

Obedient Faith

by Teresa Conlon

Obedient faith is a living faith that grows and exercises itself, and is defined by a high and lofty concept of God that leads to obedience.

Duration: 59:35

Scripture: Genesis 22:7-8, Matthew 6:33, Romans 10:17, 2 Corinthians 5:7, Hebrews 11:6, James 2:17

Topics: "Obedient Faith", "Surrender To God"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the importance of obedient faith in the lives of believers. He emphasizes that every person who belongs to Jesus Christ has been given a measure of faith. However, it is God's desire for this faith to be active and alive, just like a child. The speaker shares a personal testimony of initially feeling resistant to doing something for the Lord, but eventually realizing the need for obedience and surrender. He encourages listeners to seek the fear of God and to value His voice above all else.

Transcript

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I want to speak to you tonight on the subject of obedient faith. Obedient faith. And you should be cheering about that.

You know when we, the scripture says when we first get saved, everybody has a measure of faith. So if you belong to the Lord Jesus Christ here tonight, you have been given a measure of faith. You have faith.

Whether you feel like you do or not, the scripture tells us you have been given a measure of faith. And now it is God's design that that be a living faith. Just like a little child, there's life in that child.

And if that child doesn't exercise and move and grow, it's designed to grow and to have life. And that's the way our faith is. And I know that many of us, when we first get saved, that incredible transformation from darkness to light, and that God Almighty knew us, saved us, knew our name.

It was like we came into the kingdom and we knew we had to obey God. And so many times when we first get saved, the battles are to forgive people. Or to tithe.

Sometimes that's even more of an ongoing battle. But it's like the Holy Ghost has us. And we begin to walk in a faith that obeys Him.

But I've noticed that as we walk with the Lord many times, it's maybe because when we start in the little things to disobey Him and the sky doesn't fall, and there seems sometimes to be no consequence to not obeying, that we begin to think that sometimes that we would never consider ourselves as people who do not obey. But we begin to substitute many times coming to the house of God and being in a worship service and performing the sacrifices as a substitute. Or that's what we need to do.

But the Scripture tells us that obedience is better than sacrifice. And I know that by the shout here tonight, that the Holy Spirit is putting something in our spirit. And that is that longing to strike out and to obey God.

Because that is where absolute life is. That's where miracles flow. I really don't think that without an obedient faith that we have the kind of faith that the world can see.

I think that when we obey God... You see, because you end up doing things you'd never think of doing. You'd end up doing things that you would never do. Unless God directed you to do it.

We wouldn't think those thoughts. And we wouldn't do them because we wouldn't have the power to do it. But now because the Holy Ghost is in us, He wants to build and He's going to give us an excitement of God, what is it like to live daily to obey you? That's an incredible thing.

And tonight we want to talk about that. You know, in Romans, this is not the text, but in Romans 1, 21, I came across a Scripture. And it says, Because that when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

And I began to think on that Scripture. And it's talking about a people that do know God, but because they glorified Him not as God. And here I think the crux of where obedience lies.

Is that we feel that we can lay aside obedience. That we don't really esteem in our heart who we are dealing with. And that we glorify Him not as God, and we sometimes take obedience as an option in our life.

And it says that those that do that, and neither were they thankful, they became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. And it's saying here that this is the spirit of a darkened human spirit, that wants to always go its own way. And when you know God, and you're not choosing His path, we begin to fill our life with vain things.

Vain means empty and worthless. Destitute of real wisdom. And so you know what we'll do, is that we have not set aside in our heart, God, I am going to obey you.

My life as a Christian is going to be defined by obedience to you. It says that our mind, and our human spirit, which will work against obeying God, a deep resistance in us, will raise its head, and we will start to be led by vain empty things. We'll begin to take in, you know, read those trashy things, and watch trashy things, and we'll begin to take the impress and the imprint of the world around us.

Even though all the while we profess to know God, we are moving in a direction that is going to lead us to a foolish darkened heart. And these people with a foolish darkened heart are going to say, I know God. But it's because all along the way the Holy Ghost was checking, no, not that, not that, not there, not them.

But because obedience, we weren't obedient, we're going down a path we had no intention when we first followed Christ to go. But there is, in the Old Testament, there is a picture of such absolute and incredible obedience by one man that staggers me. And as I began to think on this man's obedience, I said, Lord, how did he get there? How did he get that faith? Because I know when I read Romans 12:1, you tell us in the spirit of a man that knows you but will not glorify you as God, they're going to go in a direction of a vain imagination and a darkened foolish heart.

And so Abraham fought, and we're going to talk about Abraham. Abraham fought that battle. So how was it that Genesis chapter 22 is in our Bible? A story of incredible obedient faith.

And I believe that's why he's been called the father of faith. If you will turn with me to Genesis 22. And that's the story, of course, of Abraham in the latter part of his life.

He's over 100 years old, and he's being asked by God to take his only son, whom he loves, to sacrifice him. And when Abraham obeyed in chapter 22, he rightly earned that title of the father of our faith. You see, God had chosen this man from all the men, all the tribes, all the nations of the world, and said, Abraham, I want to draw you to myself and your descendants.

I'm going to pull my arms around, and you will be my people. And the Bible tells us that he believed God, and it was accounted for him as righteousness. And because now he is our father Abraham, the faith he had, because we're his children, we're his seed, we can have a like kind of faith.

His seed, that faith that typifies a belief in God that can move us to an obedience, his faith can be our faith if we're his children. There is the same seed that was in that man that can be ours today. And so Abraham learned to say, not, Lord, let me hear your commands and let me evaluate them.

But it's like he began to glorify the Lord in opposition to what the people in Romans 12:1 is. And every time, there had to have been something in his heart to say, God, I honor you as God. I want the fear of the Lord to define my life.

I want you so set apart. I don't just want you to be first. I want you to be so high above first in my life.

I want you to be completely other. And when Abraham began to have that sense and that revelation of God, he became to have not just a faith that... He became a man of exemplary faith. Now that came through a trial by fire testing of his faith.

That's what we're going to talk about tonight. But he became a man that had a lifestyle of faith that we're going to see. Not a situational faith.

Not a faith just in crisis. Not a faith just in blessing. But a faith that through it all and all time.

You see, his kind of faith was indifferent to the season he found himself in. It's like a compass that always points north. And when we have that kind of faith, the faith of our father Abraham, our heart always looks to the Lord God Almighty for our direction, for his yea, for his leading, for his guiding.

And so he became a type for us. And in Genesis 22, first three verses it says, and it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt or test Abraham and said unto him, Abraham, and he said, behold, here I am. And he said, take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains, which I will tell thee of.

And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and cleaved the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up and went into the place of which God had told him. And what, I don't know about you, but when I read those first three verses, I am astounded by the immediacy, by how he acted immediately upon that word. You and I can know that word certainly was a flesh crucifying word.

Take that son, thy only son that thou lovest. And yet swiftly, it tells us in verse three, he did. And the reason why he did, I believe, is found in Hebrews.

And it tells us in Hebrews 11, 17. Let me read it to you. It says, By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac.

And he that had received the promises, offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, that in Isaac shall thy seed be called. Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from whence he also received him in a figure. And I believe that God had Abraham on a journey of faith, so that at the end of his life, in a mature faith, he had a faith that had such a vast, high and lofty concept of God, that even though contained in this son, that he was being called to offer, every promise made to him, everything that God had ever said he would do in his life and through his life, was bundled up in the life of this son.

That Abraham could get up and obey that word. Because deep in his heart was that God, if he had to, he was going to fulfill his promise. Everything he knew about his God was God was faithful to keep his promise.

How he did it was his concern. Why he would do this, that's God's affair. But he accounted that God was able to raise that son, that he was going to ask him to slay, and raise him from the dead.

You see, beloved, this is the end result of a fear of the Lord. Of this high and lifted up and exalted view of God that says, God, when you speak to me, it's not an option to obey. It is the fruit that says, God, when you speak, you are God.

And Lord, I want to have this high view. I want to be able to say by your word, God, give me the grace, give me the strength to obey it. And the end result is a man with a faith that knows no boundaries, that knows no limitation on his God.

Because whatever God asked him to do would never contradict what God had promised him. Whatever God asked him to do would not go against the incredible blessing in his life that he had known since the day he had walked with him. You see, he did not fear to obey God because he knew in his soul that God was committed to blessing him.

That everything that God said and asked him to do, there would be life in it. There would be renewal. There would be a resurrection if needed be.

But there would be something that would be restored, renewed, given back, made whole every time he obeyed his God. And so he didn't even withhold a commandment that seemed to go against everything he had ever understood about his God. He did not withhold that which seemed God was contradicting himself.

But this incredible knowledge in his being, planted there by trials, fiery trials of his faith, that God was committed to blessing him, and God was to be obeyed, produced this in him. In chapter 16, let's turn there of Genesis 16. Genesis 16.

I want to look at three fiery trials. Three tests that Abraham went through. You see, when we first read Genesis 22, I don't know if you noticed, but it said in verse 1, and it came to pass after these things that God tried Abraham.

It came to pass after these things. What things? You see, this was not just an arbitrary test out of the blue, come sacrifice your son. But it was not a random thing.

But God had a plan. And God knew how to take the faith, a precious thing, more precious than gold, a faith that he had planted in this man. And now he knew he was going to nurture it.

He was going to put it through a fire. But it was going to come out more precious than gold. And so there was this journey, this testings of faith.

And all those that have a cry in their heart, God, I want an obedient faith. I want the kind of faith that Abraham has. Because you're telling me in your Word, that's for every believer.

That's not to be unusual. That's not to be unnatural. But the Holy Ghost is in our midst, and he's starting to burn in us, and saying there is a faith, an obedient faith, that his beloved bride can have here starting tonight.

But we need to go God's way. We need to be led by God. That's how we honor God.

We say, you lead. You know what you're doing. I'm going to trust you.

It's going to be tested. We're going to fail. There's going to be times we don't understand it.

But we're going to remember this precious man and his life. And it's going to give us courage. And the first test, the first trap, that Abraham encounters, previous to chapter 16, we see that he has had trials.

He has had testings. He has dealings with Lot, his nephew. He has, God's talking about circumcision.

There are many things. God is not all of a sudden just dealing with him in chapter 16. But beloved, there is a time in your life, if you're committed to walking with Jesus, there is a time of fiery trial.

As opposed to trials. There is a time, many times, when we are committed to walking with him, we are going to start to feel the backlash of the enemy because we are determined to walk with him. He will not be happy that we've set our heart to a course.

And we know if we fail, we just get up. We know that if we blow it, we have a Savior that forgives. We begin to know that God is not looking for us to be successful, but faithful.

And we're beginning to have this knowledge, so we're beginning to walk this way. And many times, the fiery trial is a backlash because we've set our face towards him. Many times, we're a Joseph company, that we're being trained through trial.

Trained through trial. And so here we have in chapter 16, the start of this fiery trial in Abraham's life. Not that they've started, but the fiery season has come upon him.

And it says in Genesis 16 too, And Sarah said unto Abraham, Behold now, the Lord hath restrained me from bearing. I pray thee, go into my maid. It may be that I may obtain children by her.

And Abraham hearkened to the voice of Sarah. And here we have a situation where his wife says, God has restrained me. Now, when you look up that word restrained, it means withhold self.

It means resigned. It means closed up. And she does not realize with her speech how much she's betraying her heart.

But she's saying, Abraham, I am withholding myself. There have been promises made here, but I'm losing patience. I'm losing hope.

I'm resigned that the promises of God are going to go, but I'm not sure that they pertain to me. I'm closed up. I've been hoping, but I know time's marching on.

I'm not a fool. I have a mirror. And she's saying to him that the promises of God I'm closed up to, I'm withholding myself from them.

I don't want to get hurt. And Abraham is now in a spiritual circle. He's in a spiritual place where there is a people who could have the potential now to blame God for their spiritual barrenness around him.

And when you're close to people with less of a spiritual understanding than you, that can be family members or friends. It can be leaders. It can be fellow believers.

You have a faith that can still reach up and believe, but those around you and those intimately connected to you, they can't. And they begin to influence you. And the Scripture says he hearkened to her voice.

Now, I know that Abraham had to have misgivings because God had been dealing and speaking to him so clearly, but the Scripture says he hearkened to her voice. He hearkened to the voice. Not just her voice, but what was behind those words.

What they were really saying he was perceiving in his spirit man. He hearkened to the voice. And it says in the next verse, it says, You see, she was losing hope.

It had been ten years they had dwelt in this promised land. And she was beginning to lose hope. I don't know if he was beginning to lose hope.

I don't know if his faith at this point was lessened. But, beloved, he hearkened to the voice. And so we see this influence.

And he went in and she conceived. And, beloved, when you sow an unbelief, you get a harvest you don't want. And verse 4, it tells us, He went in unto Hagar and she conceived.

And when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes. And now here is a harvest that Sarai is beginning to reap in her life. There is an unbelief growing in her.

And she has come up with this plan. And her husband hearkened to her voice. And now, all of a sudden, this serving girl, the Bible says, is despised in her eyes.

And that word despised in her eyes means to be lightly esteemed. To be of small worth. And you see, when unbelief begins to get a hold of us, we are no threat to our enemy anymore.

And we begin to feel diminished and worthless. Small and not esteemed. And you begin to think that the people around you that have faith are judging you.

You begin to feel that little worth. You begin to feel that light esteeming of the enemy. And the Scripture says that she began to blame.

She began to lash out. And she says, she complains to her husband. And in verse 5, Sarai said to Abraham, My wrong be upon thee.

She is the one who has given her maid. But now, it's like as this horrible harvest begins to happen in her life, and her enemy begins to lightly esteem her, and she begins to feel how unbelieving she was. And now this woman isn't enjoying a child that she had seemingly been promised.

And now the Scripture says that she says, My wrong be upon thee. But beloved, the trap for Abraham is that he'd play the blame game back. Feeling the sting of rebuke.

And in verse 6, he says to her, Behold, thy maid is in thy hand. Do to her as it pleases thee. And he's basically saying, this is your problem.

Deal with it. But the problem is, it's not just her problem. It's not just her problem.

It's now their problem. And you know, beloved, this happens so many times. When the enemy, when we want to step forth with all our heart and walk a walk of faith, you're going to feel I could be so much more if somebody, that one wasn't there.

I could be so much greater in God if I didn't have to deal with their unbelief. If I didn't have to deal with their questions. If I didn't have to deal with their working against me.

I could be so much better if I wasn't in this situation. And this woman, this atmosphere that he lives in, Abraham goes home to a home not brimming with belief. Abraham doesn't walk in the door and she's singing Rock of Ages.

There is turmoil at the bottom of his home. And there is so much, he lives in an atmosphere of unbelief. And he lives in an atmosphere where they would like to turn their sword on him.

That he becomes the problem if he begins to show any sign of belief, speak belief. And the child of this scheming, in verse 12 it says, And he will be a wild man. His hand will be against every man.

And every man's hand against him. And here, I'm going to be speaking of Ishmael back and forth in this message. On one level, it's a spiritual type.

And another, it's a very human type. And right now, in this spiritual type, Ishmael is representing when we put our own human effort forth to achieve the promises of God. Abraham, I don't think at any thought, when God gave him those promises, that he was going to have to be the one to fulfill it.

Because the Scripture says he believed God when God said, I would give you this. But as he's in this atmosphere and he begins to say, you know, that does make a lot of sense. He does not realize that he can take the impress and the print around him.

That is the design of the enemy. He says that, you know what, you can't survive spiritually in this atmosphere. You can't hold on to my promises here.

With those ringed around you. And now he has this Ishmael. And God's saying, what you've set your hand to, I cannot call mine.

God's saying, you brought this forth. When I said, faith in me, I would bring forth the promise. But beloved, to overcome blame.

That is how Abraham was taught. That God be God to me right now. God be God to me right now.

I live in an atmosphere where everything is working against a faith I long to have in you. And God, there's something that wants to rise up in me and blame back. There's something where I want to take my sword out against them as surely as they take their spiritual sword out against me.

But the Scripture, when we say, God, show me truth. And open my eyes and ears to hear what you're saying right now. And beloved, when we open our eyes to our part in the folly, the blame chain ceases.

When Abraham could begin to see, you know, that atmosphere, this is your problem. You deal with it. No, no, no, no, no, no.

When he had to say, God, show me here what is happening in my home. Show me, you know, I have faith, I don't believe they do. God, show me.

And God begins to show them, Abraham, you think you're more than you are. You've had a part in this. You have hearkened.

You have put your hand and more to this. And now you're responsible for this. And when we begin, beloved, when we refuse in our situation to play the blame game.

If only they weren't here, if only I didn't live there. God, you know I want faith, but you know where I live. You know what I face.

You know who the people are. You know the situation. And say, God, no.

Be God to me. Show me what I need to see in this situation. Show me that so much I contribute by my own hand to this situation.

That you cannot, you're prevented from working and being God to me. Because I was blinded to my own folly and my own sin. My own hand in this.

A true heart search and a true humility when we can own our own sin breaks that blame chain. And, beloved, I'll tell you what else it does. We learn afresh and anew that sin is hell.

Sin is hell. To the believer, sin is hell. When the Spirit of God lives in us and we transgress the law.

Sin is hell. It is those of Romans 1-7. Not listening.

Not heeding. Playing lightly with their sin. They end up with a darkened heart and a vain imagination.

But those that say, God, I want the faith of Abraham. Sin becomes hell. And that is what that keeps us tender.

That keeps saying, God, I run to you. Open my eyes. Show me there's not something right.

And he does. God is faithful. God is faithful.

And those that want the faith of Abraham are going to experience sin as hell. And we thank God for it. We thank God for that.

And then with repentance we experience a new beginning. And that's exactly what happened to Abraham in chapter 17. In verses 1-3, it says, And when Abraham was 90 years old, he was 86 when Ishmael was born.

But when Abraham was 90 years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abraham and said unto him, I am the almighty God. Walk before me and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee.

And will multiply thee exceedingly. And Abraham fell on his face. And God talked with him.

And here we see that wonderful fruit of God. You're God to me. I bow my knee to you.

I bow my head to you. When you talk, I listen. I'm humbled.

I'm humbled you know me. You speak to me. You want to use me.

I'm humbled, God, that I blew it. And you still speak to me. I'm humbled, God, that when I was haughty and I wanted to blame people as much as they blamed me.

When I wanted to go in another direction, you opened my eyes. I'm humbled, God, you're still going to use me. And the promises were still right on track.

You're an awesome God. And it begins to see, God, your heart is so to bless me. God, everything you deal with me is to bless me.

God's first words to Abraham in Genesis 12 was, I will bless thee. I will make thee exceedingly great nation. I will multiply thee.

And through thee all the nations of the world will be blessed. God's first word to him was blessing, blessing, blessing, Abraham. And he never forgot that.

And so God's showing his heart. I'm going to bless you, Abraham. The promise is still on track.

You learned the lesson through the blame game. And you're honoring me. But now a second trial of faith is coming to Abraham.

And that is he must learn to refuse to live in regret. To refuse to learn to live in regret. You see, when God gave him that promise and spoke to him, And he said in verse 16 and 17 of chapter 17, Genesis 17.

In verse 16 and 17. When God talked to him, he said, I will bless Sarah. I will bless her and give thee a son also of her.

I will bless her and she shall be a mother of nations and kings of people. Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed. And he was knowing this blessing, but now something is happening now.

And he says in verse 18. He says, And Abraham said unto God, All that Ishmael might live before thee. You see, his sin had a consequence.

You know, many times you will find this true. We will sin and God in his graciousness will cancel the consequence. I've had that happen many times.

But God in his sovereignty, and he's allowed to do that. God in his sovereignty, there will be times there will be sin. The consequence will follow.

The consequence won't be wiped away. And in this case, the consequence was Ishmael. And here, the Bible says that Sarah, this relationship has been renewed again.

Sarah has been told she's going to have a child. But the problem is he has a son already. And now, he says, Oh, that Ishmael might live before thee.

And that word live means, Oh, that Ishmael to have a life anew. Oh, that you could rebuild his life. That's what that word live right there means.

That you would rebuild and give a life anew to him. And Sarah could easily reject Ishmael. But Ishmael was Abraham's son.

He was flesh of his flesh. And although Ishmael is a spiritual type, of when we try to fulfill God's word to us, and promise to us, and God's work to us in our own flesh with our own sweat. He also was a very human young boy.

He also was a real child who grew up in Abraham's midst. And he grew up into Abraham's heart. It was his son.

And the cry, Oh, that a life, a purpose, and a place before you, oh God, might be for Ishmael. God, my life is in you. And God, I don't want any less for him.

Oh, that he could be brought anew before you. And this child is growing up. And this child is not his wife's child.

And he's stigmatized. And the realization that his life is diminished because of his failure. That this boy has a diminished life as a consequence of his sin.

And that cry, Oh, that he might live before thee. And that cry that God says, Beloved, only when you let God be God to you can you hear this answer. When God says no.

Can God say no to you? Can God say no to your heart cry and your faith doesn't fall apart? Can God say no to you and with all your being you believe you're right? Can God say no to you and you have no

understanding why he would give you a no? When everything you knew about him should be saying yes. Can God say no to you? And now with God's no you can just begin to feel how the regret wants to deepen in him. How that regret wants to dig in.

And how sensitive we are, beloved, when it comes to failure with our children. When raising them we didn't have the light. Raising them we didn't have the light.

And now we look at them and we feel that they are diminished because of our failure. And it's like a worm in us eating and turning. And we're feeling that regret.

But, beloved, there's a way out. And the scripture tells us that in acceptance, where it says, where God says, I have another plan, Abraham. And in Genesis 17, verse 18 he says, Oh that Ishmael might live.

And verse 19, and God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son and thou shalt call his name Isaac. And I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant. And with his seed after.

God is saying, this is what I've ordained. This is what shall be. And the first step to moving out of a regret that churns and eats like worms inside you.

That forever wants to bring that heaviness. That forever wants you to stay low. Forever wants us to keep us out of that joyfulness of walking with Christ.

That keeps us from truly being able to joyfully obey Him. Where we always feel the condemnation and the sting and the power of it. Where it says, when God says, this is how it shall be.

This is my plan, Abraham. First there must come acceptance. I have a plan, Abraham.

But then, there needs to be trust. Because although we can't change the past and the failure. God can change things.

I said, God can change things. We can't change that past, but God changes things. And because we're beginning to understand it's hard to bless us.

And because we're beginning to say, God I want to honor you. And I don't have a right to dictate to you, to tell you how you'll do it. That the way you choose will be the way I will accept.

But God, I have a hope. Because you say that it is in your heart to bless. And it says in verse 20, God speaks to him.

And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee. Behold, I have blessed him. And I will make him fruitful.

And will multiply him exceedingly. Twelve princes shall he beget. And I will make him a great nation.

God is saying, look at, on this real level with this real boy. I have blessed him. You've been crying out for me to do something that's been in my heart all along to do.

But I have blessed him and I will bless him. And beloved, I take such comfort in that. Because God's plan goes on in our life when we choose to follow him.

But his blessings can rest on our regrets. His blessing can rest on our regrets. You know how that happens? It's like the Lord gave me a picture.

That regret is like a branding iron. At first season, when this branding iron comes down, there is pain. There is pain.

And it's like regret needs to sometimes do a full work in us. Sometimes that's the way we open our eyes and look. It's sometimes the way God gets our attention.

It's some ways that we face up to things we'd rather not. But when there comes a time when that mark has been impressed. There's a time where God says, enough.

And that branding iron lifts. And beloved, we're marked with the cross. That speaks to me, there's a cross on our regrets.

And beloved, there's no more pain. There's a scar, but there's no more pain. But the cross on the regret says, grace.

Grace on that situation. It says, I will change it. I have the power.

I'll do it my way. But I'll tell you something. My heart is, I have blessed that boy.

And I am blessing that boy. And I will continue to bless that boy. Only God can do work on so many levels like that.

God can work on the level of his plan, go forward with Isaac. But he says, Ishmael is still precious to me. That boy is still precious.

Although he will forever be the type of the kind of choice we are not to make. Grace, grace marks our regrets. And finally, the third lesson of a fiery trial that Abraham had to go through.

That third lesson is found in Genesis 21. And here in this chapter is where God asks, commands Abraham to send Ishmael away. That Ishmael in the spiritual type now is where we are called to give up all our plans of our own.

Leaving every preconceived idea of how and when and why and where we are going to serve God. We have to every hidden motive and every unsundered love. And all that is entwined in our heart that God says has to go.

We need to obey him in it. And in Genesis 21, 8 to 11. It says, And the child grew and was weaned.

And Abraham made a great feast in the same day that Isaac was weaned. And Sarah saw the son of Hagar, the Egyptian, which he had borne unto Abraham, mocking. Wherefore she said unto Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son.

For the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac. And the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight because of his son. And I believe, you know, there's so many reasons why it's grievous.

One is Abraham knows it's got to be. Beloved, you know when God's putting his finger on something. It must be.

You see this son was mocking. These things mock that holy desires that God is beginning to build into you. A fire that he himself is kindling in your heart.

For a faith that is obedient. A faith that's extravagant. A faith that God can someday along the journey of your walk.

There is nothing you will withhold from him. That's Abraham's faith at the end of his life. And God knows he's putting things on his finger on things in our lives.

That mock. That fire. That spirit he's giving.

They will forever come against what God is building in your life. You may think you can live with them for a season. In your own understanding, you can see why there has... You see no reason why there needs to be a parting.

But God knows what's at the base of that thing. That thing that you loved. You know we love our Ishmael's.

They're flesh of our flesh. We love them. And they're entwined in our hearts.

But it will mock and it will go against. It will constantly come against that spirit that God has put in you. And God says it has to go.

And Abraham knew that. And it was grievous in his sight. And that word grievous.

Very grievous means an attitude that rejects God's authority. An attitude that rejects God's authority. Now if we look up to Abraham in his life.

He's not going to just one day turn on a switch and say I think I will reject God's authority. This man has not walked with his God that long. That he wakes up one day and that's what he faces.

No beloved. The enemy is far more subtle than that. Because the command is cast out the son.

Cast out the son. And the subtlety will be how could God ever ask you to do a thing like that. There's going to be a separating come in your heart.

And everything within you is going to say that's not God's voice. That can't be God. God would not do that.

God would never put out of his presence his son. Or so Abraham could think. But God will never be fully God to you and I. Till we can trust him and obey him when he does not make sense to us.

God will never be fully God to us. Where we have to constantly reserve the big why. Explain it to me.

I don't understand that. When we demand to know. When we demand to say God I have to understand this.

You know how precious this is to me. You know what this is going to cost me. So you need to explain this to me.

I need to understand this before I will obey you. Now we may never be so bold as to put it in those clear terms. But I'll tell you Jesus told the parable about two sons.

There was a son who they were both asked to go work in the vineyard. Jesus used it as a parable. And one son said I go father but he never went.

And the other son said I'm not going. But then conviction came upon him. And he repented and he went in the field.

And he turned to his disciples and he said which one did the will of the father? You see because we'll never be so bold say I will not obey you. Tell. We'll say I'm going to obey you.

I'm going to obey you. I'm going to obey you. Just tell me why.

I'm going to obey you. But we'll never go. I'm going to obey you.

But it will never happen. Because beloved delayed obedience is not obedience. Delayed obedience is not obedience.

Partial obedience is not obedience. That is what we'll hide behind and say I'm going to the field. And I'll never do the will of my father.

I will have myself so convinced that I obey him. But I will never begin to move into the glory of an obedient faith. I will never begin to know what it is to love him with all my heart, soul, mind and strength.

Because he says those that love me obey me. I will never know what it is to work in a miracle working realm. Because when we step out one foot after another to obey him.

Something incredible takes place. And I'm going to show. I'm going to close with what that is.

But we will be deluded. And I'll tell you something. The enemy will be so subtle on this point.

Because he so fears an obedient faith. That's what shakes his kingdom. When we determine in our heart.

Lord God I will obey when you speak. I will have the fear of you in me. And I will be so convinced your heart is to bless me in it.

No matter what you ask me to do. That when we've got that in our heart. And we begin to step forward.

I'll tell you something. It's like you're on a conveyor belt. You just get into the divine flow.

Because it all happens here in the heart. When we determine we'll do this. We step on that conveyor belt of God.

And we move forward. That's why Abraham got up early the next morning. And he just set his face to Moriah.

He could do it because he determined in his heart he would obey. Beloved we can determine in our heart we will obey. But the enemy needs to deceive us on this point.

I'll obey you God. I'm obeying you God. Just give me a why.

Just give me time. Just give me understanding. Just do a few things for me.

Then I'll obey you. And we'll never be convinced otherwise that we're not. But we're not.

And so it was very grievous to Abraham. An attitude that wanted to reject God's authority. Not an outright one.

But how can this be you God? Explain this to me before I obey you. A grievous temptation to reject. And then on top of it all.

In chapter 21 verses 12. It says and God said unto Abraham. Let it not be grievous in thy sight.

He's saying I'm understand. Because of the lad. And because of the bond woman.

In all that Sarah has said unto thee. Hearken unto her voice. Now here is the woman.

And the exact attitude that got him into trouble in the first place. And here along the way. As we begin to follow God.

I'll tell you something. He seems to give contradictory advice. Or so it seems.

But beloved it's a test. Am I God to you when it doesn't make sense? Am I God to you when it contradicts everything that you think? Now beloved there is another voice that will try to deceive us. I am talking about when you know.

Like you know. God is telling you speak to her. God is saying confess to that thievery.

You'll know. Because I'll tell you something. Your flesh would never do it.

And when we say God. You've got. I am determined to obey you in this.

And you're going to show me in your word. It is the most incredible thing. But the Bible says that Abraham obeyed.

Abraham obeyed. And there was a separating in his life. And then it brings us to chapter 22.

And he's been learning all this. Lessons. He now takes his son up.

And one of my most favorite verses in the whole Bible. Is says. Verse seven.

And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father and said my father. And he said here am I my son. And he said behold the fire and the wood.

But where is the lamb for a burnt offering. And Abraham said. You see beloved.

When you begin to obey God. God will fill your mouth with wisdom. You will not have to be explaining yourself to people on the left and on the right.

And Abraham said. My son. God will provide himself.

A lamb. For a burnt offering. So they went both of them together.

And it said. You know. You know the story.

How he laid the wood out. And then he lifted up his hands. And then an angel of heaven stopped his hand.

And said Abraham. Don't do it. Because now I know that thou fearest God.

Because you've not withheld your only son. Of course it's spoken from a God. Who would not withhold his only son.

And it says. In verse 14. And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah Jireh.

Jehovah Jireh. The name of that place where God spared his hand. But would not spare his.

Jehovah Jireh means God sees. God knows. God provides.

And beloved. When we said to our face. To say God I want that faith.

Lord I have been disobedient in so many areas. And wanted to give it another name. But Lord I know that the moment that I set myself.

To say God. I put my hand in yours. Right on King Jesus.

And that we begin to walk that walk of faith. An obedient faith. He says that he will be to us on that Mount Moriah.

Because that's a picture of type. Of what it is to walk in an obedient faith. It costs something.

But I'll tell you something. God will only bless you through it. God will only provide through it.

And all the while we will have the strong consolation. That as we turn all the struggle to him. As we begin to say God I cannot do this.

Unless you walk with me. He says I know. I see it.

And I will provide. But I love what it says. When I meditated on this.

What is God going to provide? He says right in that verse. He says in verse 9. He says. No verse 8. My son.

God will provide himself. See we read God will provide himself a lamb. But beloved in the New Testament.

God will provide himself. When we set our heart to obey. And he asks us to give up things.

He says I'll replace it with myself. When he says I want to lay down the blame. I'm going to teach you a new way to walk and live in your home.

He says I'm going to provide myself to be the strength. He says when I ask you to give me that regret. Because I'm going to give you a future and hope.

It's because I'm going to provide myself. And everything I ask you to do. That you do in obedience.

You're going to walk in the glory realm of myself being provided for you. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

Because when we choose an obedient walk. We can go every step of the way. Jehovah Jireh.

God himself. God will provide himself for me. And a new revelation of Jesus Christ comes into our heart with an obedient faith.

He knows what an obedient faith costs. He knows what it means. But he says a glory will come into your soul.

Because I'll give you myself. Beloved in this day and age. We don't need more clever people.

We need people that bear Jesus Christ. That they are the revelation of Christ. But it comes no other way than we set our faith to say.

Lord God. The most fearful thing I've ever said. Lord I would have an obedient faith.

I just quickly want to close with. I probably have told this story before. But forgive me if you've heard it.

But you know. This one time when I was a young Christian. I was in a church.

And I had to take care of the nursery. And take care of all the kids. And I had not been in church a long, long time.

And finally one Sunday I got to be in church. And I was so delighted to be there. And a young preacher was going to preach.

And I'd never heard him before. And as the kids got up to go. I looked in the back.

And I saw that the lady who was teaching that. Was the wife. Was the preacher's wife.

And it was funny because I had a fleeting thought. And I thought. I wonder what it would be like to hear your husband speak.

But of course that was ridiculous. I'd married a police officer. Just like.

He would never think. I wonder what it's like to hear my wife speak. Because that's ridiculous.

He married a housewife. But. I looked back and it was the preacher's wife.

And I thought. You know. That's terrible.

They shouldn't have scheduled her to teach. While he's speaking. And we're getting ready.

You know. To hear the word. And I'd been in church so long.

I was just drinking and everything. And the Lord spoke to me. And says.

Go back and take her place. And I thought. This can't be God.

I mean. God. Do you have something about me being in church? And.

It wouldn't go away. So I thought. I know.

I'll turn to my husband. And I'll say. Dear.

I think I'm supposed to go relieve her. And of course. He'll say.

No. No. No.

You. You need to be here. And he said to me.

Well. You know. If it's God.

Do it. So. I thought.

Oh. Brother. So I'll go down.

And I'll knock on her door. And say. Excuse me.

Marga. I'm supposed to teach for you. And she's going to say.

And. Do you have something about being in church? I don't know. It's so ridiculous to me.

But it wouldn't go away. And so I got up. And I left.

I did not want to do it. This was my Sunday in church. And I walked down the hall.

And I knocked on the door. And I said. Marga.

I think I'm supposed to teach for you. And she threw the book at me. And ran down the hall.

And Jehovah Jireh. We had a lesson. We had a great time.

But I did not know. That that man was dying of cancer. And that was the last sermon he ever preached.

And she knew that. And you know beloved. If.

God is never asking us to do hard things. It's probably because we won't. I wish that was my story all the time.

But just three short years ago. I was sitting in a Bible study. And someone was sharing their testimony.

And when they finished speaking. I was rooted to my chair with my head down. Because that woman was sharing a testimony.

And what she said she did for the Lord. I knew I would never do. God could never ask me to do that.

Never. Because I wouldn't do it. And many of us are sitting here tonight.

And God's not asked you to do anything for a long while. And that's because he knows you won't. Beloved tonight can be a new night.

We can step into a realm. Of a glory. And obedience we never thought we could do.

But when we say God I need the fear of you. I need to set you apart in my heart. That when you speak I give it the value.

Of God almighty speaking to me. And it's not an option. I'll tell you something.

We will be revolutionized. He will be God to us. Would you stand? As the musicians come.

I'm trusting that the Holy Ghost. Has lit a cry for an obedient heart. In many here tonight.

Where you would honestly say. I really feel I have been one of the deluded ones. Saying I obey you God.

But you know in your heart of hearts. There's many things he can't ask you to do. Because you won't.

Or delayed obedience you've been telling yourself. Or partial obedience is good enough. God will provide himself.

To all those that will. Walk in Abraham. Walk of faith.

You come. The Lord is speaking to you. About walking in obedience.

Like you have never done before. When you walk up here what we do. Is we bring our fears to the altar.

And we bring our failures to the altar. We bring all the times. That we he has asked.

And we have not. Because he does not despise our struggle. And he's not limited.

By how unfaithful we are. He is not limited. By how weak we are.

God always operates on the level. What's your heart? What's your heart? Because it's with the heart. That's how you find me and seek me.

That's where I move through. That's where I change you. That's where it all happens.

That this is the heart cry. Oh God. We put our very little hand.

In your crucified one. And we say right on. King Jesus.

No man can hinder you. Hallelujah. And Lord we thank you that our fear.

Our failure. And Lord that times of our reluctance. Will not hinder you.

From God being merciful to us. Being gracious to us. Being long suffering with us.

Until you form an obedient. Faith in us. And then Lord.

We'll give you all the glory. Because Lord we know. That you would bless us tonight.

With this heart. That we may glorify you. In a way we never thought possible.

In Jesus name we pray. Amen and Amen. This is the conclusion of the message.

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