

From Creation to New Creation

Genesis 17:1-27

"The Son of Promise"— July 31, 2022



Introduction

Abraham is an important character in story line of scripture. He is so important that scripture says you cannot go to heaven, unless you are a son of Abraham. That might sound alarming at first, but if you look at the New Testament, the apostle Paul states in [Galatians 3:7](#) that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham. We become sons or daughters of Abraham when we share the faith of Abraham. To be a Christian is to be a son or daughter of Abraham and thus to inherit the blessing of Abraham.

What does it mean to share the faith of Abraham? How can we today be confident and have assurance that we actually are in the family of God and will share in the blessings of Abraham?

The faith of Abraham obeys God's commands even when His plan seems impossible.

Sermon Outline

1. Scene One: An unlikely future (Vs. 1-8)
2. Scene Two: A costly command (Vs. 9 - 14)
3. Scene Three: An impossible situation (Vs. 15 - 21)
4. Scene Four: The obedience of faith (Vs. 22-27)

Read & Discuss

1) Read vs. 1-8

Here, in Chapter 17 God is reaffirming the covenant that He cut with Abram in chapter 15. Abram has waited 24 years since the initial promise given to him in Chapter 12. As Abram listened to this reaffirmation, it seemed unlikely to him that he would begin a family at age 100. Yet God reminded Abram who He is - God Almighty - with Whom even the unlikely becomes possible. In chapter 15 - God initiated the covenant AND guaranteed the covenant. Here, in order to "establish" the covenant and strengthen Abram's faith in it God gave him responsibilities.

He tells Abram to "walk before me and be 'perfect'." This means to have integrity or be single-minded. This referred to a love relationship between God and Abram. A covenant changes how we live. It has implications because of the loving relationship.

God gave Abram promises about a future generation and changed his name to Abraham. Remember that Abraham is 99 years old. [Romans 4:19](#) reminds us that he was "as good as dead" physically. In changing his name, God reminds Abraham - "the father of a multitude" - of His promise.

What seems unlikely in your life as you follow God as a Christian? Is there a request you have been waiting a long time for God to answer? God doesn't operate on our time table. The basis of our hope is not based our ability. Christian hope is rooted in and built upon who God is. That never changes.

Additional Reading: Romans 4

2) Read vs. 9 - 14

In vs. 1 - 8, the emphasis was on what God would do. Now in these verses, the focus is on God's command for Abram to obey - circumcision - a sign of the covenant. What does the sign really mean?

Previously, Abraham and Sarai took matters into their own hands, but God wanted them to wait until every option of doing things in their own strength was gone. It would then be clear that the promised child had come from God's sovereignty and His power - not the work of man. The sign of the covenant was a reminder that God would bring about salvation from His power, not by the works of man. But this command was costly. It was painful. Abraham would be vulnerable. What does God command for you and me that would costly? What are you afraid of losing?

God is good. He knows what's good for us. His desire is to give us what is good. Jesus willingly endured the hostility of the world for us, and He is not ashamed to call us brothers and sisters ([Hebrews 2:10-11](#)). We are not ashamed to call Jesus our Lord. ([Philippians 3:7-8](#))

3) Read vs. 15 - 21

Here, Sarah also received a new name. God authoritatively changes her name as a pledge of what He would do in her and through her.

At this revelation, Abraham falls down to worship, but he then laughs because his mind is wrestling with doubt. Are there doubts you wrestle with? God is patient with Abraham as he is learning to walk in his faith. God is patient in our "baby steps" of faith. He is at work in you! The Holy Spirit works in us to will and to act. ([Philippians 2:12-13](#)) Good works don't earn us merit with God. They are the fruit of saving faith. God makes us a new creation in Christ, so we are able to obey ([2 Corinthians 5:17](#)).

4) Read vs. 22 - 27

How does Abraham respond? He obeyed. It was the obedience of faith. He didn't delay. He obeyed immediately and completely. His example of urgent obedience is a good example to us.

The longer we put off our obedience, the more excuses we come up with. Is there something that God is calling you to do that you are putting off?

God has given us the law is to bring us into a personal relationship of love and trust with Him. The outward sign of circumcision doesn't automatically make you a son or daughter of God. Circumcision is a matter of the heart ([Romans 2:28-29](#)). The Spirit of God takes God's law and writes it on our hearts. The result of the Holy Spirit's work is loving God with all our heart and soul ([Deuteronomy 30:6](#)). Do you love God like that?

If you don't love God like that, realizing that can be alarming. How can I change my own heart? This is a good place to be - even if it is uncomfortable. You realize that you can't do this yourself. We need God's help. It is then we are ready to hear the Good News. Jesus did for us what we could not do for ourselves ([Galatians 3:13-14](#)). The blessing of Abraham comes by faith. We turn from sin and self and trusting in Christ alone.

Are you confident that you are in the family of God and will share in the blessings of Abraham? Are you a follower of Christ but your love for has grown cold? Cry out to God. Draw near to Him and He will draw near to you and raise your affections toward Him. ([James 4:8](#))

Additional Reading: *Galatians 3*

Prayer of Response

1) After hearing God's Word, what sin do I need to confess? From what do I need to repent?

2) How should my life be lived this week based on what I have heard? What should I *understand, believe, desire, or do*?

Spend time praying together in response to God's word asking for His help and greater faith to follow Him in the week to com.

If you missed the sermon on Sunday or would like to listen again, visit our website at <https://fbcum.org/sermons-new/>

*Next week's sermon text: we turn to 1 Peter 2:1-12 "A People for God's Possession"
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