

Genesis 21 - I Promise

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[0 : 00] Father, thank you so much, Lord, for fulfilling all of your word, Lord. It will all be fulfilled. It's all been fulfilled. And in eternity in heaven right now, Lord, it is fulfilled.

There's no question of when, Lord. But Lord, here we are. We're in this in-between phase, Lord. We are seated positionally in the heavens with you. We are in Christ. We are complete in him who is the head of all things.

But Lord, we experience the failure and frailty of the flesh, Lord, of the sinful nature that still dogs us. But Lord, let us not look at that as something to be discouraging or frustrating.

But Lord, to realize when we are with you, when we are with you in glory, yes, we will be complete. But we also will never again have the opportunity to stand for you against sin.

To say no to the flesh, to choose Jesus against those that reject him. Lord, right now there's a battle. We know the victory is yours. We know it's won. But we're in this battle. We want to run our race well.

[1 : 05] We want to fight these battles well, Lord. So let us not despise the day of small things, Lord. But to recognize that the things we do here, seemingly insignificant, have ramifications for eternity.

And then remind us, Lord, remind us through the text this morning that your word will always come to pass. We thank you and in Jesus' name, amen. All right, so today's, I guess, title would be I Promise.

I Promise. What is a promise? You think, well, someone makes a promise. So if I gave you my word, I said, next week, I'm bringing donuts for everybody.

You know? Like, oh, okay. Okay, great. Well, you think, well, how well do I know this guy? Does he do the things he says? Right? If you knew me well enough, you'd go, he might bring donuts.

Or he might forget. With great intention, I said, I would bring donuts. If I said to you, I promise I will bring donuts. What does that do in your mind? He says, whoa, this is just elevated to another level.

[2 : 11] This now is something that he's prioritizing in his life. This is something he's going to focus on. Because if he doesn't, I've staked my reputation, my character, and who I am on my word now, on my promise.

Jesus said, let your yes be yes and your no be no. Don't make vows. Don't make promises. Our word should be good enough. But there are some things that have greater significance, right? I could say, I'm going to bring donuts next week. I promise. That doesn't have as much ramifications if I don't do that as I made a vow to my wife to be faithful to her. That has a lot greater ramifications. You know, your marriage vow as opposed to your donut vow. They're a little different, right? So promise, a promise, and here's a definition, binds the one making the promise to his word.

Right? It binds them to their word. But the surety of that promise is based upon the character and ability of the one making the promise. So what does that mean? If I promise you I'm going to bring donuts, you can base that on, do I have the ability to bring donuts?

[3 : 12] Yeah, he does. Does his character back that up? Probably, except he's a little forgetful. All right? If I said to you, hey, next week I'm bringing everyone a Corvette, you'd say, you don't have any ability to do that.

So how could you make that promise anyway? Right? If I had the ability to do that, then it would be based upon, well, would he actually do that? My character. But a promise, your word, essentially wraps up the entire person, your entire character, your nature, who you are, what you represent yourself to someone, whether you keep that promise or not.

Do you want to turn to Hebrews chapter 6 real quick? In verses 13 through 18, God actually, on that side of the cross, we're looking back through the filter of the cross.

God gives us some insight into the events of today's chapter. But while you're doing that, a breakdown of the chapter today, very simple. Genesis 21, verses 1 and 2, a son is born.

As we just read, Isaac is born. Verses 3 through 8, his name is Isaac. We kind of get the early few days of Isaac's life. We're going to see in there Abraham's reaction to the promise and then Sarah's reaction.

[4 : 20] And then at the end there when Ishmael mocks, he's not even named in this chapter, but the son of the bondwoman, Sarah then has discernment and Abraham has obedience.

I'm going to throw this up as well. We're going to go through. We'll hit these points as we go. I know that's a lot. So I'm just going to leave it there as I read in Hebrews. But the whole chapter is about promise. It's all about God's promise being fulfilled and what that does in a life, how that brings joy to a life, how that brings separation and holiness.

And so we're going to see that. And there you can kind of see the breakdown, at least how I broke it down, is how these things kind of jumped out at me, how the promise was acting on this chapter.

And again, as we hit each spot, I'll mention it. But in Hebrews chapter 6, verse 13, it says this, for when God made promise to Abraham, so God made a promise.

Did God say, Abraham, I promise? No, he was his word. God's word is his promise. When God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, saying, surely I will bless you and multiplying, I will multiply you.

[5 : 30] Or sorry, surely blessing, I'll bless you and multiplying, I will multiply you. And so after he had patiently endured, Abraham, that is, he obtained the promise. For men verily swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife.

Again, if you've got an issue and something's going on and one says, I give you my vow, I promise, here's the oath, or as we would write out, a contract. Well, that kind of settles it.

Okay, I now have this in writing. I've got you now. You know, that's not a bad thing, it's just, that settles it for us. Wherein God, willing more abundantly, in verse 17, to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath.

There's a lot of big words there. The heirs of the promise, that's us. It's not just Abraham. That through faith, we become heirs of the same promise as Abraham. And God desired to show his immutability, his unchangeableness.

He said, I want to show you I'm not going to change. That you don't have to fear. That you can know what? Verse 18. That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set before us.

[6 : 46] God said, I want you to know I'm not going to change. That when you have fled for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope I've put before you, that consolation, that comfort, that reconciliation, you can know it's not going to change.

And so what do you do? It says, by two immutable things. What are those two things? Well, within that text, and actually a little before in Hebrews, it's his word and his promise. God gave his word and his promise.

Right? God said, this is what I'm going to do, and I swear by myself, I promise. Do you know where the promise and the word are united in one? In the son of promise.

Jesus is the word made flesh. He is the promised one. Way back to Eve, God promised this. Isaac is a type of that. His word and his promise come together in one, in the son of promise.

So that's God binds himself. Does God have the ability to keep his word? He sure does. Yes. Does his character and nature tell me he will keep his word? Yeah, it does.

[7 : 46] So as we go into this promise, it is God's nature. It's God's character who's placed on the line. And he has brought to pass what he said he would do.

In verse one and two, there's a lot of time there that's not referenced. So we're going to have verses one and two. It could be like nine. They're about nine months. Right? Verses three through seven are his birth.

You got eight days there. It says on the eighth day, circumcised. So we're a time period of eight days across those verses. And then when you get to verse eight, the child was weaned and Abraham gave him a feast.

You're probably talking four or five years old at that point. So there's some interesting time frame being covered by different amounts of verses. But in these first two verses, it says, The Lord visited Sarah as he said, and the Lord did unto Sarah as he had spoken.

And Sarah conceived and bare Abraham a son in his old age at the set time which God had spoken. A little further down in verse five, it says Abraham was a hundred years old. If you look

back in chapter 17, verse 17, Abraham receiving this promise from God that in a year from now, I'm going to come and do this.

[9 : 01] Give you this son, this promise. He said, Abraham laughs and said, shall a child be born unto him that's a hundred years old? And shall Sarah that is 90 years old bear? Okay, so now we have a time frame.

God came and gave the promise. We're talking nine months later because Abraham's still a hundred. So we're less than a year. What's happened in that time frame? Well, God gives this promise. And then what happens?

He comes and visits Abraham. They have this talk about Sodom and Gomorrah. The next morning, God goes down and smokes Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham then leaves for Gerar. And what happens to Sarah?

She's taken into Abimelech's house. That probably means Sarah was pregnant at the time Abimelech takes her as his wife. Did she know it? Did Abraham? Probably not.

But it's very conceivable because of the time frame. Like she would have been pregnant at the time that Abimelech takes her. And you see the danger here to the son of promise.

[9 : 58] And you see how God cared for them through this. But at this time, 25 years later, back in chapter 12, God promised Abraham you'd have a son.

25 years later, he comes. I want to look at a couple things in verse 1 and 2 here. What jumps out to you? The Lord visited Sarah as he said. And the Lord did unto Sarah as he had spoken.

For Sarah conceived and bare Abraham a son in his old age at the set time of which God had spoken to him. It's all by the word. It all comes by the word. And God visits.

It says, God visited Sarah as he said. God visits us in his word. How do we visit with the Lord? We don't have to go up to a mountain. We don't have to come to a special place. We come here not because we think, well, it's a holy place.

A holy place. And so God's going to be here. It's not a cathedral. Oh, that's holy. No, it's not. We come because the word's here. And God's going to visit us in his word. The Lord visits.

[10 : 59] His visit was for the purpose of what? Fulfilling his word. He came and fulfilled his promise, which was according to his word. God comes for the purpose of fulfilling his word. And then we see Abraham and Sarah's greatest blessing.

The thing they wanted most in their life. How did it come? By way of his word. Comes by God's word. At the end there, I like that where it says, at the set time of which God had spoken to him. And it will always be as God had spoken. Always. But God's appointed time. What is that? God's appointed time is according to his word, not my desire.

Okay. When God comes and gives a promise according to his word, that stirs up a desire in me. When God comes and promises and said, hey, you know, Abraham, I'm going to give you a son. Abraham's like, well, yes, that's what I want. That's what I've wanted for all these years. I've wanted a son. It stirs up that desire. How long, Lord? When? So it's not wrong we have our desires aroused by God's promise.

[12 : 01] The problem is when we think our desire means it's now. We use our desire to determine God's time frame. Where God's time frame is always according to his word. Not according to our desire.

Remember with Jesus? When he was going to go up to the feast of tabernacles and his brethren said to him, it's in John chapter 7. They said, hey, go on up. If you want everybody to know about you, go up to the feast.

You'll be Mr. Popular. And he said, no, now's not my time. He said, your time is always now. It's always now. And it's true. I always want everything now.

I don't want it later. You know, it's like, oh, I can't wait to do whatever we're going to do and experience. Now, there's one exception. I do like that Christmas is way far out there. Because my favorite season is fall.

And when we get to Christmas, it's just over. So that can stay way out there. But that's because I want to experience now the type of season I like. So when God brings a promise to our life and he arouses our desire for that, we need to wait upon him to fulfill that promise.

[13 : 05] So that was verse 1 and 2, the promise fulfilled. Now we go into verse 3. What does Abraham do here? And Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bare to him, Isaac.

Okay, of course he's going to call him Isaac, right? He should call him Isaac. That's what he's supposed to do. He told us, God told Abraham, you shall call him Isaac. Well, Abraham named the promise that God gave him, didn't he?

He named him in obedience to God's word. Abraham had a part to play in fulfilling God's word. God said, I'm going to give you a son, Abraham. He gave him a son. Okay. Thank you, God.

All right. Well, God's like, whoa, whoa, whoa. You've got a part to play in this, Abraham. You need to name him. But I told you to name him. And you need to do what I've commanded you to do with him. And Abraham circumcised his son, Isaac, being yet eight days old, as God had commanded him.

In Christ, in 2 Corinthians 1, verse 20, I'm going to use an NIV translation. I know. Brace yourselves.

[14:11] But I really like how this translates, this verse, or how they phrase it. And this is the scripture that says that all the promises of God are yes and amen in Christ Jesus. It says, for no matter how many promises God has made, they are yes in Christ.

And so through him, the amen is spoken by us to the glory of God. It's our place to speak the amen over God's promises in our lives. It's not enough for God just to, oh, well, God's going to take care of that.

Okay. You know, God's doing something in my life. God expects you to name that. Own it. It's yours, right? We don't name it and claim it. Right? But we should claim it and name it. Okay? We don't say, well, I want that.

It's mine. But when we recognize what God's done in our lives, we should name that. We should say, hey, God has called me to this. God has gifted me in this.

God has given me this. I name that. I own that. I claim it as mine. I say, thank you, God. And I use it for his glory. And here we see with Abraham, the promise is given to him. He names that promise.

[15:10] And then he takes charge of that promise to walk in the commands of God. And so in verse four, we see Abraham, he consecrates himself and the promise. He consecrates the promise.

Abraham made obedience to God's command, the priority in the life of his children, didn't he? Right away we see here, Abraham goes and he circumcises his son as God had commanded him.

You know, after this point in Abraham's life, after this point that Abraham receives the son of promise into his life, we will not see Abraham fail again.

He will not fall. He will not see a lapse in his life again. And I think that speaks to what happens when we receive the son of promise into our life. Will we never sin again? Of course.

Of our failures. But from here on out, you know, it's on to glory. Once we receive Christ, he's got it. It's all taken care of. And I think it's interesting that through Abraham's ups and downs, God has prepared him to receive the son of promise.

[16:09] And from here on out, Abraham does not lapse. And so Abraham's faith in God, despite all of his failures, despite all of his lapses, the man who's waited 25 years for Isaac to be born, he's 100 years old, all of his ups and downs, his faith didn't fail, did it?

He received the promise. God's word didn't fail and Abraham's faith never failed. Because why? Because God never fails, right? We've said it before. Your faith is only so good as what its object is, as what it's in.

Again, you put faith in someone to accomplish something. Well, it's only so good as their ability to accomplish that. So our faith in God can never fail because God can't fail.

Now, I can fail and I can forsake God and my trust in him, but God hasn't failed ever. So Abraham's faith in God never fails and neither will yours if you continue to trust him.

What Abraham does, he does some really dumb things. But what else, the other thing he does is he always responds to God's word, right? He makes a stupid choice. And he goes and says, Sarah's my sister with Abimelech.

[17:21] God's word comes, changes his perspective. He says, okay. And he obeys God's word. You and I don't always know the right thing to do, right? We can be in the word. We can be Christians for years.

And we can find ourselves doing something stupid. And God kind of taps us on our shoulder and says, there's a better way. You know, how do we respond to that? Do we respond to the word and go, okay, and turn and fall?

That's Abraham. Abraham's faith was such that he never focused upon his failures. He quickly responded to God's word. So Abraham, he responds to the son of promise being born. Receiving the son of promise into his life resulted in obedience to the word of God. A priority upon the word of God in his life. As we go into verse 6, we're going to see the promise rejoiced in. This is Sarah's response. And Sarah said, God has made me to laugh so that all that hear will laugh with me. I think Sarah needed to laugh. I think she was a pretty crusty lady from what we've seen. [18:27] I think she needed to laugh. And she said, who would have said unto Abraham that Sarah should have given children suck? For I have borne him a son in his old age.

And so Sarah's response is what? Joy. Joy as she receives the promise into her life. As she receives the word of promise, the fulfillment of the promise, the son of promise. She receives this joy.

So Sarah's expression, her outward expression, her laughter, was simply a reflection of what? Well, her inward hilarity. What does that mean? She was hilarious? I thought we don't do that thing here. The barking like dogs. No, no, no. Her inward hilarity stemmed from her incredulity. Right? The fact that it was so incredible, so impossible, that God could fulfill this promise, it just, it overwhelmed her.

It was just hilariously amazing that this could happen in her life. And it just resulted in this outward expression of joy that she had. And God's promise fulfilled, it defies all possibility and produces a hilarious joy.

[19:30] There should be joy at God's fulfilling his promise in our life. When the son of promise comes into our life, when Jesus comes into our life, what does he say? He said, in me is fullness of joy.

I want you to have joy. The joy should be because we recognize the impossibility of what God's done in our life. Right? I am going to heaven based on no merit of my own.

And yet somehow, God has looked down and not only just saved me, but called me in such a way that he says, I want you to know I love you, but that I also have a part for you. Come on, let's go do this.

Here's a promise. Receive it. React upon it. Do something with it. Here we were talking a little bit before service about Reformed theology, Calvinism. Right?

The idea that we are predestinated to everything. Predestinated to heaven or to hell. So if I preach to you and you're predestinated to hell, no matter how much your desire is to go to heaven, it's too bad. You're not going to make it.

[20:26] That's the ultimate end, you know, of their doctrine. That idea. This predestination. And God's desire is that we have a part in what he's doing.

But our part isn't like, okay, well, I'm going to save myself. No, God does all that. God does the impossible. God does the miraculous. God makes the promise and fulfills it. What he wants of us is he says, are you going to receive this?

Are you going to act upon it? Is it something in your life that has value enough that you're going to say, yes, I'll take that? That's the difference. I don't think that God's going to force upon you your salvation.

But I think he's done everything for you and essentially gifted it to you. And now you get to receive it. As we see here with Abraham, with the promise that God's fulfilling in his life, Abraham had a choice. Once God brought that promise into his life, what's he going to do with it?

How's he going to respond to it? And that's where we see him responding according to God's command and according to his word. But Sarah makes this statement here where she says, who would have thought that Sarah should have given children to Abraham?

[21:31] I think she's speaking out of her heart that it's been very lonely for her. Very lonely. And it can be very lonely. We're going to see as we go through now, we're going to get into Ishmael.

We're going to see how the persecution, the loneliness of those who decide to live according to promise. And Sarah's been very lonely and believing God's promise can be lonely because it's impossible.

Because you're telling someone, I believe something that cannot happen by any means in this world. God has to step into my world from outside this world to make it happen. Whether that's salvation or whether that is just God's at work in your life.

And so believing God's promise can be very lonely. But God's promise does what? God's promise validates our faith, doesn't it? When God's promise comes into our life and we receive it, faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

And when God fulfills his promise, it validates our faith. And our faith is stronger, becomes even stronger. And then Abraham, he honors his son in verse 8.

[22 : 37] So we have eight days. He's been born. We're eight days in. He circumcises him. And then it says the child grew and was weaned. So we've got a few years here. This could be three, four, five years old.

And the idea there of weaned, it's only used a few other times in Scripture as that word. Like that the child is no longer dependent upon its mother for life, right? It's actually used in other places to mean a complete person or wholeness.

And so when he's saying that the child was weaned, it's kind of the idea that the child is now an independent person. And we are recognizing independence of the child. That it is no longer just, you know, a baby that is responding to some stimulus.

But it's like, okay, this is my son. And it is time for him to take his place among us. And so Abraham makes this feast. And he honors Isaac.

He's honoring the promise, the son of promise that God has brought into his life. But Sarah saw the son of Hagar, the Egyptian, which she had borne unto Abraham, mocking.

[23 : 45] And again, this kind of goes back to our crusty Sarah, where she's still referring, she's going to refer to Hagar as the bondwoman and her son. And I don't think that her and Hagar ever had, you know, a good relationship after that whole mess in chapter 16, where she gave Hagar to Abraham to be his wife.

But Sarah saw that Ishmael was mocking Isaac at this point. And it seems to be at the same time. It seems to be at this feast. It doesn't seem like there's any other time passing. And the word mocking is an interesting word there.

It means, you know, to mock, to make fun of, right? And the flesh, because Ishmael is a type of the flesh, we're going to see that, it always mocks the promise, always. But the wording for this, and I'll put the references up there if you want to see them.

So in Judges, Judges chapter 16, it's where they bring out Samson at the end of his life, right? His hair is growing back and the Philistines bring him out. And they said, hey, let's bring him out. They put him between the two pillars. And it says, and they made them sport.

So this is during one of their pagan festivals where they're worshiping. And a lot of their pagan festivals were very inappropriate, if I could say the least, for delicate ears, right?

[25 : 03] In Exodus chapter 32, that's when Moses, he's going to come down from the mountain. And guess what he finds the Israelites doing? It says they ate and drank and rose up to play. Didn't mean they were playing spike ball.

Okay? They rose up to play. That same idea. And then we're going to, in Genesis 26, we'll eventually get to Isaac, where he does the same thing his dad does.

And he says, oh, Rachel, I'm sorry, Rebecca, she's my sister. Right? But then Abimelech, not this Abimelech, Abimelech's just a title for a Philistine king.

The Abimelech at that time looks out his window and it says he saw them sporting together. Again, they weren't playing racquetball. Right? So this idea within this mocking of corruption, of inappropriate behavior, it's not just like, Isaac spilled his milk.

The kids are full. No, it's something worse than that. And the flesh always seeks to corrupt and minimize the work of the spirit. And that's Ishmael at this point. He's not just mocking Isaac.

[26 : 08] He's seeking to corrupt him. He's belittling. He's doing something very inappropriate, whatever that is. See, the flesh can never be a partaker of the promise.

Never. Ishmael, no matter how hard he tried, he was Abraham's son, but he was never going to be the son of promise. And Isaac, as long as Isaac was in his realm, okay, he's a baby.

All right, he's with the women. But Isaac now at this feast is being brought into Ishmael's realm and Ishmael's world. And he's like, oh, no, I can't have this.

It's the same with us as we accept the son of promise into our life. It's like, all right, your flesh is like, whatever. You can do your church thing. Okay, that's cool. Go to church. Whoa, whoa, whoa. Don't you bring that into the realm of your entertainment.

Don't bring it into your house. Your language, your work. No, no, no, no, no. I can't have that. You want to go to church and do your church thing, that's cool. But when you're with your friends, that's all about a good time.

[27 : 05] And baby, the flesh is where that's at, right? As soon as we start to bring that son of promise into the realm of those areas of our lives where we are now making prominent the son of promise, the flesh is going to fight back because the flesh can never be a partaker of the promise.

And so it hates the things of the spirit because it just shows them up constantly. Paul tells us in Galatians, this section of scripture right here, because Sarah, you know, says, cast out the bondwoman and her son because she saw her mocking.

Abraham, it says in verse 10, I'm sorry, in verse 11, the thing was very grievous to him, very grievous. But then the Lord comes in verse 12 and says, let it not be grievous in your sight because of the lad, because of the bondwoman.

And all that Sarah has said unto you, hearken unto her, for in Isaac shall thy seed be called. Paul grabs onto the section of scripture in Galatians. Remembering Galatia, they were struggling between living according to the law, which the Judaizers were pressing upon them, and living according to the things of the spirit.

So in verse 28 of Galatians 4, Paul says, now we brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. Okay, good to know.

[28 : 25] We now know that like Isaac, we are part of the promise of God. We are a miraculous birth based on God's promise. But as then, he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the spirit, even so it is now.

Nevertheless, what says the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son. For the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the free woman. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.

So Paul likens this struggle between the flesh and the spirit, between our natural nature and the new nature that's in Christ. And he says, my friends, we are not of the bondwoman, but you gotta, on your own, decide to cast out the bondwoman.

The flesh is there. The flesh isn't part of the promise. You're not gonna bring it into that realm. As we're gonna see, there's no cohabitation. Ishmael's gotta go. He can't stay with Isaac. It's not gonna work.

Galatians 5.17 says, For the flesh lusts or desires. It covets against the spirit. It's jealous. It's envious. So it's fighting against the spirit.

[29 : 33] And the spirit against the flesh. The spirit pushes back on the flesh. And these are contrary to one to the other, so that you cannot do the things that you would. The flesh fighting against the spirit.

The spirit pushing back on the flesh. It says that as long as these two are contrary one to another, you can't do the things you would. As long as the flesh is allowed to maintain any footing in your life, even the spirit working in your life, it's gonna hold you back.

It says you can't. You can't have both cohabitating. It's not gonna work. It doesn't produce fruit. You end up not doing the things that you would because of this conflict.

And so Sarah has discernment here, recognizing this cannot stay. He's gotta go. He can't be here. The flesh is always the one to initiate the conflict as well.

If you see that in verse 17 in Galatians there, the flesh is first. The flesh comes and attacks the spirit. And then the spirit pushes back. That's a lesson to always kind of wait it out. When you have a reaction in the flesh, the Lord will come in with his spirit.

[30 : 40] And he will give you, Scripture says that he always makes a way. He never gives us anything too great to bear. But by himself makes a way for us. So the spirit comes in and says, hey, here's the correct way to handle this.

Don't react in the flesh. The flesh will always be the one to initiate the conflict. Proverbs 22.10 talks about casting out a scorner. It says, just cast out a scorner and contention shall go.

Yea, strife and reproach shall cease. And so Sarah's recognizing that Ishmael has to go. There's not going to be any cohabitating together any longer. Because now that Isaac is here, Ishmael is not content just to leave things.

He's going to fight back. And the Lord then says to Abraham, let it not be grievous in your sight. That word grievous means like, it's like a loud noise almost.

It's like shocking. It's like super loud and in your face. It's just, this is so hard for him to handle and to bear. Abraham could not see past the emotional pain in this moment.

[31 : 44] It's just, I can't do this. I can't get rid of Ishmael. He's my son. I love him. But God's word comes and gives him the proper perspective, doesn't it? The word of God came and says, let it not be grievous in your sight because of the left and because of your bondwoman.

Excuse me. And all that Sarah has said unto you, hearken to her voice. For in Isaac shall thy seed be called. And so Abraham has to decide what voice is he going to listen to.

Remember the last time he listened to Sarah's voice? It's the same word there where God says hearken to her voice. Last time he hearkened to her voice was Genesis 16 verse 2. It says Abraham hearkened unto the voice of his wife, took Hagar.

He's like, honey, you told me to do this and now you're telling me not to do this. And both times you're telling me it's a great idea and probably God's will. How do I know I'm supposed to do? How do I know? God's word. God's word will validate godly counsel.

It will validate the advice we're given. Look, we may not always have a scripture and a verse to go with everything we do in life, with every decision we make in life. But we should at least have the assurance that we're not violating God's word, that it's in line with God's word, the decisions and choices we're making.

[33 : 01] But there are times where God knows that we need something more than just the voice that's spoken to us. And so he gives Abraham his word here. And here we see the promises then protected.

Where Ishmael was threatening the promise, Sarah has this discernment. And Abraham obeys. He obeys not her voice so much as the voice of the Lord. He sees it's very grievous.

And so God's word restores perspective to Abraham. And he said, I will also, in verse 13, and also the son of the bond woman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed.

Well, Abraham was probably very excited about that. Like, okay. Whew. You know, at least I know my son shall also be a great nation, just like Isaac. Ishmael will as well.

How'd that turn out? You know? Not every area of my life should produce fruit. Not every area of my life should produce fruit. Because it could be bad fruit.

[34 : 02] Scripture talks about the flesh producing fruit under corruption. I don't want God to bless every area of my life. I want God's blessing to be on every area of my life. But I don't want him to bless this.

Oh, and bless that. Oh, and bless this. Instead, I want him to bless God. I want your blessing. So that transforms my life. Like with Abraham. I don't want my desires to be what you bless.

I want to receive the blessing of your desires. To be what I do. Right? There's a difference. It's not always healthy. For every area of my life to produce fruit.

And I need to be careful what I bring under God's blessing. Right? I can bring something under God's blessing that he never intended to be under his blessing. I can bring something into my ministry, into my life, into my home.

That now falls under God's blessing. And it's not something that's going to produce good fruit. Or is healthy. And Abraham here. Hears God's voice.

[34 : 59] And he says, okay. All right. God's given me perspective by his word. He's telling me I need to do what Sarah said. And what does he do? Abraham rises up early in the morning.

Like his nature. Like his habit is. Took bread and a bottle of water. Gave it unto Hagar. Putting it on her shoulder. And the child sent her away. And she departed and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba.

And here we see the promise is singular. The promise cannot be maintained with the flesh. Right? That's holiness. Holiness means just singular. Not plurality. Right?

Something that's holy is without corruption. It's like if you have a glass of water. It's holy water. Well, he puts dirt in it. Well, it's not holy water anymore.

It's no longer singular. It's now been something else has been introduced to it. And here God is telling Abraham the promise must be maintained in holiness and singularity.

[35 : 57] And where Abraham, this is where he's so remarkable, where he originally may have had the wrong perspective. He thought, I'm not getting rid of Ishmael. Honey, I'm not listening to you. No way. This is my son. God's word comes and says, Abraham, this is what I want you to do.

He's so quick to respond to that new perspective that God's word brings. So quick to say, okay, I'll get up the next morning. I'm not going to drag my feet on this. I'm not going to call up my pastor. I'm not going to like, you know, I should probably pray about this for a while. He's like, all right, I'm going to do this. Why did God have Abraham get rid of Ishmael? Because if he had not gone through this first, he never would have been able to offer up Isaac. Abraham had to first offer up Ishmael before he could offer up Isaac. This is a progression here. But Abraham needed to release this to the Lord. Time is never a factor in obedience. Previous failures or faulty viewpoints should have no bearing on future obedience. Future obedience is not determined by past failure. No matter what your failure is, no matter what struggles you may have had, you know, you may be like, man, I haven't read my Bible in two years, right? [37 : 08] Whatever it is. So what? So what? Paul says, forgetting that which is behind, reaching forth unto that which is before, I press forward to the prize for the prize of the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

We have to be willing to release the past to move forward into what God has for us. And so Abraham does that. He's quick to obey. He's quick to respond. He's quick to let God give him perspective on this.

Romans 13, 14 says, But put you on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof. And Abraham, he sends out Hagar and Ishmael.

He gives them a bottle of water and a crust of bread. You think, what? Because Abraham is entrusting to God what God has taken from his hands. God has said to Abraham, cast her out as your wife has said.

He didn't have the freedom then to go and requalify that and add his own opinion to that. He entrusted to God what God was taking from his hands. God said, I want you to do it in this way. [38 : 10] And he did it. He did it. And it was a picture to us to not make any provision for the things of the flesh. And we are never to give to the flesh what belongs to the promise. Abraham was not free to give to Ishmael what God had said was clearly Isaac's.

That it was Isaac who would be the one to inherit. And so we too are to entrust to God what he takes from our hands. But this was hard. This would have hurt.

This was a very painful moment in Abraham's life. I'm sure watching, you know, Hagar and Ishmael walk off. We're told to crucify the flesh and the things of the flesh. There's a reason it says crucify. Because crucifixion is painful. It's a process. It takes time. It's not just something that's simply done and over. But what comes after crucifixion? Resurrection.

Crucifixion isn't the end. You don't go down into the water. And that's it. Crucified with Christ. And then you die. No. Raised to walk in newness of life.

[39 : 10] Right? We identify with that with Christ. Because he has done that, we can take part in that. But it can be a process. And it can hurt. And Abraham offered to God.

The sacrifices to God are a broken spirit and a contrite heart. Oh God. He will not despise. And Abraham was willing to do that. So the fulfillment of God's promise, as we close this out.

It was not affected by Abraham's failures, shortcomings, lack of ability. None of that. Abraham's faith in God never failed because God never failed. God fulfilled his promise.

God fulfilled his word. God fulfilled his word. I'm going to give you a shotgun of a few different items here. I'm going to throw at you. Just to recap. I think it's really good for us to see a few of these bullet points. A man of faith.

Who's a man of faith? Well, we saw the man of faith today. We saw Abraham. We've watched his life to this point. And this is the culmination. Yes, he's going to take Isaac up to the mountain. But he would not have taken Isaac to the mountain if he had not let Ishmael go.

[40 : 12] If he had not prioritized the word of God in his life. And a man of faith or a woman of faith has what? They have a part in naming God's promise. Abraham had a part in naming God's promise. They have a readiness to allow God's word to shape their perspective and form their decisions.

Abraham was open to God's word, totally changing his perspective and his course of life. Never would he have thrown out. That sounds bad. Sent out his, you know, wife, quote unquote, common law wife and son.

Except God's word directed him to. Man, there are people today that need God's word. That are living together and aren't married. And they need God's word to say you need to do it the right way.

You need to cast that out. Right? There's those of us that are struggling with something that God's saying. You need to go a different direction. My word is going to give you that perspective. A man of faith has a humility to be led by godly counsel.

Abraham didn't hold it against Sarah that she had given him wrong counsel one time. He was willing to be led by godly counsel. He had a surrendered life that entrusted the things of the heart to God.

[41 : 18] His son, his son Ishmael. God said, I want you to release that to me. A willingness to remove from his life anything that would hinder God's promise.

I think that's a big one. Especially for us today. What in our life needs to be removed that is hindering God's promise from having his fulfillment in my life? Abraham was willing to let that be removed.

And then lastly, the son of promise. The son of promise. What did the son of promise do in the scripture today? Isaac, the son of promise, when he came into Abraham and Sarah's life, he brought obedience to the word, didn't he?

Abraham was quick to obey the word when the son of promise came. The son of promise brought fullness of joy. Sarah needed joy in her life. The only thing that was going to bring that type of joy was the son of promise.

The son of promise also forced a decision. There's a progression that happens through the text, and we didn't have time to see it all, where it kind of builds.

[42 : 21] It builds an intensity of like the promise is here. The son of promise is here. The promise is fulfilled. It's named. It's consecrated. It's rejoiced, and it's honored, and it kind of gets to this peak, and then the opposition comes.

The opposition comes. And it's the same as Christ works in our life. That decision is going to come. There's going to be a forced decision. Are you going to try and maintain the flesh with the son of promise, or are you going to allow that division that God wants to happen in your life?

And the son of promise resulted in holiness and a singularity. As Isaac came into Abraham and Sarah's life, Hagar and Ishmael had to go, and they recognized that.

That it resulted in holiness. And as Jesus comes into our life, the flesh has to go. It's got to go. So what needs to be removed from my life to make way for the son of promise?

Colossians chapter 2, verses 10 through 13 may feel like a shoehorn fit, but it does fit. Just bear with me. I wanted to break it out into these different parts. Paul says, and you are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power.

[43 : 33] So in Christ, in the son of promise, we have completion. In other words, he's saying, this is it, guys. You're not going to go out and find something else that's going to help you. There's no power. There's no principality. There's no angel. There's nothing else. There's no spiritual anything, guru or anybody that's going to make you more complete than what you are in Jesus.

In whom also you are circumcised with a circumcision made without hands and putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ.

And just as Abraham obediently circumcised Isaac, he removed the flesh. So in Christ, the circumcision of our heart is Jesus, his desire to remove the flesh from our life.

Why? For fruitfulness. Because like we read in Galatians, you cannot do the things you would if there's that conflict between the spirit and the flesh continually taking place. In Christ, he removes that.

Buried with him in baptism, wherein also you are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God who has raised him from the dead. So we are buried with him in baptism. That link likens back to the flesh being removed.

[44 : 35] Just as Christ died and his death allowed sin and flesh and the natural man to die. Well, we are like this. The same idea of baptism. As we go down into baptism, we're identifying saying, I accept that.

I leave in the hands of God the things that I can't handle myself. And I accept that his death was enough for me. It was payment for my sins. And then as we come up in newness of life, God raises us to live with Christ.

And you being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, the impossible place we found ourselves, hath God quickened together with him, with the son of promise, having forgiven you all trespasses.

So as Abraham and Sarah have received the son of promise into their life, as Isaac comes into their life and changes their life, they're so excited. There's so much joy. And then there's division and separation and choices and pain.

Jesus said, I did not come to bring peace, but I came to bring a sword. You know, it'll divide in your very homes. And when you do that, when you choose to walk in the spirit and say no to the flesh, you're going to look down, be looked down on by a lot of people.

[45 : 47] A lot of people who you may consider yourself, consider your friends or consider themselves in the church. Those who have not yet given up on themselves, given up on their own idea of their own ability to keep what only God can do through his spirit.

I guess the question for us is, I know I've been asking myself this week, what needs to be removed from my life to make way for the son of promise? What is it that's got to go so that the son of promise can have the prominent place in my life that he should have?

Second Corinthians chapter one, verse 20. For no matter how many promises God has made, they are yes in Christ. And so through him, the amen is spoken by us to the glory of God.

As God wants to, we've said, you know, what does he want to remove from our life to make way for the son of promise? Well then, on the other side of that, what promise is God just waiting for you to say amen to in your life?

And what promise is he waiting for you to grab a hold of and say, this is mine. And I'm going to honor God with it. I'm going to live by it. Father, thank you so much.

[46 : 58] Thank you that it's in Christ. Thank you that we're in Christ. Thank you as we read, the heirs of promise. It's us, the heirs of promise. Lord, as we bumble and stumble our way through this world, may we be like Abraham, Lord.

Lord, we're going to fail. Not perfect. We're not going to always keep our word or always choose the right thing. But Lord, when the word of God comes into our lives, when the Holy Spirit brings illumination, may we be like Abraham, quick to respond, quick to obey, and quick to entrust into your hands the things, Lord, that you want us to release.

Thank you so much. May you make your promises real to us this week. And in Jesus' name, amen.