

Abraham's Example As A Father

by Zac Poonen

This sermon delves into the significance of being spiritual descendants of Abraham, emphasizing the qualities in Abraham that God valued and desires to see in us. It explores the obedience and faithfulness of Abraham, particularly in the context of commanding his children to walk in righteousness. The message highlights the importance of fathers taking responsibility for raising their children in the ways of the Lord, drawing parallels between Abraham's obedience and the blessings that follow, and the need for believers today to prepare the way for the second coming of Christ by fulfilling a similar ministry to John the Baptist.

Scripture: Galatians 3:29, Genesis 18:17, Genesis 22:9, Luke 1:17, Ephesians 6:4, Malachi 4:6

Topics: "Faithfulness", "Spiritual Legacy"

Description

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Transcript

It's—the Word of God is so amazing that you can read it for many years and still discover something that you never took seriously or never hit you so much earlier. So here's something that came to my heart more recently from Galatians chapter 3. We know that the Jews were called—people of Israel were called the descendants of Abraham, and we have a heavenly father. But here in Galatians 3, it's an amazing verse in 29.

If you belong to Christ, and we say we do, then you are Abraham's descendants. I'm a descendant of Abraham, heirs according to the promise. So when the New Testament, the Holy Spirit calls me a descendant of Abraham—it's obviously spiritually because physically I'm not—it means there's something in Abraham that I need to understand which calls me his spiritual descendant.

It never says that I'm a descendant of Moses or I'm a descendant of David, and some of these are great men. It only says I'm a descendant of Abraham, and Abraham is not one of those people who a lot of Christians admire very much. We tend to admire Moses for the wonderful things he did, and David killing Goliath, and things like that.

But what was it about Abraham that the Lord appreciated that he wants to see in us? Turn with me to Genesis, please, and here we have a little passage where God is thinking something, and that's written down in Scripture, what God is thinking, and that's found in Genesis in chapter 18. When it says in Genesis 18, verse 17, the Lord said—he wasn't saying that to anybody, he was just saying that himself—the Lord said to himself. So one of those rare passages in Scripture where we are given an insight into what God was thinking, not what he was saying to anybody, and what was he thinking? What was God in heaven thinking? Shall I hide from Abraham what I'm about to do? Because Abraham is going to be a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth will be blessed through him.

See, that's a statement never made about David, or Moses, or any of the other great men, Elijah, Elisha. All the nations of the earth are going to be blessed through Abraham. And now it tells you why God chose him.

We can say God went into Ur of the Chaldees and picked out somebody. I mean, he could have picked out anybody, but here he tells us a reason why he chose him. He looked into Abraham's heart.

I have chosen him. Why? What purpose? So that he may command his children and his family after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness. And when he does that, then the Lord will be able to bring upon Abraham what he has spoken about.

So, if God is to fulfill what God has promised Abraham to do, there's a condition. The condition is, first of all, God has chosen him, but he's chosen him with the primary purpose that he will command his children. That's a lovely word, not bring up his children.

We talk about bringing up your children, but we are supposed to command our children. Abraham commanded his children and his family, and this is where we are to be descendants of Abraham, to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice. So that, I mean, that's a condition.

If that's not done, the Lord will not be able to bring him through you, but he chose you and me that we might command the children God has given us. God has given you children. He's given me children, and it's not Sarah's job to bring them up.

God did not choose Sarah for that. Sarah can help Abraham. Like God said that Eve could be a helper to Adam, to whatever Adam's job was to be a gardener in Eden, and Eve could help him.

So, God has given a woman to be a helper, not to be a leader, and if Abraham is to bring up his children in godly ways, Sarah is to be a helper, but she's not the one responsible for bringing up the children. It is Abraham who has to command his children, to keep the way of the Lord. What does he command his children to do? Keep the way of the Lord.

Do righteousness, and then the Lord will be able to bring upon Abraham what he has spoken. And you see a great example of that in Genesis 22, when Abraham took Isaac up to the Mount Moriah, to the top of Mount Moriah. This is a very significant, because, you know, if you study scripture, I don't have time to show it to you, but this is the exact spot where the Lord built his temple, through Solomon.

You read that in 2 Chronicles 3.1, in the place where Abraham offered up Isaac, God told Solomon, build a temple there. That's in 2 Chronicles 3.1. So, it was something, I mean, Abraham didn't know that, but it was a very sacred spot, because Abraham commanded his son. What did he tell his son to do? You know, he made the altar, he put the wood, he got whatever it was to light the fire, and Isaac says, where's the

sacrifice? Abraham said to Isaac what no man has ever told his son, you are the sacrifice.

Now, go and lie down there. Now, remember, Isaac was not a small boy. It says, and you read carefully, he carried the wood up all the way up that mountain.

I guess he must have been around 20 years old to carry all that wood up the mountain. Imagine telling your 20-year-old son, lie down on the altar, I've got a knife here, I'm going to kill you, I'm offering up to God, you have been a wonderful father. You have been a wonderful father if your 20-year-old obeys you.

You're a true descendant of Abraham. But you can't expect that from a 20-year-old if you don't start when he is one. If Abraham did not start with Isaac when he's one year old, Isaac would have told Abraham, go get lost, I'm not going to lie down here, go get some animal to kill.

I don't believe God ever told you to sacrifice me. He would have dared to tell his dad, I don't believe God ever told you that. That's the way a lot of children of Christians today speak to their parents.

Abraham would not tolerate that in his child even when he was three or four years old. Isaac, you dare not talk like that to me. He commanded his children so that God could bring upon him all that he promised.

There was a condition, and what a testimony that was. There's not a testimony like that anywhere in the Scripture of a man, of a young man who obeyed his father like that. It's one of the outstanding examples in the entire Bible of a son obeying his father as a grown-up son, obeying such a difficult command.

Doesn't he want to live? And his father is going to kill him? He doesn't know the end of the story. He doesn't know that God's going to stop him. He thinks, this is the end of my life, and he accepts it.

It's a challenge to me. I ask myself, have I brought up my sons like that? That if I tell them to lie down, I'm going to kill you, I'm going to offer you up to God, they'll lie down and say, okay, dad, help me, Lord. I'm supposed to be a descendant of Abraham.

It's quite something. And when he did it, God kept his word so that I can bring upon Abraham all that I promised for him. It's not automatic.

I tell you, brothers and sisters, there's nothing automatic in the Christian life. Even forgiveness of sins is a condition. Repent and believe.

And the devil is always eliminating the conditions. If he has removed repentance from the gospel, he's eliminated the major part of the gospel. Just believe.

And that belief becomes an intellectual thing. Come forward, sign a decision card, and believe. Signed.

Okay. You're a child of God. Now, almost go and live as you like.

You know, you've got a citizenship of heaven now, your passport. Nobody can take it away from you. This is the world Christian Christendom that we are living in.

Don't let your children grow up believing that false gospel. Repent and then believe. So when God saw that he had, it says here in verse 9, Genesis 22, Abraham built the altar, arranged the wood, and just as if it was a very small thing, bound his son Isaac on the altar.

How easily it's written there. He laid the altar and arranged the wood and just bound the son as if it was such an easy thing. It wasn't easy for Abraham.

It wasn't easy for Isaac. But there I see, perhaps more than in any other example in the entire Bible, of a man who brought up his son to obey what he said. And we read that in Genesis 18, so that God can bring upon Abraham all that he promised, because he will bring up his son to obey me.

And we are Abraham's descendants. And when he did that, of course, the Lord stopped him. And he said, now don't stretch your hand out against the land.

12, verse 12, do nothing. Now I know that you fear God. When will God say to you and me, now I know that you fear God.

When I come to church regularly, no. When I sing well, no. When I can preach well, no.

When I have learned to obey what He told me. When I've learned to bring up my son in obedience, the Lord on high will say to you, now I know that you fear me. You did not take my commands lightly.

And there is no limit now to how much I'll bless you. That's the meaning of what he's saying in verse 17. Abraham, there's no limit now of how much I'm going to bless you.

I want to be in that. I'm a descendant of Abraham. I want to be in that line where God says to me, there's no limit to how much I will bless you and I will use you.

Lord, make me like that. I want to be like that. I don't want to be great in the eyes of men.

That's trash, rubbish. But I want you to say that you will bless me and make me a blessing. And that the children, God tells Abraham, the children you brought up in obedience, verse 17, the last part, they will defeat the enemies and occupy the enemy's territory of the gates.

What a promise. Lord, pray that, my brothers and sisters, fathers, pray that, that your children will possess the gate of their spiritual enemies. They'll be overcomers.

That's the meaning of that. And, you know, I've often thought of John the Baptist, who was one who prepared the way for the coming, first coming of Christ. Today, the church, that's you and me, are to prepare the way for the second coming of Christ.

So we've got to have a very similar ministry to John the Baptist. That applies to all of us. It's not one person.

And it says about Abraham, sorry, John the Baptist, in Luke chapter 1, a prophecy of John the Baptist, the angel came to Zechariah and told him in Luke 1.13, you're going to have a son. And verse 15, he'd be great in the sight of the Lord, John the Baptist. And he will, see what it says in verse 17, he'll go as a forerunner, and apply that to ourselves in the spirit of Barn Elijah, to turn the hearts, this is one of the ministries of John the Baptist, remember, to turn the hearts of the fathers back to the children.

What's the meaning of that? Is there any father who doesn't love his child? It's not that. Turning the hearts of fathers in the last days to take responsibility for their children and not blame the mother if the children are wayward. It's got nothing to do with the mothers.

Fathers, and thus to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. And that's why throughout the New Testament, it says fathers, bring up your children. Ephesians chapter 6. Children, obey your parents.

But then it doesn't say parents, bring up your children. Ephesians 6.4. Fathers, bring up your children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. The commandment is not to Sarah, it is to Abraham.

One last verse. It's from which, which is just quoted in Luke. It's the last word, verse in the Old Testament.

Malachi 4, verse 6. Verse 5 and 6. I'm going to send Elijah, the prophet, before the coming of the day of the Lord. And that was John the Baptist, and for the first coming of the Lord. And the Elijah for the second coming of the Lord is the church.

The church is the prophet, no one individual. We all have got to be part of that Elijah prophet of the last days, who will restore the hearts of the fathers to the children, verse 6. That means the prophetic ministry of the church is to get fathers to take responsibility for their children, to turn them towards the Lord. Otherwise it's so serious if that doesn't happen.

Because when they do that, the children's heart, verse 6, will also be turned towards the fathers. That when the father says, lie down on that altar, I'm going to kill you, they'll obey you. May God help us to bring up our children like that.

Amen.

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