanted to see his brother. And he was afraid to see the face of his brother. And here comes Jacob.

He tried to scheme something. He tried to bribe his brother with goods. More than that.

And he still did not feel that was safe enough. And so he divided all his people in groups. And so if his brother Esau would capture that first group, the other can find a way to escape.

And so he sent all his family to the other side of the river of Jabot. But he still felt not secure. And he still felt uneasy.

And he still remained there. But thank God. So a man came and wrestled with him.

All night they wrestled. And could not overcome him. Before sunrise.

And that man touched the hip of his Jacob. And his joint was broken. He was weakened and his strength was out.

At that moment, he embraced that man. He would not let him go. He said, you must bless me.

He said, unless you bless me, I will not let you go. I have nothing now. I am finished.

I exhausted all my strength. You must bless me. At that very moment, brothers and sisters, the Lord changed his name.

You shall be called Israel. Same with Abraham. For thirteen years, God was silent to him.

Thirteen years of agonizing work of Jacob. God was still sustaining him. Kept him so that Jacob would not be powerful.

But until age ninety-nine, and God was here. This wrestling took place thirteen years. At the end of that wrestling, the Abraham came to an end of himself.

His natural strength, his natural ability, beauty, all came to an end. And then God appeared to him. I am the God Almighty.

I am almighty. I am all sufficient. I am all that you need.

I do not need your help. I take full responsibility. I have no need of help from anyone.

I am your all and in all. Walk before me. Walk perfectly before me.

Brothers and sisters, have God brought us to such a place yet? Vision demands to do a complete work in our lives. God, if God is not your all and all, he is not God to you at all. If he is not the Lord of all, he is not Lord at all.

Is he your Lord? Have you been brought to an end of yourself? Is there still something that your natural strength that still sustains in your whole life? Something in your life that substitutes God himself? Our God is a jealous God. If he is not all, then he is not all at all. So God told Abraham, Be blameless before me.

Because I am. Because who I am, therefore you can be blameless. And God changed his name.

You should not be called Abraham. Exalted father. And now you should be called Abraham.

The father of nations or father of multitude. Brothers and sisters. Humanly speaking.

One who is childless and to be called exalted father. The name and reality are just the opposite. There is a mad man.

There is not a mad man. You do not have a child. How can you call yourself an exalted father? Brothers and sisters.

He was still without child. But God said, you will be the father of multitude. And for the world this is the most foolish thing.

But faith will see the unseen future reality. God changed his name to Abraham. God said, I will make a covenant with you.

Now there will be a sign of the covenant. All the male in your household must circumcise. What does that mean? The meaning is if we are to inherit God's promise, if we are to inherit God's promise, covenant, there is no room, no place for the flesh.

Flesh must be removed. Then you can inherit all God's promises. Brothers and sisters.

In all God's promises and there are A and M only in Christ Jesus. Aside from Christ in the flesh nothing at all. Brothers and sisters.

In that very moment we see his vision gradually becomes his very life. Becomes his heavenly vocation. Now that vision enters into his very being.

God himself enters into his life. God's will now completed completely in him now. Brothers and sisters.

Same with us today. Why God used, wasted so much time? He used all kinds of time, all kinds of events as though he was really dealing with us. Sometimes we say if we do not love God we seem to have a better life.

When you love God your life seems to be more complicated. If you don't love God things seem to go quite smoothly. But if you love God you will encounter all kinds of difficulties.

Brothers and sisters. Because he loves you. Because he intends to finish his work in you.

He intends to instead convert that vision into your life's vocation. Until our name change. We are changed persons.

Christ fully formed in us. Flesh are now cut off. The sin of the flesh, the good of the flesh now all removed.

There is nothing of yourself and now he becomes dear brothers and sisters. This is God's love. Praise God.

At the end of Abraham's life at the very end of his life two things happened to him. One is the offering of Isaac. And the other is sick bride Rebecca for Isaac.

We call this last period these two events his victory. Why? It means that that vision he saw is within him making that vocation a reality. Now that vision would express that glory through Abraham's life.

The God of glory appeared to him. Now that glory want to express through Abraham's life. That is victory.

The first is offering, sacrifice. When Abraham reaches his old age we have no idea how old he was at that moment. So we can calculate by that time possibly he was in his 140's.

Because he gave birth to Isaac at the age 100's. And when Isaac married he was at the age of 14. And so at that moment Isaac was maybe in his 30's.

He is not a young child. But with that to Abraham Isaac he was still a lad. But he was already in his 30's.

And Abraham at that moment he is already 130 or so. So at that moment the scripture said God want to test Abraham. We know God never want to tempt or test anyone.

James 1 and the book of James it says God never want to tempt anyone. And he cannot be tempted. But if one who is tempted is from Satan.

It arouse the lust within. And so our lust is activated drawn out. And it result in sin.

So we can never say God tempts. God never tempt anyone. And no one can tempt God either.

If we tempt him that is a big sin. Because the Israelites in the wilderness tempted God for 3 years. At the end they cannot enter into Canaan.

But God test man. What is testing? Before testing comes God work his grace into you. He put himself into you.

And he allows circumstances to happen. And so testing is simply to draw out what God has already deposited in you and to bring it forth. And what is expressed that is glory.

So brothers and sisters why at this moment God wants to test Abraham. Because God said I have already done such a work in your life. Now I want to draw that work into you.

I want to draw it out. To allow the people to see the work that God has done. So God become his testimony.

Brothers and sisters. So God talk to Abraham. Take your son.

Your only begotten son. The one you love. Offering up on that mountain I will tell you.

Offering up as a sacrifice. Brothers and sisters. As though God was challenging him.

Take your son. That son is your only begotten son. It is the man of your old age.

It is promised on. And all the promised God is rested on this one son. And the one you love.

You bring him. A three days journey. Offering him up as a sacrifice.

If you hear such a word from Lord. What will be your reaction? God will not be can not be tempted. God is not man.

He can not say one thing and then change to another thing. He already promised me a son. He will not take it back.

Because all the promised God center on this one son. If I offer him up. Not only is lost to me.

Also God is your lost. Because your promises will not be fulfilled. So because I love you.

I will not allow to or I will not offer Isaac up to you. That is human reasoning. Very reasonable.

At that very moment. He knew God. He knew God.

He knew God to such extent. No question. The next day he rose up.

He did not negotiate with flesh and blood. And he took his son. And two of his servants.

They took the wood. They took the torch. And the knife.

And with son they journeyed to Mount Moriah. God allowed him three days. If he will return.

He can return. Brothers and sisters. But because everyone because of his faith.

Because he knew God to such extent. He was so completely self to himself. Selfless to himself.

He said God wanted to test me. So he was willing to lay down his all. And he went toward Mount Moriah.

When he arrived. He asked his servants at the foot of the mountain. So the servant cannot interfere.

He took Isaac up to the mountain. He put the wood on the back of Isaac. And his hand he carried a knife. He carried a torch. And when they arrived at the top of the mountain. Isaac asked the father. Wood is here. The fire is here. But where is the sacrifice? Abraham replied. God will provide himself a land. On the mountain. He erected an altar. He bound his son. And put it on top of the altar. He took his knife. Then God spoke. Abraham, Abraham. Don't do anything. Now I know your heart to me. And God prepared a ramp there. To take the place. So what does the scripture say? So when Abraham was prepared ready to offer up his son Isaac as a sacrifice. No. He never thought. He thought that was the. He finished. He come to that place. He believed that God can raise up Isaac. Not for himself. But for God's glory. So that all God's promise can be fulfilled. So Romans 4 tells us. And so the faith that God. The faith that Abraham had on God is the God who can raise the dead. Who can cause things that do not exist to exist. At that moment. God gets his glory. Blessed this. At that moment. How satisfied God was. God again revealed to him. Oh God take over. And God. Reaffirmed his covenant with him. But this. If this is not victory. What is it? This is the victory of faith. At this moment. God gets his glory. Brothers and sisters. The whole purpose of life. Is for that glory. God created us. That is for that glory. We are not for ourselves. We are for his will. We are for his glory. But what can glorify him? When he becomes our all in all. It's when we can be offered up absolutely all unto him. That is worship. That is service. Because that will bring God his glory. Brothers and sisters. The way Abraham. The way he did. He expressed. What really was in God's heart. This is indeed God's heart. God so loved us. He was willing to give his son to us. He will not hold back anything away from us. He was willing to give his all to us and his son. This moment. God's true heart was revealed. That's glory.

God led Abraham to such a way that through Abraham. God's heart was fully revealed. More than that. We also see. At the very moment. He prepared a bride for his son. And also at the end. He prepared a bride for his son. It is not the daughters of the Canaanites. It's from his home country. To seek a wife for his son. I'm sure you're very familiar with this story. In Genesis chapter 24. It is a very beautiful story. How Abraham sent his old servant. And to Pender Abraham. And how that old servant looked to God. At the end. He found the bride. This young lady. There was love within her. This young lady was a very diligent lady. And finally. Olson brought her back to Canaan. At the age of 40 years. Isaac was 40 years old. He married Rebecca. And we see. His heart was comforted. Right sisters? There. Abraham also. Through this event. God's heart was finally unveiled. God loves us. God loves his children. But they are not all suitable for him. God loves his son. He said I'll prepare a bride for him. Just like him. So that his heart may be comforted. Right sisters? That's the church. This is new Jerusalem. Heavenly Jerusalem. This is the city built by God. Full of God's glory. Right sisters? This is what Abraham had accomplished at the end of his life. So we can see. From the moment God appeared to Abraham. He saw a vision. Thank God. He believed. He moved toward Canada. In these many many years. God's grace sustained him. Operating in him. Until that vision becomes his very life. And now that vision from within manifests its glory. Isn't this the work God wants to do with each one of us? Right sisters? He loves us. It's about beyond what we ever think or imagine. God wants this vision to become our testimony. Everything is his work. We have no idea how we resist him. How we hinder his work. But thank God. But he can never be defeated. And those who he has predestined. And he intends to conform them to the image of his beloved son. Those he foreknew. He called. Those who he called. He justified them. And those who he justified. He glorified them. Thank God. God of glory.

We can only prostrate at your feet. From beginning to the end it's all grace. We are but only a hindrance to you.

Oftentimes we misunderstood you. Oftentimes we resisted you. But you never give us up.

You never give in. We give you praise. You will persist to work and work in our hearts until your heart is fully satisfied.

Lord, you have allowed us to see your glory. Do not let go. Do not allow us to go away from that glory.

May you work your glory into us. Until you bring all many sons to glory. All glory belongs to you.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/8/SID8441.mp3>
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/stephen-kaung/vision-3/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net