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[00:00:00] We have started Section two in Genesis and like almost invariably commentators divide this book into two sections chapters 1 to 11, section number one, creation Adam and Eve, all the way to babble. We're talking about 2000 years of human history, and then Chapters 12, all the way to Chapter 50 really is the second section. And we're talking about Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and Joseph, the patriarchs, you know, the institution of the promise that God gave to Abraham and the fulfillment ultimately through Isaac and Jacob. So we're talking today, we're going to start the life of Abraham, obviously significant person in the scripture to study. And this section, section four is entitled God Be Friends. And that's exactly what he does with Abraham. So let's check out Genesis Chapter 12. If you have your Bibles today open with me to Genesis Chapter 12 and we're going to read six verses. The Bible says Now the Lord had said to Abraham, Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation. I will bless you and make your name great and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you and will curse those who Kurt and I will curse him who curses you. And in you, all the families of the earth shall be blessed. You may want to not only highlight that or promise, but especially underline that last promise. So what did Abraham do? So Abraham departed as the Lord had spoken to him, and lot went with him, and Abraham was a ripe 75 years old. Some of you were like, Man, I'm God can't use me. I'm too old. And Abraham was 75 years.

[00:01:48] And some of you were like, man, you're you guys, you old people. You're just too old for God to use. And Abraham was 75 years old when he departed from Haran. Then Abraham took Sarah, his wife, and laid his brother's son and all their possessions that they had gathered and the people whom they had acquired in Haran, and they departed to go to the land of Canaan. So they came to the land of Canaan. Abram passed through the land to the place of him as far as the terrible tree of Moora and the cane and ice were in the land. Let's pray together. And Father, we thank you for this new section in the Book of Genesis and God so grateful, so grateful for your love for Abraham and Sara. And you're calling on their lives and and father today that we, in fact, are experiencing the fruit of their obedience, God, the fruit of your choice, your selection, the fulfillment of your promise, God. Even as we were singing, you never fail, even when we don't see it. God, even when the evidence of the promise is not around us. We know God that you. It's impossible for you to not keep the promises that you have made to your people. And God, we pray today that you would teach us what it means to have a friendship with you. Sometimes this is so hard for us to conceptualize and experience. But we prayed today that we would learn, and then we ask that we would live it out this week. In Jesus name. Amen. You can have a seat. Oliver Cromwell was one of England's greatest generals and statesmen, and he was particularly loved by the people because of his authenticity. You know, in a time where if you were a leader in England, there was a lot of pomp, there was a lot of circumstance, there was a lot of celebrity ism.

[00:03:46] There was a lot of show. But, you know, he was a unique leader, not not just in his capacity to lead, but the way that he led. And like I said, the sincerity and the authenticity was kind of he was kind of like a regular guy. And the story goes just to illustrate this. The story goes that he was having his portrait done as many great leaders during that era would do. And as the artist was just about to begin, he looked at him and he said, Listen, I want you to paint me as I am, warts and all. And I guess he had a lot of warts. So and you know, they didn't they didn't airbrush at the time. But but but basically the artists would would do that. They would the rendering of the individual wasn't really always the real thing. And so he said to the artist, you said, Hey, I want you to paint me warts and all. And if you don't, I will not pay a farthing for this painting. And so the story goes that the artist did that. And I appreciate that. I appreciate that, that authenticity. I appreciate appreciate that sincerity. And, you know, I love one thing I love about the scriptures is when we're talking about the great figures of the Bible, you know, the Bible is honest. The Bible does portray the greatest characters, warts and all. And I'm thankful for that because, you know, as you see inadequacy, as you see failure, as you see great figures of the Bible faltering, sometimes, man, it just is a reminder, not that you rejoice in other people's failures, but it's a reminder man of God can use that person. He can use me. And, you know, the Bible is faithful to do that in Abraham's life.

[00:05:33] And I think this is significant because, you know, Abraham is called the father of faith, and in fact, he's called the friend of God. And the way the scripture presents him, you know, isn't airbrushed. It's not leaving out the inadequacies. He was the father of faith. He was the friend of God, even though he was a man who struggled greatly. Now, when I say the phrase friend of God, some of you might be skeptics in this room and you might be thinking, well, you know, God isn't a friend of anybody, especially the God of the Old Testament. The God of the Old Testament is capricious and angry. And, you know, you cherry pick certain stories that kind of lead you to that conclusion. But the truth is this, as we look at Genesis all the way to the Book of Malachi, what we see over and over and over again is a god of love. There are not two gods in the canon of Scripture, the God of the Old Testament and the God of the New Testament. There is one God and He is the same yesterday, today and forever. The same loving God that we love in the New Testament is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He was the one who created a relationship with Adam and Eve, and the Bible says walked with them in the cool of the garden. He is the same God that instituted the rainbow as a covenant of mercy over all of humanity. He is the same God that cared for Hagar when she had been cast out and marginalized by Abraham and by Sarah. He is the same God that showed kindness to rehab the prostitute. He is the same God that showed mercy to Nineveh at the preaching of Jonah.

[00:07:12] He is the same God that heard the cries of Israel and delivered them from the Egyptians. And He is the same God that called Abraham. His friend Abraham was selected not just to be a tool that God would use, but Abraham was selected because he was a heart that was loved by the Lord. And, you know, I've mentioned the importance of covenant in the Scriptures. And and I talk to you about the purpose of covenant to restore what was lost in Eden, that ultimately the plan of God was that we were to be image bearers, that we were to have a relationship with God. And as God institutes, you know, this is an amazing chapter. Chapter 12, this relationship that was instituted, it wasn't just that God wanted to use Abraham's life as a tool, or God was restoring something. He was restoring intimacy. He was restoring what was intended in Eden, that his people would be image bearers. And just as Adam and Eve walk with God, so also Abraham and Sarah would learn the same and they would do so as friends of God. You know, I think friendship is an. I know you'll agree with me today, but I think friendship is one of the most basic human needs. And I want to say to you today that that need is most deeply met in a relationship with God. All of us need companionship. And I'm not I'm not just talking about somebody that's in close proximity. This is not just a statement of geography. I'm talking about intimate relationship. We've been created to have relationships and friendships with one another. And, you know, Christmas this season, you know, I love it. I've mentioned that to you before. I think it's beautiful.

[00:09:01] I think there are so many reasons why it's beautiful. One reason is that you can spend time with family and friends and and yeah, the truth is, for some of us, we don't have that. We might not have family members. We may not have friends. We may be struggling with loss. And it's in those moments where we're struggling with loss or the absence of human connection that we can learn that the most important relationship, our relationship with God is, in fact what meets that need in the deepest way. Have you experienced that before? Anybody. Anybody you like? No, not really. We should start with the gospel. If the answer is no, you know those times where it's like, Man, no one loves me, no one's for me. I might as well just eat worms and die. And then you. Then you push pause, and you lean in to God and you discover something so beautiful. Well, the Bible says, in fact, a number of times that Abraham was the friend of God. James talks about this in James chapter two, verse 23, where the Bible says this, and Abraham was called the friend of God. Some of you I know had a friendsgiving this Thanksgiving, and you guys know what a friendsgiving is. You and you invite your friends over. It's not it's not all the time that a Thanksgiving with family members is actually a friendsgiving. Because because sometimes sometimes there's people in your family that aren't even your friends. And and and so, you know, what people have done is they've created a friendsgiving and you get to invite people over that you actually like. Right. You know, it's not that you just have to because they're family, but you actually get to select people that you like and you want to spend time with.

[00:10:59] That's what a friendsgiving is. How many of you guys had a friendsgiving? All right. Well, you know, I've got great deep theological truth for you today. If you're a Christian, you're a friend of God and God likes you. All right. God likes you. And God wants to spend time with you. That amazing. In one of my Bible college classes on theology, the professor got up and you said, Hey, I'm going to share with you what I learned in my seminary class. Probably the most deeply theological thing you'll ever hear in your life. Number one, God likes you and He wants to spend time with you. And I thought, man, is that what I paid for, for this class? No, I didn't think that. I thought, well, I'm going to have to really ponder that. I'm going to have to ponder that because the concept of God actually liking me, since I know me, is hard to put together. You know, in fact, today, if you're a Christian, how many Christians do we have here? Raise your hand. Yeah. Okay, listen. God is your friend. God is your friend. I want you to say out loud. God is my friend now. God, that was so unorganized, so unorganized. It's like when we start our Bible study and you all are sitting. Hey, let's. Let's try it again. On three, I want you to say this. God is my friend. Ready? One, two, three. How did that feel? Good. Did it feel good? So how many of you would say, Hey, man, that felt really good. Raise your hand. Now I just want honesty today. How many of you were like. It felt good, but it felt weird. Anybody? Anybody, anybody? Like, be honest. All right. We're all going to talk about this in a minute.

[00:12:49] But conceptually, this is something that I've had to really work through myself because and I'll I'll I'll detail this out later. But for me, it's been it's been a process. It's been a process because, you know, sometimes we have this view, rightly so, of the glory of God and the magnificence of God and the other worldliness of God and the supremacy of God and the holiness of God and the righteousness of God. And we think, man, we think all of that. And He can be my friend. Yeah, that's a hard thing sometimes to put together. This is what we learn about Abraham's journey with God and the friendship that God developed with Him. And I just want to read verses 1 to 3 again. They're so important. Look out some of the most important verses in all of the Bible and everything that you read in Genesis Chapter 12 ties all the way to the end of the Book of Revelation, all the way to the end. This is part of the scarlet thread of redemption that we see throughout every book of all of the canon of Scripture. So the Bible says, now, the Lord had said to Abraham, By the way, God is going to change Abraham's name to Abraham, and for the sake of simplicity, I'm going to call him Abraham. Now I know, like I said last week, there's some highly technical scholars in this room who will say, Pastor, you know, technically you can't call him Abraham yet because God hadn't changed his name. So. I know, I know. But peace be at peace today. I understand that. But for the sake of simplicity, I tried. And Sarah, his name was changed to Sarah. He says, Get out of your country, from your family and from you're not no Thanksgiving anymore.

[00:14:37] That's what you're saying. And from your father's house to a land that I will show you, I will make you a great nation. I will bless you and make your name great. And you shall be a blessing. Notice that I will bless you and you shall be a blessing. Those two things are always tied together. I will bless those who bless you. I will curse him, who curses you, and in you, all the families of the earth shall be blessed. Now, listen, as we look at God's relationship with Abraham, there's a lot embedded in this. I know mobile. We'll talk about as many details as we can. With respect to his friendship with Abraham, the first thing we learn is that friendship with God is gracious and personal. Friendship with God is gracious and personal. Think about Abraham situation. You know, think about the context that he was living in. Abraham was a deeply superstitious individual. He worshiped a pantheon of false gods, and there was a hierarchy among these gods. In fact, we know this from archeology and history, that in that culture, the Chaldean culture at the time, the Chief God among all of the gods was named as sin, which probably was really appropriate. Not only were you in sin when you worship when you were worshiping sin, but sin was actually the name of the deity. And so Abraham without a doubt, was part of this polytheistic religious system, and he was actually worshiping a false God. There is no indicator. There is no indicator whatsoever that that before God speaks here to Abraham, that he had some inclination towards monotheism. That, for sure, is not the case. Now, I don't want to get sidetracked this morning, but, you know, some people say people who believe in an evolution as they look at theism, they say, well, you know, monotheism ultimately was where man landed.

[00:16:36] Man was initially initially polytheistic. And then over the course of time, you know, as religions began to develop humanity for social reasons, developed monotheism, that is not the case. Right. Humanity, we know, starts with monotheism, drifts into polytheism, and then it takes objective revelation from God outside, revelation from God to get humanity back on track. And that's exactly what God does with Abraham. I mean, there is no reason, there's no deserving reason in Abraham's life for God to select him and choose him. It's not as if, you know, Abraham had dotted his eyes and tossed crossed his t's in some religious sense. And so God looked down and said, Hey, there's a really good guy. And, you know, in the midst of polytheism, he's he's leaning towards me. No, that was not the case. There was no reason for God to choose Abraham. In fact, some of you are thinking, well, gee, yeah, I mean, I hear that. And I think, why did God choose Abraham? And my question for you is, why did God choose you? Right? Don't give Abraham a hard time. Give yourself a hard time. And the truth is this only God knows. Only God knows. I mean, for sure we know it's for His glory. And one day when we're in heaven, all things will be much clearer. But what does God do? God chooses Abraham. God speaks to Abraham. God gives command to Abraham, a command to leave his family, a command to leave his land and to trust him. Now, I just want you to think about the context of Abraham's life. The guy is 75 years old when he gets the command to leave his family and his land. His wife is in her mid sixties. They've lived in the same place their whole life.

[00:18:27] They build relationships. I mean, Abraham, it would seem, was a wealthy individual at this point. Of course, we know that God continue to bless him. But there was a life that had been built in this land. And what does he do? He gets the command of God he chooses to obey. I wonder what that would have looked like when Abraham tried to explain that to his friends. You know, he's starting to pack up and his friends come over. He's wrapping up the tents and they say, Hey, man, what are you doing? He's like, Well, I'm moving. And they said, Well, where are you moving to? He's like, Well, I don't know. I'm not sure. And they say, Well, why are you moving? And he says, Well, because God told me. God told me. I mean, I think if you're if you're in the social sphere of Abraham, you're looking at this and you're thinking, man, this makes no sense whatsoever. But there was a choice that Abraham made, and the choice was to walk by faith. Hebrews 11 eight says by faith, Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. Check this out. And he went out not knowing where he was going. Don't you love that? And he went out not knowing where he was going. I don't have time to talk about this today, and I've talked about it before. But, you know, there are times where God calls us to take a step of faith and he does not fill in any detail. There are no details. And you know that we have we have requirements for God to be obedient to him. It's like, okay, hey, God, you know what? I'll do what you want me to do, but you need to check these box boxes first.

[00:19:55] First of all, I need to have all the information. I need to have all the information. And, you know, we'll wait in that spot. God's saying, hey, I want you to move. And and we're saying, hey, I'm going to stay right right here until you meet my requirements. And, you know, that's not walking by faith. God in your life. God has the right because he's God right. God has the right to give you as much information as he wants to. And there are times where God will lay out some detail, and there are times when God won't. Our responsibility is to be obedient and to walk by faith. So just consider, right, God's friendship with Abraham. It demonstrates graciousness. Abraham definitely did not deserve this. It was the grace of God. Today, if you have a relationship with God through His Son, Jesus Christ understand it is because of His grace. I don't care how many times you attend church or how much money you give or how selfless you think that you are, or the bumper stickers that you have on your car. Right? None of those things are earning you favor. It is the grace of God. I want you to think about how personal this calling on Abraham's life was. The invitation. Just consider the invitation. What was it that he was being invited to? Well, later on, I want to read from Isaiah 48 or 41, verse eight. This is what God is going to say. God, at this point in the book of Isaiah, is speaking to the nation of Israel and he's talking about how they were chosen. But then he says something about his relationship with Abraham that is so profound. He says this. He says, But you, Israel, are my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, the descendants of Abraham, my friend.

[00:21:43] I just think that that says so much about what God has invited us into. You know, when we talk about being the friend of God, what exactly what exactly does that mean? Some of you might struggle with it because I say friend of God and you and you might be thinking, well, pastors talking about being God's buddy, here he goes. You know, Mr. Relevant Pastor is talking about God being our pal and pulling God down to our level and talking about God and friendship with God like we would talk about friendship with with human beings. Hey, God is my buddy. We've got this great relationship. We hang out from time to time. I'm kickin it with God. And listen, you can kick it with God, don't get me wrong. But when we talk about friendship with God, we're not talking about reducing God. There's not some theological reduction where we're making God our equal. For sure. That's not the case. And honestly, I'll just tell you right now, conceptually, this has been a hard thing for me, because when I think of God, I think of he's my king. I think he's my master. I think he's my Lord and for God. I'm just telling you, for me, you know, it's kind of been and it just framed in an either or how can he be my master and be my friend? How can he be my king and still be my friend? How can he be the Lord of all the universe? You know, the the incomparable one. And still be my friend. And I'll tell you, he is. It's not king or friend. It's not Lord or friend. It's not master or friend. It is. It is. And it is. And this is the beauty of the relationship that God has invited us into.

[00:23:33] What does it mean to be a friend of God? It means this. It means to intimately know Him. When we talk about friendship with God, it means that we have the opportunity to intimately know him, to know his eternal purposes, and to join him in their fulfillment. That's what friendship with God. When you said before we write, as we were starting the service, Hey, say this, God is my friend. This biblically is what that means, that God has invited you into an intimate relationship where you can know Him and experience Him, where he is divulged to you his eternal purposes. And in addition to that, not just to know what he's up to. Like God doesn't just want you to know the details of what He's doing. He's inviting you to be part of their fulfillment. And you see that in this. You see that clearly in this promise, in this calling that he had on Abraham's life, every single one of those things. And in addition to that, this is precisely what Jesus said to his disciples. You remember in the upper room, this was just hours before the Garden of Gethsemane and his crucifixion. In his final moments, as as they had just celebrated the Passover meal together, he said this in John 1515. No longer do I call you servants for a servant does not know what his master is doing. But I have called you friends for all things that I heard from my father. I've made known to you. He called them to an intimate relationship. He called them to understand the father's eternal purposes. And then he invited them to be a part of their fulfillment. The prayer. So let me just say this before I tell you what the prayer is this week, the gospel is an invitation to friendship with God.

[00:25:24] If you've never put your trust in faith in Jesus Christ, when you do, when you have the opportunity to say Jesus, I believe I'm putting my trust and faith in you. I've sinned against God. And I see that I'm turning away from my sin. And I'm trusting that you died on the cross for me, that you paid a penalty, that I deserve to pay for my sins, but I could never pay, and that you rose from the dead and that you ascended to the right hand. When you when you take that step of faith and trust in Christ, what God gives you, He gives you many things. But one thing He gives you is a friendship with him. Today, I want to encourage you that throughout this week you should take a step of faith and pray. God help me to know what it means to be your friend and help me to learn to enjoy it. That's what I did this last week. I'm like, God, you know, I got a I got a lot of growth in this area. And so I pray that you show me what friendship with you really means and then teach me to enjoy it. Friendship with God is personal and gracious. The second thing I think that we learn from Abraham is this friendship with God means that God makes promises, that he keeps friendship with God means that He makes promises that he keeps. Now, typically, my approach to this portion of Scripture is to go through every one of these promises and kind of lay them out. Obviously, we're not doing that today, but if I were to do that, I would go through the promises like this. He promised to Abraham, a land he promised to Abraham, a nation he promised to Abraham a name he promised to Abraham protection.

[00:27:06] And he promised that through Abraham would come the greatest revolution. And all of those are significant. Let me just say that God faithfully fulfilled every one of those promises to Abraham, his friend. God gave him a land. And we know that that promise remains today, because we've seen the Jewish people regathered to their homeland. We see that there is a nation. We see that Abraham's name is has been blessed. We'll talk about that in just a second. We know that the divine protection over Abraham and his people remains until this day. And we know that through Abraham's line came the greatest revolution the world has ever known. Isaiah, chapter nine, verse six, four Unto us, a child is born unto us a son is given and the government will be upon his shoulder and his name will be called one. Full counselor, mighty God, everlasting father. Prince, prince of peace. Right. And through you, all the nations of the earth will be blessed. In other words, Abraham, through your seed, I'm going to bring the real revolution. Some of you are like, Hey, yeah, I'm a part of a cultural revolution, and I'm engaged in this social issue. Now, if you want to be a part of a real revolution, put your faith in Christ and preach the Kingdom of God. That is the real revolution that God brought through Abraham's life. There were promises that God gave to Abraham. And just like we see in Abraham's life, let me just remind you, God does not make promises that He won't keep to you. God does not make promises that He won't keep. Now, now, listen, as we consider Abraham's life, we know that there was a lot that Abraham didn't see. Abraham saw a partial fulfillment in the giving of Isaac, that supernatural, miraculous birth when he was 100 years old.

[00:29:06] Imagine that he had to wait 25 years for the fulfillment of that promise. There was a long period of time where Abraham had to learn to wait. He had to learn to trust in God. He, the Bible says he learned to endure patiently. You know, I think that this is something that God teaches all of us. You know, there are promises that God gives to us. God doesn't give us promises that he himself won't keep. Oftentimes, though, we only see a partial fulfillment. And then sometimes that fulfillment or the peace of the fulfillment comes with a lot of waiting. You know, how many of you like to wait while God fulfills his promise to you? I God, God says this, that or the other. He is going to do something. There's a calling on your life and it's okay. It's like, okay, God, when are you going to do it? Like tomorrow. It's not going to happen next month. And then a month goes by and five months go by and a year goes by. And then you start to study the scripture, you know, for all those people you're looking for, all these people who had to wait so long for the fulfillment of the promise. And that doesn't really encourage you because you look at David and he was anointed as king and it didn't happen really the fulfillment until 14 years later. Or you look at Joseph and the dreams that he had and he's thrown into prison, you know, is sold into slavery to modernize by his brothers, put in prison for ten years. And then you hear some some lame pastor talk about talk about Abraham's life and how it was 25 years that Abraham and Sarah had to learn to be patient and wait.

[00:30:46] And none of that's encouraging to you, right? You're like, God, really, please don't make it 14 years. Don't make it 25 years. And in the midst of all of that, you're you're sometimes like the rest of us struggling. What was it that anchored Abraham during those years where he was waiting for God to fulfill his promise? Well, number one is this he endured patiently, the Bible says, because it was God who promised, because it was God who promised. Check this out for when God made a promise to Abraham because he could swear by no one greater. He swore by himself saying Surely blessing, I will bless you and multiplying I will multiply you. And so after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. The point that this author is making is this He learned to patiently endure and to wait for the fulfillment, because it was God who promised he was able to anchor himself to this truth. God, because you said it. I know it's going to come to pass. God because you've said it. I know that it's going to come to pass. Listen will apply in just a second. The second thing he learned to do. The second thing he learned to do. I mean, all of this learning that when God makes promises, he keeps them. The second thing he learned to do was to give God glory before the answer came. He learned to give God glory before the answer came. It was 25 years of ups and downs, 25 years of God. Really? I don't have a son. Azar's my servant. Is this. Is this how it's going to roll? God. Genesis, chapter 15. We'll talk about that later. And I'm not saying, you know, warts and all.

[00:32:27] Right. We know that there were moments that Abraham struggled. But fundamentally, he anchored himself to the fact that God was the one who had made the promise, and he anchored himself to the reality that God is not only willing, but God is able. He anchored himself to the reality that he who made the promise was also able to perform. Look, Abraham had every reason. Can you think of something more like difficult than wanting to have a child, having a promise from God, not being able to go through the process, getting to the point where you're a hundred years old? Look, the issue isn't just infertility. I don't want to go into biology with you today, but we're talking about like God waited until it was literally a physical impossibility. And then what did God do? What did God do? He had to. Abraham and Sarah had to anchor themselves to something. And it wasn't going to be medicine or technology or advancements in science. It wasn't going to be their own abilities or circumstances, just working out or timing or something like that. They had to anchor themselves to this God. You not only promise, but you're able to perform. Check this out. He did not waiver the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God. There it is and being fully convinced. Right. There's a decision that was made, being fully convinced that what he had promised, he was also able to perform. So this is what he does, as the promise has yet to be fulfilled. In that moment of weakness and difficulty, he anchors himself to two things. Number one, God, you said it, and if you said it, I know you're going to do it.

[00:34:13] Number two, because you said it. I also know circumstances don't matter. Situations don't matter. Human capacity and ability doesn't matter. My own personal resources don't matter. You are the one who promised and you are able to perform. So this is what I'm choosing to do. I'm going to be patient. I'm going to trust you and God while I'm waiting for. For you to fulfill the promise. I'm going to I'm going to glorify you. I'm going to give you praise as if the miracle has already been done. I mean, hey, don't you want to walk in faith like that? Don't you want to walk in faith like that? I mean, you talk about how a friend should treat a friend. That is real friendship. I'm not sure what promise of God you've been struggling with. I don't know what difficult issue of life you're dealing with today. I want to tell you when God promises he will be faithful to bring it to pass. And I want to tell you that no matter how catastrophic the circumstances may look, he is able, he is almighty. He is all powerful. He is totally capable with man. It is impossible with man. It is impossible. But with God, all things are possible. So stop spinning. Stop stressing out. Stop living under this cloud of confusion that is self-induced because you have chosen not to plant your flag and believe. Do you understand what I'm saying? Hey, we struggle. We do struggle. We'll talk about this in a couple of weeks. The struggle is real, but you have to choose not to live perpetually in that place of struggle. Like it's okay, to be honest, to say, God, you know what? I don't get this, that or the other.

[00:35:55] Dump it on to the Lord. His shoulders can bear it, but at the end of the day, you've got to plant your flag and say, okay, you know what, God, I am struggling and I can't see how the dots connect here, but I'm choosing to believe in you. I'm choosing to believe in you. I'm going to make a choice right now. And that's when your crooked path gets straightened out. That's when the cloud of confusion. Some of it's self-induced. Some of it's self-induced. That's when the cloud of confusion gets lifted. And the light of his truth begins to guide your way. That that's when all of the voices that you're hearing. Right. Because you've got your own crazy voice and. Don't act like you don't know. Don't act like you don't know. You got your own crazy voice. You got society's crazy voice. You've got the devil's crazy voice. And all of these voices are playing. And when you plant your flag. And the promise of God. And. And. And anchor yourself to who he is. All of a sudden, those voices begin to dissipate. And there's one voice that you hear. Friendship with God means. God makes promises that he keeps. The final thing today is this friendship with God means that he has an amazing plan for legacy. Or let me say it like this friendship with God means His plan for legacy is powerful. His plan for legacy is powerful. You know, the there is an expansive plan of God that is manifested through this miniature moment. This is a small moment. This is we're talking about time space continuum here. One guy and his wife. They were chosen as a couple. Abraham and Sarah, one family was chosen and they were living in one location.

[00:37:47] God localized. God localized. His divine purpose and revelation in this small particular moment. And then. Then what you see over the course of time is this amazing, exponential work. I just want you to contrast today, Genesis Chapter 11 and Genesis Chapter 12. Collectively, humanity gathers together. They say, hey, we've got people power, we've got technological advancement together. There's nothing that we can't do. You know, this is the mightiest moment humanity has ever known. And then what does? And it comes to nothing. It falls off the face of the cliff. The building goes unbuilt. Right. I was like, No, you want to do something without me? Not going to happen. And then God does something. God does something. It's not pomp and circumstance. It's not social media blast. Like it's not this massive marketing move of God. He simply selects this small, unknown family, right? Who's living in this polytheistic culture that they're totally saturated in. God selects them. God calls them out. There's this. There's a simple, albeit challenging step of obedience that they're faithful to make. And then over the course of time, there is this supernatural, exponential, powerful work of God, powerful work of God to the point where today 4.4 billion people consider themselves to be part of a Abrahamic religion. I mean, you know, they said in Genesis Chapter 11, let's make a great name for ourselves. And then God says to Abraham, I'm going to select you and don't worry about you making a great name for yourself. Don't worry about that. I got that. I'll handle that. I'll make your name. Great. I will make your name great. Hey, in your life, don't pursue greatness for yourself. Don't pursue, you know, the idea of making your name great or being somebody led.

[00:39:38] If God wants to do it, let him do it. And if God chooses not to do it, then be at peace with that. Right? Not everyone needs to be an influencer. You you will be an influencer in your own way with the people that God brings into your life. God did that in Abraham's life. He became the father of faith. And then we see all the way to the Book of Revelation. We started this last Sunday night where out of every tribe, every tongue, every people, every nation, a multitude, so great that it could not be counted before the throne of God worshiping Him. And God used Abraham. I'm not saying Abraham is the Messiah because He's not the Messiah. Came through Abraham. God used Abraham, the father of faith. And you might be thinking today, well, you know, that's Abraham. That's Ghazi. And calling on Abraham. And I say, Yeah, you're right. You know, God had a unique promise, a series of promises that he made, that he was going to give him a land, that he was going to give him a nation, that he was going to make his name great, that there would be divine protection, that ultimately the greatest revolution the world would ever know would come through Abraham. Those were specific promises. And so while that's true, the one thing that doesn't change is God. God is God. And God wants to use your life for amazing things. You know, I said this earlier friendship with God means being a part of fulfilling his purposes. And you never know what God might do through your life. You never know what God might do for your life. Some of you are like, Well, God can't use me. You know, I'm not I'm not charismatic.

[00:41:21] I don't have a great personality. I don't have strong leadership gifts. You know, I don't really I don't really see clearly what the purpose of plan and purpose and plan that God has for my life is. And I say to you, stop looking at yourself. And stop limiting God and let God be God. Let God be God. Let God work a miracle, right? Don't disqualify the miracle of God in your life because you're so focused on yourself. Pastor, I would love to be used like that. Well, what steps of faith are you taking? Well, you know I'm not. Stop with that. I'm not. And start with the. He is right. He is start changing the way that you talk and you'll begin to experience the great things that God desires to do. And you never know how He might use you. Can I illustrate this? Pretty. Please, can I? This is. This is just so good. I love this. Check this out. You got to pay close attention. A Sunday school teacher named Edward Kimball won a shoe store clerk to Jesus. That shoe store clerk was named Moody. He was one of the greatest American evangelists. Dale Moody traveled to England and awakened the heart of a young pastor named F.p. Meyer. Effie Meyer became one of the great Bible expositor of the 19th century. He came to the U.S. and preached on college campuses and was used to convert a student to Christ. His name was Wilbur Chapman. Wilbur Chapman attended one of Moody's meetings in Chicago and became Dale Moody's coworker. Chapman employed an ex baseball player as an assistant. His name was Billy Sunday. Billy Sunday became a great evangelist. He preached in Charlotte, North Carolina, at a meeting he organized that he called his Lehmann's Evangelistic Club.

[00:43:09] This club invited an evangelist to Charlotte. His name was Mordecai Ham. Mordecai Ham preached in the tent meeting and led a young man to Christ. His name was Billy Graham. So I just. It's just good. It's just good. I just. I just want you to think about this, right? I want you to think about this today. You have a Sunday school teacher. No one knows his name. I mean, you do now. But his name is not renowned. There's no websites named after him, right? I mean, he's basically is an unknown who is just faithful to the call of God. What did God do in that man's life? I mean, you still see the connection here, right? He is faithful to the gospel deal. Moody gets saved, F.p. Meyer gets charged, Wilbur Chapman gets saved. Billy Sunday engages in evangelism. Mordecai Ham preaches and ultimately leads Billy Graham to Jesus Christ. Now, I'm not saying that you might lead the next Billy Graham to Jesus, but I just want to say today you might lead the next Billy Graham to Jesus. You just never know. You never know what God desires to do in your life. Abraham was blessed so that he could be a blessing. Abraham was blessed. The purpose wasn't just to bless his life for the sake of blessing him. He was blessed so that he could be a blessing. God has blessed you today. Friendship with him is personal. He is gracious. There are promises that he has made that he will be faithful to keep in your life. And there's a legacy that he wants to give to you. Not only this week should you live out the blessings of God, but you this week should be a blessing to others.

[00:44:59] Amen, Father. And we thank you, God. We are grateful today. It's hard to understand. And I confess, God, sometimes it's just hard for me to get my mind around it. But you are our friend and what a friend we have in Jesus. Thank you that you've invited us in to this intimate relationship. Thank you. That you've you've disclosed your purposes to us. Thank you. That you've given us the opportunity to be a part of you fulfilling your purposes. That you. Through our lives. Bring your kingdom. You bring heaven to this earth? And we want to be a part of what you're doing. We want our lives to be a blessing. We want to learn what it means. To be your friend. And to receive it. To enjoy it. To walk in it. Today as we're closing our service, as our eyes are closed and our heads are bowed. Maybe today you've just heard some things that. You've never heard before. You've thought that? Christians are just religious people. And there are rituals that they participate in. And. That by doing these specific rituals at some, somehow there's a God that's pleased this this untouchable, unknowable God is. Pacified. That's just not the message of the Bible. He is a God who is filled with love. He loves you. He loves you is a God who desires a personal relationship. There's not a detail. Of your life that God does not know. And there's an invitation today to you to. To come to him and to step into this beautiful relationship. And, you know, he's so good. He's so good today. If he's speaking to you, understand that he knows the good things and he knows about things. God's knowledge of you is comprehensive. And the bad things in your life don't disqualify you from coming.

[00:47:34] They're a reason to come to him. There are reason they should compel you to come to him for forgiveness, to come to him for his mercy, to come and have that need in your heart. That that empty place. That nothing can fill. Nothing is seemed to satisfy. To come to him so he can meet that need. He's the only one who can look. He. He created you with that need. But that need can only be fulfilled by him. Today that that the hopelessness and the despair maybe today the the voices that are crowding your heart and mind. That have just been so discouraging and frustrating today. He wants to free you from that and he wants to bring you hope. He wants you to hear his voice. He wants the cloud of confusion to be lifted. He wants to give you peace. If you just put your trust and faith in Jesus, His son is the first step in your relationship with God. And so today. If this is you and you just would say, as God is speaking to you, that that you want to take that step of faith and trust in Christ, begin that relationship with God. Received the invitation to friendship with God. Let God work that new beginning in your life this morning. If this is you, I want to pray for you. Would you raise your hand today? If you want to take that step of faith and trust in Christ to stretch your hand up high. God bless you. Thank you. The center here in the back over here on my right. Thank you so much. Here in the front. Anybody else? Just let him let him do that work. There's not a bunch of hoops for you to jump through today.

[00:49:39] There's only one thing that's required and that's faith in Christ. The Son of God. Anybody else? Today. If you're a believer and you know, you've maybe been struggling in your relationship with God and you just need God to refresh you and maybe draw you into that deep friendship that we've we've talked about today. Maybe you've been going through the motions and it's just it's just been a bad or difficult season in your relationship with Lord the Lord, and you need that revive today. Christian If you need to rededicate your life to Christ, would you raise your hand? God bless you. Thank you. Awesome. I see your hand, too. Thank you. All right, you can put your hands down. And Father, we thank you today. God, we're so grateful for the work of your spirit in this place and how you love people. God, you love these hearts. We pray, God, that that day would take a step of faith and be bold like Abraham was. God, you're maybe calling them out of a lifestyle or out of a sin. And in God, they don't totally know what you have prepared and plan. But God, we pray that they would, with great boldness, take this step of faith and anticipate your good work right where you're sitting today. I want to lead you in a very simple prayer. This prayer may be the first time you've ever prayed. And as you confess your sin, the Bible says, all of us have sinned and fallen short of God's glory as you confess your sin and turn away from it, and trust in Christ, trust in the sacrifice that Jesus made on the Cross and His Resurrection. The Bible says that you'll be forgiven of your sins. You'll become a friend of God.

[00:51:27] You'll be given the gift of everlasting life and many, many amazing promises. And so right where you're sitting today, I want you to follow me in this prayer. God today I give you my life and God is true. I've sinned against you. I'm turning away from my sin. And I'm turning in faith to Jesus. I believe in the Gospel. I receive your forgiveness. I can say today. But God is my friend. Fill me with your spirit in Jesus name. Amen.