

Driving the Stake of Righteousness

by Zeb McDaris

The sermon emphasizes the importance of obedience and faith in establishing a righteous relationship with God, as exemplified by Abraham and Phinehas.

Duration: 1:05:15

Scripture: Genesis 15:6, Psalm 106:30, Romans 4:3-9, Galatians 3:6, James 2:23

Topics: "Righteousness"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher talks about the annoyance of being constantly told about the wrongdoings of others, especially when it comes to children. He emphasizes the importance of obedience and refers to the story of Saul, who disobeyed God's commands and faced consequences. The preacher also mentions the boldness of Phineas, who took action and was rewarded by God. He then discusses the concept of land grants and relates it to our identity as friends of something greater than ourselves. Overall, the sermon highlights the need for belief, obedience, and boldness in our relationship with God.

Transcript

I'd like for you to take your Bibles, if you would, please, to Genesis chapter number 15, the book of beginnings, Genesis chapter number 15 for our text this morning. I want to say I thank you for being here this morning in the service. I appreciate every one of you who have put an effort to be in the service.

I'm glad that you're with us. I hope the Lord helps each and every one of you. That's our prayer.

We are praying the Lord to move in the service this morning and have His way. Not what we desire. I'm sure everyone in here thinks of something that you wish would happen in this service.

But let's submit ourselves to whatever He decides, whatever how He moves, whatever He chooses, whatever He wants for our lives. That's the best. Amen? And so that's what we want today.

We want whatever the Lord's will is for our lives. I appreciate that song and I appreciate that verse of Scripture. Psalm chapter number 24.

And the Lord's using it in this meeting and helping people with it. Amen? And it reminds me also of Isaiah chapter 57. I believe it's verse number 18.

The high and lofty one of Israel said, I dwell with them who are of a contrite heart and a broken spirit. Is that correct? Let's check and make sure. We don't want to miss it.

Isaiah 57 verse 15. For thus saith the high and lofty one that inhabits eternity, whose name is holy, I dwell in the high and holy place with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite one. And those are promises, you know.

Those are promises. If we come to Him as He has asked us to, in the spirit that He has asked us to, we can dwell with Him. And I'm sure that someone in simplicity would say, well, you know, I'm saved.

I know that I'm saved, and so I already dwell with the Lord and the Lord dwells in my heart. And that's true. I understand that.

But we're talking about relationship. There are people who live in the same house that don't speak to one another and stay in the same place and never carry on a conversation. And there are people who dwell in the same place and eat from the same kitchen that never ever fellowship one with another, never know what one another is thinking.

So what we're talking about is going past that, progressing further into a place of intimacy with God, a place where we can be with Him in a way where we can be as close as our next breath and feel His breath coming down our collar. Amen? And that's exactly what I want, and I hope that's what you're wanting. Well, we brought in some more trash today.

Everybody say, Amen. For those who are wondering what's going on around here, I don't know. I wasn't in service all the time.

I don't know if the pastors mentioned it, but last night we just made the devil mad. And as a matter of fact, I think we took a two-by-four and whacked him one right up the side of the head. But we had a good time last night.

People are emptying out their homes and their cars and their lives of things that are ungodly and wicked that have drawn our attention away from the true and living God. And we decided to just go ahead and get rid of them. Amen? And so last night we met out in the field and we just burned it.

As a matter of fact, the Bible says that it's all going to be burned up with a fervent heat anyway. We just kind of sped up the process. And so we had a good time last night.

I know the stores are full of things. You can go right back out and buy the investment. When you've made an investment in something and you realize that I've just got to get that out of my life no matter what the cost or the price or how endeared it has been to my heart, I've got to get rid of it.

And when you make that move, then God's going to bless you. God's going to honor you for those moves that need to be taken. Amen? And so more junk come in today.

Of course, someone will say, you know what you could do with that stuff is have a yard sale. But if it's bad for us, it's bad for everybody else. So we don't want to share bad with the world.

We're trying to do right. Amen? And so we just burn it. So we're going to burn again today.

This evening after the service. Is that right? Maybe tonight. We're going to burn again tonight.

Amen? And so some of you need to get in on it. Don't say, well, I missed it. No, you ain't yet.

Because it's on. And we'll burn every day if we have to get rid of this junk. Get this junk out of our lives.

Amen? How many of you brought something? I'm not going to ask you what you brought, but how many of you have brought something this last week put on the fire? How many of you? Raise your hand. How many of you all slept good last night? That's right. I slept like a baby.

Amen. It was good. We had a good time.

We're going to have a great time. We're going to keep on going until the Lord says that's it. Everybody's cleaned up.

Everybody's done what they need to do. When God stops moving, we quit moving. Amen? We'll stop burning when the trash stops coming.

Amen? I told the guys a while ago, we were bagging some stuff up, just terrible stuff, putting it in bags so that we could bring it in here and put it on the altar. And I told them a while ago, I said, you know what? We surrender our lives to the ministry. We go to Bible college.

We go to seminary. We spend all of our lives educating ourselves and getting doctor's degrees so we can become God's trash men. I'm loving every minute of it.

Amen. But I think we should have a class in the Institute. Amen? I think we should start a class in the Institute on God's garbage boys.

And that's right. I may have to preach on that. I'm liking it already.

Alright. Genesis chapter 15. I have poor eyesight and cataracts.

I think it says it's 15 to 10. And I promise you'll be out by 12. Amen.

Some of y'all said, it's Sunday morning. How many of y'all got a roast cooking in the crock pot right now? Only one of you. It's going to burn.

Amen. I hope it's on low. I hope it's on low.

I really do. I've got some things in the crock pot too and me and my wife was leaving to come to service just a moment ago and I just reached and turned it all off. We'll cook later.

Amen. You found your place in Genesis 15. Would you stand with me while we read the Scriptures together? Genesis chapter number 15.

We're going to read a couple of verses of Scripture together so let's start here in Genesis and then let's go to Psalm 106 and we're just going to channel through a couple of verses of Scripture together and we'll take our time to read them. Then we'll pray and then you can be seated. But this is a most reverent time.

Let's be respectful. Once we get started here, we've had our laugh and all that. We've had a good time.

But once we get started, let's calm down and let the Spirit of God speak to us and slow the traffic down in and out and all that. Let's spend our time with the Lord here as much time as we can and allow Him to

speak to us in every way He possibly wishes to this morning. Genesis chapter number 15.

Verse number 6. And he believed in the Lord. The he in this verse, by the way, is Abram. Later we call him Abraham.

For the sake of the message today, when I refer to him as Abraham, you'll understand because of the covenant God made with him. He believed in the Lord and he counted it. The second he in this verse is the Lord.

And he counted it to Abraham, to him for righteousness. Alright? Psalm 106, if you would please. Psalm 106.

Verse number 30. When you found it, say, Amen. Then stood up Phinehas and executed judgment.

And so the plague was stayed. And that was counted unto him for righteousness unto all generations forevermore. Romans chapter number 4. Romans chapter number 4. When you found it, say, Amen.

Verse number 3. For what saith the Scriptures? Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Verse number 5. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Verse number 9. Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only or upon the uncircumcision also? For we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness.

Verse number 22. Same chapter. And therefore, it was imputed to him for righteousness.

Galatians chapter number 6. If you would please. Galatians chapter number 6. Galatians chapter number 3, rather. Galatians chapter 3, verse number 6. Have you found it? Say, Amen.

Even as Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Do you notice the pattern of Scripture here and the reference to this thing about Abraham? One last text of Scripture if you don't mind. James chapter number 2. James chapter number 2. And verse number 23 when you found it.

Say, Amen. And the Scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God and it was imputed unto him for righteousness. We'll stop our reading right there.

Let's bow our heads in prayer together and ask the Lord's help for this time we have in this service. Our Father, I humbly come before You to pray. I ask You, God, that You'll forgive my sins.

You'll cleanse my heart, purify me, dear Lord, and ready me for this moment of time. Give me exactly what I need for this moment that I may preach to these people and do as You have called me to do. I pray, Lord, that it may be done that Your name would be glorified and that You would be lifted up knowing that if You're lifted up, You'll draw all men unto You, lost and saved.

We will come to You if we see You. And, Lord, I pray humbly this morning that You would enlighten us, open our eyes to see the truth of this Scripture and open our hearts to receive the truth knowing that if it sinks so deep in our hearts, we'll leave from this place different people. Help people this morning to respond to Thee.

As You speak to them, help them to come and deal with things in their own life as they must so that we may all enter into that place, that high holy hill with Thee, and enter into that holy place that we may rest

upon Thy breast, that we may feel Your breath blowing down our collars upon our necks. Lord, we want to be that close to You today so that we may hear Your thoughts and Your words and know Your language and know, Lord, that we have been with Thee. And, Lord, we know that this will change our complexion.

Our countenance will change. Our hearts, our language, our mouths, our hands, all that we give ourselves to will change. And when we have left from this place, men will perceive and they'll know that we have been with the Lord.

And that's what our heart's desire is so they might see You. I pray these things in the name of Jesus. Humble us today.

Revive us again that Thy people may rejoice in Thee. And we'll praise You forever and ever and ever. In Jesus' name we ask these favors.

Amen. You can be seated. We'll go back to the book of Genesis if we could and we'll start from there and give you sort of a historical event of the life of Abraham and where we are in the text of Scripture.

And then we're going to go to a history account as it is found in these verses and in the Scriptures that you hold in front of you and see some thoughts about the life of Abraham and the life of Phinehas. Two men in the Scriptures where it's referred to in the passage of Scripture that because of the actions that they have committed, because of things they're doing, it was counted unto them for righteousness. Now in Abraham's story when he starts out in these verses, he is in a land where God comes to him and says, Get up.

Leave your father. Leave your home. Leave the farmland that you've known.

Leave everything that you have. And I'm going to lead you to a place that you've never, ever been before. And I'm going to make something of you.

I'm going to use you. And I'm going to make a great nation out of you. And I promise you, this is what I'm going to do.

And Abraham rises up and obeys the Lord simply by faith. Now, in the life of Abraham, many times we see that Abraham believed God. But Abraham left everything he had, moved his tent, and followed after the voice of God.

And that movement of faith impressed God so much that God said it was counted to him for righteousness. And then it's repeated in the New Testament, the verses we read in Romans 4, in Galatians 3, in James 2. These texts recount what the Lord said. What has the Scripture said? The Apostle Paul, knowing the Scriptures, having been taught the things of God, says, What does the Scripture say? He says, Abraham believed God, and since he believed God, God counted it to him for righteousness.

I like to reference the historical account, the hall of history or the hall of faith in Hebrews 11. In verse 8, By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed. Now that's a key interest.

Because when we settle on all the things we're going to discuss this morning, the prime issue here is going to be obedience. Obedience. Do you remember the life of Saul and his event when he went to war

with someone who God said, don't you behave in this way? And Saul went ahead and behaved, and God said, then if you're going over there, kill these people and destroy all that they have so that nothing is left.

Annihilate this crowd. And yet he didn't. He saw of himself a good offering, and so he brought an offering back of cattle and sheep and things of that nature.

And the preacher, Samuel, comes riding up and he says, I hear the sound of the baying sheep. Don't you hate when somebody cattles on you? Come on now, y'all. Y'all with me? Don't you hate a tattletale? Come on.

Some of y'all are looking at me like, I'm not sure if we're supposed to answer. I mean, it's bad when you have a tattletale. You know, we have children.

We have six small children. One of them away. I say small.

They're not all small now, but young children, you know, from 13 years old down. And so we have children. Do you know that every day is filled with hundreds of tattletales? You almost want to discipline the tattle more than you want to discipline the one who's doing wrong, because you're just so tired of hearing, Mama, Spurgeon did this, and Zeb did that.

Don't you hate a tattletale? Well, what's terrible is sometimes our sin tattles on us. I mean, come on. Don't you hate when you hear a door slam and a kid peeks through the window and says, it's the pastor! Turn that down.

Turn that off. Throw that in the closet. Go to your room and change your clothes.

Don't you know that's not how we dress? Isn't it funny how fast people get religious? Get the family Bible in here now. Everybody sit down. We're reading the Scriptures.

The pastor rings on the doorbell. By that time, two or three people are huffing and sweating. It's been the fastest transformation ever in time.

I'm talking about the clock. Fifteen seconds counting. He's woke up and said, well, five seconds.

Come on, come on, come on. Five seconds. Too late.

Ding dong. And then Dad says, come on in, Pastor. Good to see you.

We were just sitting here reading numbers. Trying to work our way through all these names and all. And then, as bad as you hate it, there's that one child who always opens their mouth.

That's not what we were doing. And then there's that other child that comes walking in too late, don't realize the pastor's already inside the house, and they come in and say, is this better than what I had on when he pulled up? You've been tattled on. You didn't even know it.

Don't you hate a tattletale? Might as well laugh now. It's going to get worse than this. You know, when the preacher rode up and Saul was out there and there's all these sheep and everything, and Saul says, I hear sheep.

You can just see Saul telling two servants, texting them, shut the sheep up now! We're just practicing for a play, preacher. School play and all. Some of the servants are back there working with the kids and they're

just acting like sheep.

Shut them up now! You're all fired! You know, I mean, they tattle. Our sin tattles on us. We don't even realize it.

This is one of the fun things. You know, I used to pastor. Pastor is probably why I don't pastor now.

Because I used to pastor. And a man asked me the other day, Mr. Price asked me the other day, he said, do you give up pastoring because you like evangelism better? I said, well, Mr. Tom, they just wouldn't have me anymore. I can only last about a week, you know.

I mean, here it's a Wednesday through Sunday deal and I'm done. Well, you all ain't laughing. You're serious, ain't you? But when I was pastoring, this is one of the fun things I do.

I come in and I walk into someone's house and they've been scrambling, you know. I wasn't making all that stuff up. People are doing that.

And did you know that your house is not sound insulated? So while the pastor is actually walking up the sidewalk and the music's going and your mom's screaming and dad's yelling and people are throwing stuff and he's threatening, you're grounded for life! You know, while all that's going up, the preacher's acting like he don't hear nothing, but he hears everything you're saying and doing. It's hilarious, man. I love it.

I thought about bugging myself one day, you know, just so I could have a recording of some of the things that happen when you visit some places. But then you go in and they say, would you like a cup of coffee? And then they realize, we don't want him to go to the kitchen. You've probably had enough already, haven't you? I'll go get you some.

Mom, just have a seat. And just as you start to look around for a place to sit down and you see some things laying on the shelf that shouldn't be, and you're looking around, parents are walking by and turning CD covers over. Mom kicks that up under the furniture.

Have a seat right there. You sit down and your couch crunches. Oh, gee, the time will tell.

So Samuel realizes he's busted. And so, well, you know what? I brought that back for him. I'm giving an offering.

That's right. We were saving up for a big offering. That's what he did.

We're going to have a sacrifice. Well, so there he is texting again. Can you see him? Bring a knife.

I ain't bringing a knife. You all still with me? So anyway, he slaughters a bunch and he's offering up smoke and he's got it all going on. It looks like he's having some real religious activity.

And the preacher clears his throat, looks over at him and says, Obedience is better to obey than to sacrifice. It's better to obey than to sacrifice. You obey first, it costs less.

The sacrifice may seem so expensive, but obedience in the beginning costs way less than all that sacrificing. Just a thought. That's where we're going with this measure.

All this comes down to obedience. There's three things I want to show you from these texts of Scripture that we've read together in the Bible this morning about this counted to him for righteousness. And this is

my theme.

I want to give you a subject. I've asked for the flags to be brought up here because of the representation here. I'm going to use them in a moment as illustration.

But this is my subject. I want to preach on driving a stake of righteousness. Now, we don't know much about the life of Abraham before a promise was made and before his faith moved him to obey.

But we know that when the Lord spoke to him, that he did something. Alright? You can agree with me on that. We know we read in Hebrews 11, v. 8 that he moved and that he obeyed, and so we know that there's movement, there's action, and his response to God's call causes God to see and counts to him for righteousness.

In other words, no matter what his life was like before, at this point, he obeys God and because of obedience, there is an establishment of righteousness. That's what I want to talk about this morning. Three things that I notice.

Two in the life of Abraham. One in the life of Phinehas. The first I notice as I look at the life of Abraham is that it always has something to do with faith.

In every account that we read about Abraham, it has to do with the fact that Abraham believed God. Abraham moved because he believed what God said. The reason that some of us are not moving is we really don't believe God.

That's what it boils down to. We can't obey because we don't believe. Some of you are financial geniuses, especially in comparison to me.

It's easy to balance my checkbook when there's nothing there. Zeros don't have any problem. And in the ministry, God has chosen to leave me that way so I have less to worry about.

That's comforting. I've tried to find a nice way to think about it. It helps me at night.

He says, don't worry about paying that bill. You don't have any money. Some of y'all didn't like that, I can tell.

But when the money comes in, you pay it. You've still got a zero, amen? Easy to count that. It's just easy.

But some of you are financial geniuses. And if someone who is a reputable banker came to you and looked at you and said, I want you to consider this investment, and this investment right here is going to return to you a hundredfold. Some of you would be interested in that.

Some of the other people saying, well, how many times do you fold it? I don't even like to fold tiles. What you talking about folding something? But for those of you who understand something about finances, you look at that type of investment. But you know what you're going to look at? This guy's talking numbers, but let's look at the reputation of the guy who's talking.

I can tell you by real life example, I'm talking about, I'm your testimony right here. Y'all look up here at me. I can tell you by real life example that most people ain't going to trust me with their investment.

I don't have it down to my name. Are you listening? You know, when you drive in a car that the transmission only works in one gear, it don't go backwards, and you and your kids are at Walmart and you're pushing that thing every time you have to pull out of a car spot, and you get in and you drive. You're not even looking at me right.

You don't believe none of this stuff, do you? You know, when that's the investment that you get, people don't trust you with their money. They're not going to hand you and say, hey, I believe that he's got a good return going right there. I'm going to give him all I've got because I believe him.

You don't believe somebody like that. As a matter of fact, bankers don't trust preachers and painters. Amen? It's already 12 and y'all are asleep, ain't you? Stay with me now.

What I'm trying to say is it has to be somebody you trust. A man walks up to you and says, I want you to invest \$100,000, and taking a wild guess here that somebody here actually has that much money to invest, would look at that and the first thing you're going to look at is the reputation of the person of whom you're handing over your funds to. Well, see, when Abraham heard the voice of God and God said, I want you to sell out all you've got and pick up everything you've got and grab your family, and I want you to go wander off into the wilderness because I'm going to give you something and I'm going to bless you, Abraham evidently thought he was credible enough that he obeyed and listened to his voice.

I say this because many of you don't believe him so you don't react to what his Word says. We would like to argue about what the Scripture says and debate. And we would like to fuss about interpretation of Scriptures.

What do you think it means? And what so-and-so thought it meant? And you know, 200 years ago, Mr. So-and-so thought it meant this and then my pastor said he thought it meant this and my neighbor who's an atheist thinks it means this. And let's debate Scripture, but never obey Scripture. Because you don't understand who's doing the talking.

A lot of times when things are said in church, people will quickly brush that off with that's the pastor's opinion. But in order for God to look at you and say, hey, that person has established in their life righteousness and I'm going to help them build a foundation of righteousness and that's what we really want. We want God to build in our lives a relationship and a foundation of righteousness.

Do you understand where we're going with this? First, we've got to believe Him for what He says. You say, well, my mama always said it. My mama's a good Christian woman, godly lady.

But if my Bible says something different than what my mama says, I'm going to have to go with the Bible. Why? Because I love my mother, praise the Lord, but I think God's probably more right than my mother is. If it's going to come down to a wire and I've got to choose between what grandma said and what God said, I'm going to have to go with what God said.

But that comes down to believing God. If you believe God, you must first believe God before anything else. That's the foundation for righteousness being established.

There are some ungodly things that are happening in our lives, and we need to clean them up. We need to straighten these things up. But the reason that a lot of us are still attached to our ungodliness is because we don't really believe that God's going to judge us for those things.

I'm talking to you that are saved. And since we have a lot of new people here that don't know the customs and the way it works when Brother MacDarris is preaching, I just want to let you know, if you agree, you go this way. And if you'll say amen once in a while, the people around you won't think you're guilty.

That's how it works. If you sit there quiet or look at the floor a whole lot, then people are going to think you're guilty. And they're going to be praying for you.

God help you. You don't want to go there. So just stay with me just a little bit longer.

I know it's going to be a little bit longer than you anticipated, but just stay with me. Because this is point number one. We haven't even got started yet.

Just stay with me for a long time. We talk about the chastening hand of God, but many of you have never recognized that something happened in your life and it was the chastening hand of God. You know why we don't recognize it? Because we filled our heads with so many other things.

We filled our heads with humanism. Well, this is the way it is in every person's life. We filled our heads with wicked, wicked worldly advice.

Some of us would believe... Man, I started to say that word and I forgot it. You know that thing where you... All I can think of is horror. Horoscope.

No wonder I was thinking of horror. But some of us would believe a horoscope before we would ever believe what God's Word says. And a horoscope may say it's going to be dark and cloudy today, and we go out and find a flat tire.

Oh, my horoscope said so. I mean, we would believe a horoscope. This is some 18-year-old high school graduate sitting in a room somewhere typing anything he can think of.

Today it's going to be cloudy. Just wrote the horoscope for today. And you know that there are people... I'm talking about smart, intelligent people.

People who have education. People who have brains. Not your normal dud.

Real people with brains that have jobs, making good money, doing... I mean, like the whole world rests upon their shoulders. They make decisions that hundreds of people are the result of, are recipients of. I mean, real smart people.

Not like me. Not like some of these other guys. But I'm talking about real people with brains.

Believe that stuff. And never notice the judgment of God or the chastening of God or God's hand in their life because they're justifying it with everything else. And that's what the devil's doing.

He's throwing up road signs to try to get your attention on a different method so that you'll understand a different belief as to why things are happening in your life. The Bible clearly says that He chastens them that He loves. Chastens.

Do you all know what that means? He gives us a good, old-fashioned whooping. That, by the way, ain't a whipping. That's a whooping.

Some of y'all remember that? Any of y'all ever had a mama or a grandmama tell you to go out there and find a hickory limb? Did any of y'all ever want to say, go find your own? Did any of y'all ever say it? And if you did, did any of y'all have mama ever say, go get two hickory limbs? I mean, you understand, we have received such humanism into our life, the devil throwing these signs up, that now we are convinced that we have had something incidental that has happened in our life simply because this is the way life is. And we don't see the judgment of God. We were talking, some of the preachers and I were praying this week and talking and fellowshiping, and I said, you know that if somebody in our church actually, something happened to them, went to the hospital and died, two days later, we would be having a funeral service standing up here in the church telling everybody how good they were.

And we would be telling everybody all the great things. We would never even talk about what their life was really like or if they actually had sin in their life because we want to just make everybody feel warm and fuzzy. And we would just really butter the whole thing up and just preach them right up to the throne of God and just like the greatest things in sliced bread.

And we would just make them look so good and so cool. Everybody would want to be like them and never realize that it could have been that person. It could be that person that God just finally took all He could take from them and He judged them and took the breath right out of their bodies, sucked the breath out of their lungs, caused their hearts to stop beating, and people go, God's not like that! He is! And you don't know Him well enough to realize that He is that mighty, that powerful, and that able to do, so therefore, you don't believe that He could judge you for your sin or that He could correct you or that He could bring tragedy in your life.

And people want to argue and say, why does God take on little children? Or, why does God... I thought God was a God of love! God is a God of love. But this humanistic world, this pitiful, demonic system that is around us has convinced us that a God that would chasten someone, well, they've convinced us the same thing about parents. That a parent that would chasten a child is a mean, a wicked witch of a parent.

And that's wicked and ungodly. That's wicked, terribly wicked and ungodly. We're trying to protect.

We're trying to guide. We're trying to instruct. We're trying to teach and to train our children not to act like heathens.

When I was growing up, I used to hear people say things like this, you better start to correct them in the high chair or they'll end up in the electric chair. Now we have time out. Can y'all see God putting somebody in time out and Him telling them, I told you I was going to get on to you if you acted that way.

You're in time out. Go to the corner. Go sit in your time out chair.

Y'all listening? Go get in your time out chair. Now, you don't talk for five minutes. That's it.

I don't want to hear nothing else out of you. You're in time out. Don't pray no more.

I can't listen to you for five more minutes because you're in time out. No, it ain't working like that. That's not how God operates.

God deals in judgment. But see, we don't believe Him because we don't know enough about Him. We don't believe Him, so when He speaks, we don't obey.

Now that's the truth of it. Like it or lump it, that's the truth of it. The reason that people are not responding and obeying to God is because they don't really believe what He's saying.

Number two, in the life of Phinehas, Psalm 106, verses 30 and 31, it's not only belief that we see in the life of Abraham, but boldness that we see in the life of Phinehas. And only these two men, only these two men ever had this recorded about their life that something happened that was so dramatic in their lives that God said, I'm going to account this to your life as righteousness. We're sort of in the introduction.

I haven't even got to explain that yet. But look at Phinehas. He stood up when other men would not.

And when there was a plague against the people, there was judgment against the people, he stood up and he executed judgment and he did what was right. And because he executed judgment and did what was right in the face of everyone around him falling and failing, he stood for what was right. And his boldness to do what was right caused God to look at him and say, I'm going to count that to you for righteousness.

And as a matter of fact, in v. 31 of Psalm 106, he said not only am I going to count it unto you for righteousness, but for all generations to come. In other words, it will be remembered. It will be passed on.

It will be seen. And it will be a tale. And it will be historical event that from now on, people will know that this drove a stake of righteousness down in your life and established a new path for you.

This was the movement that caused other people to see your righteousness. Boldness. In the day we live in, it's easier to be mild and to go along with the flow.

And in preacher schools and colleges and all that, they teach us people are having a hard time. These are hard times. And what people need when they show up at church on Sunday morning is comfort.

They need to be pampered and petted and loved. And so we've done that. And we've done it for so long that there's been no judgment, there's been no righteousness, there's been no conviction, there's been no preaching against sin.

And now preachers are scared to preach it. I was speaking to my physician the other day, my medical doctor, and he and I were discussing, well, I don't know, we were talking about some doctrinal issue between churches. He's Catholic and I'm Baptist and he knows that.

I know it. We talk back and forth and not in a controversial way. I told him he wasn't right.

And he told me that he understood that's the way I felt. However, we're talking, and so when I got ready to leave, I told him, I said, hey, doc, I said, my wife's fixing to have a baby. And he said, man, how many children you got? I said, that'll be number seven, the Lord willing.

And we live long enough. And Jesus don't come. That'll be number seven.

And so he looked at me and he said, you sure you're not Catholic? You're probably Catholic and just don't know it. You get that a lot, brother? Well, Tessie, you ever heard anybody look at you how many kids you got? Are you Catholic? And I looked at him in honesty. This is what I said to him.

Because we were just talking about our religious differences and our religious standards. Do you know that the Catholic Church has the strongest teaching in the world? The Catholic Church has the strongest teaching on the misuse of contraceptives. And they teach their children that it is wrong, that it is sin, that it

is wickedness, that they're supposed to allow God to bless their home with children.

That's why people think that Catholics, you have to be Catholic to have more than three children. You must be Catholic. You have five children? You're absolutely Catholic.

Six children or seven? You're probably like the highest in the whole Catholic Church. You're climbing the ladder. You must be Catholic.

I wasn't offensive to him. He wasn't offensive to me. But I looked at him and this is what I told him.

I said, Doc, I want to explain to you the reason. I said, because our denomination and doctrinal standing has taken a position of fear, afraid to say what we believe or what the Bible teaches. And since we have, we've shut our mouths, and we have crept into a worldliness to where people can't tell the difference between us and the general public at Walmart.

And I was talking about us. I wasn't condemning him. I was condemning us.

And I said, while your church has been steady preaching it and steady teaching it, our preachers are hiding behind their pulpits afraid they're going to lose their salaries if they say anything about it. And I said, so you guys are winning on it, and we're not. He sat there with his mouth open.

Boldness in this hour is looked at as foolishness. However, it's always been looked at as foolishness. Hence, God looked at His man and said, I have chose the foolishness of preaching.

Not foolish preaching, but the foolishness of preaching. And so, we're to stand up bold. We need bold Christians.

We need bold people who stand up and say, hey, I'm tired of living just this normal life feeding into society. I'm ready to drive a stake down right here and say, we're living righteous and holy and acceptable in the sight of God. It will take boldness to deliver that kind of statement to this world.

So we know that it's faith, and we know that it's firmness, and we know that it's friendship, because in James 2, he says that Abraham was a man who believed God. It was counted to him for righteousness. And then he says, and Abraham was called a friend of God.

A friend of God. I have a verse of Scripture. Wouldn't you like to be known as a friend of God? Wouldn't you like to have that written above your head as you travel through life and people look at you and say, hey, something different about that man.

Something different about that home. Something different about that family. Something different about them.

And someone to be able to reply, oh, they're friends of the Lord. Years ago, I worked as an electrician. And I was licensed in the state of Mississippi and working as an electrician in Coahoma County in Clarksdale, Mississippi, just about 60 miles south of Memphis, Tennessee.

And Clinton was going into office and during his routes of traveling, he was coming to stay with a friend. And our place of business was hired by this friend and by the Secret Service. We received a letter from the Secret Service and says, here's a map of the property and this is what we looked at and this is the requirements of lighting that need to be established at this place.

And we were chosen to go out there and put the lighting in in order that Clinton could come and visit. And so here we are. We're all out there and we're working.

Now, we're just laborers. We're just workers together. But here comes this guy.

He never would even speak to us. He's too highfalutin. He had his nose stuck up somewhere in a far off place.

And he was so highfalutin and he won't even look over at us. He just kind of glares at us as we go by. And a man looked at me.

He was a deacon at the AME church there in town. His name was Robert. He looked over at me and he says, that must be how the friends of the president act.

I've never forgotten that. You reckon that's how the friends of the president act? Well, so we rigged all the lights to go off when he arrived. Shouldn't have snooted us.

Never underestimate the man with the timer. Amen. And you should have heard the write-up in the paper when the Secret Service were in a tease because all the lights went off.

That was the funnest thing ever. I wouldn't recommend you all do that. But you ought not snoot, folks.

But I guess that's how the friends of the president act, right? You reckon anybody will ever look at you and the way that you act, the way that you live your life, do you reckon anybody will ever look at you and say, that person must be a friend of God? Is that possible? I believe it's possible. Evidently, it was written in the most prominent book in the world and has been read down through all these ages. I want to share this verse of Scripture with you before I go to the illustration God's given me.

James 4, verse 3, "...Ye adulterers and adulterers, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is an enemy of God. Do you think the Scripture saith in vain, The Spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy? But He giveth more grace. Wherefore He saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.

Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. You draw not to God, and he will draw not to you.

Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double-minded." James 4, verse 4 through verse 8. Wonder if we had to classify who your friends are. And we had to put it into a group. I wonder where you fit.

I would love nothing better than to live my life and die and people be able to say about me, that that man was a friend of God. Him and God must have been the best of friends. He and God must have been the best of buddies.

You'd never see one without the other. Everything He enjoyed in this life, He enjoyed with God. Everywhere He went, it seemed like He was with the Lord.

Are you listening? Wouldn't that be something to have that said about you? You see, there has to come a time in your life when a stake is driven deep that says, a new way, a new path, a stake. This is the point, establishing this beginning point of righteousness. Now let me explain to you the flags in my illustration

here.

Down through the years, many times since the founding of our nation and the development of our flag, the flag has been established in many places as a symbol that we have the right to be there. Are you all listening? I think it was Veterans Day last year when our guys came forward and did a presentation of Iwo Jima and they stood just as they were in that picture with the tilted flag and the men and every part of them was in replica of the picture that we often see. And you know that flag going up just puts chills in you.

But raising that flag and those men giving their life and boldly standing forward because of something they believed in, stepping up to hold that flag in position and to establish that flag was nothing more than God's inside of them that said, we belong here. We fought for this. We have the right to stand here.

And because of what we believe in, we're raising up this flag. We're establishing a marker. You with me? How many times on foreign soil has it been just like that where men have traipsed in there in war encounters, have come to some difficulties but have fought through it and boldly they have continued on? Why? Because of something they believe in.

Faith is what has rested in their hearts and caused them to continue to move forward. They believe it in their hearts. They don't only just talk about it.

They don't just sit around and joke about it. They don't just read books about it. They don't just meet two or three times a week so that they can barely be identified with it.

It's something that rests so deeply down inside of them that it causes them to leave home, to leave father and mother and friends, and to tread on foreign soil to establish a presence and say we believe in this. Faith is a strong thing. As a matter of fact, one man said faith is the strongest element in man.

Do you know that faith is given to us by God? A measure of faith is given to every man. Some people look at our flag and they don't really believe. They've got an idea, but it's not real faith.

But it's real faith to every one of those men who are out there laboring for it. And the principle is when this flag is raised and when this flag stands, the principle is that men are able to look and say that flag is not what we believe in, but that flag stands for what we believe in. And that flag is the representation of all the faces, of all the people, all across that country where we believe in this same element of truth.

Amen? And that flag waves to declare it. In the Christian faith, a flag was established some years ago and the Christian flag has also been waving now around the world in many nations. It has been established to make a presence of people to understand there's something we believe in.

There's a cross that sits in the middle that is red. It tells us of the blood of Jesus Christ. There's white around the outside of the skirts that tells us about righteousness and holiness.

There's blue up in the middle that tells us of the deity we believe in, God, and of a heavenly place that we believe this cross will take us to. And every time that flag's raised up somewhere around the world, it stands up to say there's something that we believe in. And we're giving our lives for it.

And we're willing to go the extra mile. And we're willing to cross seas and to climb mountains and to go into dark caverns so that we can tell men about what we believe in. Every time a flag goes up, it goes up screaming a message to those people around it.

Do you know that God said of Abraham when He said, "...accounted unto him for righteousness." Do you know that God said, I'm going to stick a flag up right here in the middle of the life of Abraham and I'm going to declare to the next generation every time they look back at this flag waving that Abraham believed in something and that because Abraham believed in something, Abraham obeyed God and he moved according to his faith. I'm going to let this flag wave in the life of Abraham to tell people to come that Abraham was a righteous man because of his belief, it seems. Do you know that Phineas, when he made that move and stepped up in the face of fear and danger and decided to go ahead and stand for truth and to execute judgment? When men looked at him and said, this is a bad idea.

Your fathers didn't do it this way. And they looked at him in fear and trembling, but he stood up boldly as if it were his Iwo Jima. He raised that flag and he raised it up.

God said from now on, I'm going to tell men from now on that you're a righteous man. There's an establishment of righteousness. There has to come a starting place.

There has to come a time when stake is driven down in your life that says from now on, from now on, we're living a life of righteousness. This flag, this stake, represents something we believe in. We believe in God.

In fear of Him and in fear of the danger of sin, we're willing to confess we believe Him and we'll obey. And we will proudly and firmly stand up for what is right. And then it speaks of our identity that we are friends of something greater than we are.

When this country was founded, there was land grants. I started to bring in some dates and times and the way that the lands progressed, but most of you know in history, so I'm just going to breeze through it if I could. Land grants were given.

They'd go to the land office. They'd receive a grant to go to a certain area and stake their lands. Some of y'all probably remember in history reading of the land races.

Y'all remember that? Because if they just let someone loose, they'd take all the land. They would line all those up who had rights to claim a portion of land. And they would set them up on horses and they would prepare themselves.

And then the flags would go, the ropes would drop, the gun would go off. Bang! All the horses would hit the trail and they would ride as hard and as fast as they possibly could to get to a place that they had looked at, a place they had dreamed of, a place that they wanted to call their own. And they would get there and they would fall off their horses while they were riding in full speed and stake their ground.

Do you understand what I'm saying to you? This is what God did in the life of Abraham. Abraham moved according to faith and he moved according to friendship. He moved according to a firmness in his heart to stand for truth.

And God said, let Me take care of it, Abraham. I'm driving the stake and saying this is ground that you can have. This is your place.

This is your ground. He counted it unto Him for righteousness. I ain't even dealing with the righteousness part.

I haven't even got to deal with that, but this is where we're at. This is where we are. Let's just take this for this measure of time.

God has a place for you. We looked at it this morning. We talked about Psalm 24 as the song was given to us.

Isaiah 57. A place that's given. The race is on.

Many of you have joined in the race of the world and you're driving stakes on places and properties and things that you will possess only for this life. And when this life ends, all of that will be burned up and gone. But I wonder if there's something in your life, if there's a place in your life where God's driven a stake down deep and said this is a place of righteousness.

You see, that will last forever. I'm not talking about if you're saved or not. This is only for people that are saved.

But if you're saved, it's time to start hunting for properties and things of this life that will cause you joy and will cause you a moment of happiness. Stop hunting for things that bring you a moment's thrill. Stop hunting for things that are another run on your ladder of success.

Stop hunting for things that identify you more with the world. And start looking for that place God wants you to go where there's righteousness. Where the stake can be driven up and say this is where I live.

And where I live is a place of righteousness. My home is going to become a place of righteousness. My life is going to become a place of righteousness.

My marriage is going to become a place of righteousness. This is where we live. This is where we're driving the stake down.

From now on, this is how it's going to be. And we're going to be people who are identified as the friends of God. It's time you raise your flag up.

Some of you, I'd be scared to see what your flag looks like. I'm not asking you today to become a proud American and go home and raise a flag in your yard and say I'm proud to be an American. I'm not asking you to go home and raise a Christian flag up in your yard.

That's not what I'm talking about because that would probably be a mockery with some of our lifestyles and the way we live. But I'm talking about making a determination in your heart today to make a movement of faith and say I believe God and my lifestyle is going to change because I believe Him. And today, God's driving down His flag in my life.

And when people see me from now on, they're going to see me as a friend of God, a person of righteousness, a person who's doing right according to God's law of right. I wonder if there's somebody in here who has the belief in what God is doing, a belief in who He is, a belief in what He says, a belief so strong that you're willing to wage war against the devil, hell, and the world, and take a proud stand and identify your home and your life and your family as a place of righteousness. Have you ever made that kind of decision? Some of you in here may have never been saved.

Do you know how we get saved? According to Romans 10, verse number 9, it starts with belief. Faith. Do you know what our faith is? First, we believe what God said about sinners that all of sin comes short of the

glory of God.

We believe what God says about the wages of sin, for the wages of sin is death. We believe it. A lot of people want to try to get saved, but don't ever believe that people die and go to hell.

But lost men die and go to hell. Lost women die and go to hell. Lost young people die and go to hell.

People who have never trusted Jesus Christ die and go to hell. But we believe what He says about that. We believe it.

We believe it so much that we are willing to embarrass ourselves in front of all mankind and rush ourselves to an altar and find a place of prayer and confess with our mouth the Lord Jesus Christ and to beg for Him to forgive us and to save us because we believe it so much. It's not a simple prayer that you repeat. It's a belief system.

It's something that's so great down in your heart, your heart thumps and beats and knows, if I don't do this, I will die and go to hell. It causes you to move. And He says, it's not a matter of your national standing for Jew or Greek.

The same overall is great and rich. In grace to who? To all who call upon Him. Then He says in Romans 13, for whosoever, no matter where you come from, no matter what color you are, no matter what size you are, shape, what your financial status is, no matter who your mom and daddy was or where you grew up, for whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

And why do men call upon the name of the Lord? Because they believe. For how shall they call on whom they have not believed? So we preach to you Jesus Christ so that you'll hear Him, you'll know Him, you'll believe, and you'll make that choice toward righteousness. I would like to invite sinners to come and be saved, but my first invitation to you this morning is those that are saved who have never settled the ground.

Some of you have got so many flags waving in your life. Whatever is running today, whatever fits in the mold, whatever your neighbors are doing, whatever your friends are doing, wherever you fit in. Shame on you for even fitting in.

It's time to tear down some of those old worldly flags and establish that for this family, for my life, for my marriage, for me, it's going to be righteousness. And allow a flag to be raised in your life. A movement that God can see.

And God will say, I count that for righteousness. I want you to answer to God about this. I want you to do what He tells you to.

I want you to obey Him. I don't want you to consider what others are doing around you, what your friends and your family are doing. I want you to consider yourself between God.

I'm really looking this morning for others who want to be in that high, holy place with Him and be known as a friend of God. That's what we're looking for this morning. It could be you're an enemy of God this morning and you need to make things right.

It could be you're lost and you need to be saved. Obedience is the key. If you believe, you will obey.

Obey Him in the matter of baptism. There are people who need to be baptized here this morning. Some of you have been saved during the services this week and you need to obey.

It's the first step of a Christian. The first step of a saved person should be to obey the Lord and be baptized. Obey Him this morning.

Let God open the doors of blessings and start the decision now that everything He says, I'm going to obey Him. Not later, but now. I'm going to obey Him.

Why? I want to be a friend of God. I want to be as close to Him as I possibly can be. I want to be as close to Him as my next breath.

I want to be His friend. Is that what you want this morning? Stand with me please. Heads bowed, eyes closed.

Please don't run out of the building.

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