The Fruit of Faith — Delivery Transcript

Genesis 12:4–9 (CSB) · Wes Terry · Sunday, October 29, 2023 · *Faith & Its Reward*

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I understand during the sabbatical, with Taylor preaching every week, there'd be many times, I think about once a month where we would do hymn Sunday. And so I'm glad I got to participate in one of those hymn Sundays. I know for the vast majority of you in this room, you are at this service because you like the contemporary worship music, you like the band, you like the noise—I say the noise, you like the volume, I should say. It's a beautiful noise. It's a beautiful noise. But you like the volume. And so I know it's maybe not your favorite to do hymns but I just want to thank you, for even if that's not your favorite style of worship, the vast majority of you have still sung enthusiastically and allowed those Sundays to still be a meaningful intimate time of worship.

And it really isn't—worship isn't about the music only. It's about the heart of the worshiper. It's about the song that you're singing. It's about the truth of the songs that we sing and their scriptural relevance to our lives. And we've just been blessed as a church to have a community that is united around their common faith and love for the Lord Jesus Christ and that transcends their preferences on any given Sunday related to music or stylistic kinds of things. And so Taylor's actually leading worship next week, so he'll be back in the pocket.

For those who weren't here last week, public statement of gratitude to Taylor for his amazing leadership during this time. It will be wonderful to have him leading us in worship next Sunday and to see him step into the new role that God has for him in this church as he takes over more responsibility in the pastoral realm. We're certainly blessed to have him and his family in our church in this season. This morning we're going to be in the book of Genesis, chapter twelve, and so if you have your Bible you can go ahead and turn there.

And as you're turning there, I'd like to raise the question, have you ever doubted your salvation? That's maybe a difficult question to answer, but I don't want you to feel like you're crazy if you have. I think any Christian who's lived the Christian life for any length of time

has had at least one or two seasons of their life, if not more, where they really struggled with whether or not they truly were saved—whether or not, if they stood before God in judgment, God would say, "Come into my heaven. Well done, good and faithful servant.

"You are mine and I am yours." We struggle with knowing are we really saved? I have loved ones in my life who say, "Whenever I get to heaven, I just hope I go with the sheep and not the goats." And I always kind of laugh at that, but can you really know that you're going to be with the sheep and not the goats? On one level, the answer to that question is pretty simple because salvation is simple. Salvation is God's gift, it's not something we do, it's not something that we earn.

Salvation is a gift of God, and it is received, right? We receive God's gift of salvation by grace. But that grace is received through a mechanism in Ephesians chapter 2, and that mechanism is faith. Salvation is God's gift, received by grace, but it is received through faith. So whatever this word faith means, it is the means by which we receive the grace of God into our lives. And so one of the most important questions that we could answer if we want to have confidence that we are really saved is defining that word faith.

What is faith? And how do I know I have the real faith as opposed to its counterfeit? And God's people throughout the generations, from the Jews back in the Old Testament to Gentile believing Christians, today and even in Jewish Christians today as well have been going back to the Old Testament, to the book of Genesis to look at the life of Abraham. And in our text he's actually called Abram, that's before his name is changed by the Lord, because he was the founding father of faith. He, we saw last week, was God's man who was chosen as the person that God would pluck up out of that broken culture and begin to form and create a counter-culture, a culture within the culture, a city within the city that would embrace God's design, reject brokenness, reject sin in the world, and allow God's purposes and promises to advance through their little community.

Just like he does today through the church, he did there back then through the life of Abraham. And Abraham was a man of faith. He wasn't perfect faith, but he was a man who demonstrated genuine faith. And so it's good for us to go back to Genesis 12, go back to the life of Abraham, and answer the question, what is real faith? Because if we have real faith, then we can have real salvation. Real hope, real peace, real confidence. If we don't have real faith, then none of those things are available to us.

We have no salvation, we have no access to God, we have no communion with God, we have no hope, we have no peace. And so it's extremely important that we separate real faith from its counterfeit. If you like taking notes, this week the notes are in your bulletin. Trying something a little bit different. There's also some discussion guide questions in there if you want to go home and talk about the message later on. We're going to be in Genesis chapter

12, starting in verse 1, and we're going to kind of review a little bit of what real faith looks like because last week we began to explore what real faith is in the life of Abraham.

And we saw at least two things. We saw number one that real faith, when God calls you to faith, without doubt it's going to require something from you. In the life of Abraham, it was going to require a great deal. But we also saw in Abraham's case that whatever faith required, it was worth whatever obedience was going to release in his life. Because when you obey God by faith and do what he calls you to do, it releases a reward in your life of God's promise and provision. So we're going to see, just by way of review, that faith demands something from us.

In Genesis chapter 12, verse 1, the Lord said to Abram, "Go out from your land, your relatives, and your father's house to the land that I will show you." And we saw last week that these things that the Lord is asking Abraham to do are a tremendous sacrifice because back then, in patriarchal culture, your economic security, your economic prosperity, your social identity, all of that stuff was wrapped up in your father's house. For Abraham to leave would have been a slight on his dad. It would have been kind of a way of shaming him.

And he would have been charting out into this vast unknown. It's not like he had a job he could get to in Canaan. It's not like he was checking out Zillow or Trulia or whatever they look at these days to see what the cool houses look like there. It was a total act of reckless faith. It would have been tremendously sacrificial in terms of its cost, and yet Abraham does it. And in response to that faith, the verses two and three show the reward. That faith releases something for us. So it requires something from us, but it releases something for us.

And what it released in the life of Abraham is God saying to him, "I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you. I will make your name great. You will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you. I will curse anyone who treats you with contempt. And all the peoples on the earth will be blessed through you." One of the things that I think is really important to note on this is this word bless, or blessing, is used five different times. And if you've been paying careful attention in the book of Genesis, you know that the word curse, which was first introduced in Genesis 38:15—or I'm sorry, in Genesis chapter 3, after Adam and Eve bring sin into the world, the ground is cursed, the serpent is cursed, there are consequences for both the man and the woman, whether it's pain in childbearing or toil and sweat to be able to provide for your family.

We saw this idea of curse show up, not one, not two, but five different times from Genesis chapter one all the way to Genesis chapter 11. So it's as if God is saying to Abraham, if you will trust me, I will release these blessings into your life. And not just kind of sort of blessings, I will literally through you and your life reverse the curse that was introduced because of sin coming into the world through your first parents. I will restore what the locust has eaten. I will crush the head of the serpent.

I will undo the brokenness that you see in and around you if you will just trust me. If you'll just go, if you'll just walk by faith. Faith requires something from us. It demands a sacrifice. But it releases something for us. And whatever faith requires is worth what obedience. Whatever faith requires is worth what faith rewards. This morning I want to kind of give us a template, number one, for where we're going to go. This little promise here in verses two to three, you could summarize it under three headings: God promises Abraham land, he promises Abraham a lineage, and he promises what I'm going to call Abraham a Lord, a Messiah or a Savior who would take the blessing given to Abraham and the salvation given to Abraham and spread it to the ends of the earth.

And if you read the rest of the book of Genesis, you will see the land promise unpacked from Genesis chapter 12 all the way to chapter 15. So most of this series is going to be focused on that land promise. In chapters 16 to 18, he focuses on the lineage, the promise to give him a son, and the son's name is Isaac. And then from chapter 19 onward, we're going to see the blessing. Faith releases God's promise and provision in our life, but that's not what we're focused on this morning.

This morning we're focused on the third attribute of genuine saving faith, and that is what faith results in. Faith requires a sacrifice, it releases a reward, but it results in fruit. Faith produces a certain kind of fruit in our life, which is wonderful because if we really want to know that we are saved by grace through faith, if we want to know we have the real and not the counterfeit, the Lord says there are things that I've established, sign markers, evidences, a fruit that hangs on the tree that will show me and you and everyone around you that you have the real thing and not the counterfeit.

And we're going to see it under three headings in our passage: the fruit of obedience, the fruit of proclamation, and the fruit of worship. So let's read our passage, starting in verse four of Genesis chapter twelve: "Abram went as the Lord had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran. He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, and all the possessions they had accumulated, and the people that they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan. When they came to the land of Canaan, Abram passed through the land to the site of Shechem, at the oak of Moreh, and at that time Canaanites were in the land.

"The Lord appeared to Abram, and he said, To your offspring I will give this land. And so Abram built an altar there to the Lord who had appeared to him, and from there he moved on to the hill country east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. He built an altar to the Lord there, and he called on the name of the Lord. And then Abram journeyed by stages to the Negev." I want to from those verses examine the fruit of faith.

And the reason it's important is because if you wonder, am I really saved? Can I know for sure I'm going to go to heaven when I die? These are markers. They're external evidences that salvation has visited your home, that you are walking in the grace of God, because your life is marked by the fruit of faith. So the first fruit that I see, it's very simple, chapter 12, verse 4, is the fruit of unquestioned obedience. And this outline is not unique with me. I heard this somewhere along the way during the sabbatical and it was just too good to not write down.

But it's the fruit of unquestioned obedience. True faith says to the Lord, "I will go, I will say, I will do—whatever it is you say, Lord, I will." When God says to Abraham, "I will, I will," real faith says back to the Lord, "Then I will." And we don't see in this passage, maybe it happened, maybe it didn't, but we don't see in this passage Abraham wrestling with God. We don't see him saying, "Yeah, but God." We don't see him delaying the obedience. Maybe those things happen, but we don't have that insight in our passage.

All we see is God say to Abraham, do this thing, and Abraham immediately, unquestioningly doing that thing as the Lord has said. True faith is evidenced by obedience. Now, I don't know about you, but in my life, my obedience to the Lord is not always unquestioned, and it is not always immediate. Can I get an amen? And sometimes that's understandable because God doesn't always speak to us like he spoke to Abraham. I was talking about my sermon yesterday with my brother Kyle when I was in Roby getting the deer feeder set up, and I said, "Well, true faith is marked by unquestioned obedience."

And he goes, "Yeah, if you know you really heard from the Lord." And I said, "Well, you got a good point there." Sometimes the Lord doesn't speak to us like he spoke to Abraham. Sometimes the Lord guides, sometimes the Lord leads. I had an old man tell me at a gun show one time, "The Lord leads and the devil pushes." Don't you buy that gun from that man, because he's trying to push. The Lord sometimes guides, sometimes he impresses. And you're like, "I don't know, is this the Lord? Is this the burrito I had last night?"

You're trying to wrestle with—that's not what I'm talking about. That's something different. What I'm talking about is when God speaks clearly, directly, unmistakably to your life through his word, and you know for sure, without a doubt, it is from the Lord and it is for you. What do you do in that instance? What faith does is it says to the Lord, I will. I will. And it will be hard and it will be difficult and I will need help. I will need wisdom, but I will do what you've asked me to do.

And if your faith does not say to the Lord when He speaks clearly, directly, plainly through His Word, then your faith may not be what you say it is, and it may not be what you think it is. What does this look like? Sometimes, you know, the Lord speaks during your personal devotional time. There'll be times when spending time with the Lord, going through a reading plan, everything's set and established. I'm not like, you know, just flipping through

the Bible and saying, "Okay, God, speak to me"—it's just kind of in the normal course of things, you're reading a certain passage of scripture, you've got something going on in your life, and that passage of scripture relates directly to what's going on in your life, and you just hear the voice of the Holy Spirit say, here's what you need to do.

You need to write that letter. You need to make the phone call. What do you do when that happens? Or maybe you're listening to a sermon and the sermon just happens to be reading your email. I've had people come up and say, well, you know, have you been reading my emails? You were, did someone tell you what's going on in my life? No, that wasn't the preacher, that was the Holy Spirit. What do you do when the Holy Spirit speaks like that? Maybe it's in your small group. Maybe it's through the voice of your children.

God speaks plainly, directly, powerfully to your life. If your immediate response is, well, I sure wish so-and-so could have heard that, or I think this would be great. I'm going to send this sermon to my cousin—and there's nothing wrong with that, and certainly there's nothing wrong with wanting people to hear biblical truth, but if your first response is always them and never you, you may have a faith problem. Because the first response should always be drawing that circle around yourself and saying, Lord, search me, know me, try me, see if there's any unclean way in me.

I repent, I will. With God's help, with your grace, I will. If that's not a fruit of your faith, then your faith may not be real. It may be a counterfeit, a hard heart, a stiff necked. Is your life marked by those things or soft submission and repentance? Faith says, I will go, but it also says, I will tell. Look at verse 5. Abram, when he's ready to go, he takes his wife Sarai, he takes his nephew Lot, he takes all the possessions that they had accumulated. That's pretty expected, right?

If you're going to go, you're going to take your stuff, you're going to take your wife, you're going to take Lot because basically the only people left is Terah, Abram's dad, and he's a super old man. He's not going to be able to take care of Lot. They got nobody else, so it makes sense that he would take Lot. Although some people say he shouldn't have done that. But then you have this phrase, and the people that they had acquired in Haran, and they all set out for the land of Canaan.

Who are these people? Well, some people would say, well, Abraham was like a slaver and he had slaves. That's not a super popular interpretation, but it's out there. I don't think that's what's going on. These people I think are people who've converted to Abram's religion. These are converts. These are people to whom Abram had said, "Stop worshipping Nannar, this moon god that was worshipped in Ur of the Chaldeans and was worshipped in Haran. Stop worshiping that god. It's a false god. It's a god who doesn't speak. It's a god who doesn't keep his promise.

"It's a god who is not true and real. And follow this God. This God who has revealed himself to me, this God who speaks to me, this God who has promised salvation and blessing and covenant, this is the real God." And I just—if you can imagine it, Abraham there in Haran, got all this idolatry, all these people worshiping these false idols, and Abraham's going up to them and he is evangelizing them. True faith says what God has done. True faith does what God says, and then true faith says what God has done.

And I love this because for Abram he was not supposed to stop in Haran. He was supposed to keep on going. Haran was a detour. Haran was disobedience in Abraham's life. But Abraham was making the most of that opportunity. It's kind of like if you've ever in your life been disobeying the Lord, but you try to do everything else right in your life so maybe God won't be so mad. I think that's what Abraham's doing. And so he's evangelizing people, he's bringing people into the fold. Because that's what true faith does.

True faith cannot be silent about what God has done in your life. And so Abraham had his entourage. Do you have yours? This was something that the Lord really convicted me on during the sabbatical, because during the sabbatical on Sunday morning, sometimes I would just skip church—actually, I'd watch it online and then I'd skip it. Two times I did that. In both instances, I went out into the community and just wondered what lost people look like. So I went to Walmart on Sunday morning. And I'm sure there's a lot of Christians there, but I just kind of watched people.

And during that time the Lord convicted my heart and said, you are a pastor. You are, if anyone understands salvation and faith, it should be you. But when's the last time outside of your ministry in a Sunday morning sermon that you have verbally communicated the gospel to another person? Or even had a spiritual conversation that could lean itself that direction. And I had to confess to the Lord, it has been way too long. And the reason is because I spend the vast majority of my waking hours at church, around church people, sometimes literally in a church building, and when I'm not there, I'm in my house.

Full of—I've got two lost people in my house, but they're young, they're not able to really follow the Lord yet. My life rhythm, my life structure was not putting myself in environments where lost people were present. That's an indictment on my faith. It's an indictment on your faith. And usually the longer you're a Christian, the more likely it is that you're not spending any time with people who don't know the Lord. True faith has to tell. True faith cannot be silent. True faith isn't stagnant. One of the books that was very helpful for me during the sabbatical was a book by Greg Koukl called Street Smarts.

I would recommend that you go buy it. It's a wonderful book on apologetics and sharing your faith in a post-Christian world. But the thing that was so helpful for me with that book is that he made a distinction between gardening evangelism and harvesting evangelism. You guys may remember the parable of the soils. Taylor, it was his first sermon during the sabbatical.

You've got the good soil in which the seed of the gospel goes down, takes root, bears fruit. That's salvation and obedience and that's what you want. But then there were the other three types of soil, the rocky soil and thorny soil and the different kinds of soil that the seed could not go down into the heart.

It didn't take root. It didn't bear fruit. Maybe for one it kind of sort of did bear fruit, but you weren't quite sure is that real fruit? Is that real gospel? Is that real salvation? You kind of left with the question that's a picture of the heart of everybody who lives when it relates to them hearing the gospel. And what was helpful about the book is he was saying there is such a thing as harvesting evangelism, like Billy Graham or Shane Pruitt, where you give a simple gospel message and thousands and thousands of people get saved and come down to the front like when you're singing "Just As I Am."

Well, I don't know about you, I am no Billy Graham. Are any of y'all Billy Graham? Because if you are, we'll put you on staff. No Shane Pruitts. That's a gift some people are given by God, but that's not the vast majority of people. The vast majority of people are more gardening evangelism. And gardening evangelism is tilling the soil. It is breaking up the hard ground. It is conversation. Sometimes it's not even just conversation. It is a life accompanied by actions motivated by the love of God in the name of Jesus Christ that cause people to go, "Huh, that's different.

"Huh, maybe I should consider this whole Jesus thing." Or tearing down walls, taking arguments and making them subject to Jesus Christ, the false ideas that are rampant in our culture, just little questions like, "Well, how do you know that that's really what that is? What reasons do you have for rejecting the reliability of the Scriptures?" Doesn't mean you have to be an expert on the reliability of the gospels. It just means you are gardening all the time in your day-to-day life. And that is just as legitimate in the course of God redeeming someone as is the Billy Graham who calls for the response and the person walks the aisle and they get baptized.

It is just as relevant, it is just as important. In fact, it may be more important in our culture because in our culture the ground is getting harder and harder and harder. And so we need an army of people who, because of their salvation, because God's grace in their life transforming them, are quick to tell, quick to give a reason. You may not be Billy Graham, but every single Christian has been commanded to always be ready to give an answer to anyone who asks them for a reason for the hope that is within them.

Every Christian has been told to do that. Every Christian has been told to let their speech be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that they might know how they should answer. Every person. You can do it. I can do it. The thing is we just have to be willing to structure our lives in such a way where we are around people that Jesus loves who do not know him. And that we are

bold and courageous to open our mouths and share what God has done in us and for us. True faith is not stagnant and true faith is not silent.

Every Christian has a word to obey and a story to tell. If you don't have a word to obey, then you probably hadn't been reading the word. You probably hadn't heard a sermon, you probably hadn't been sitting in church. If you have not heard God speak to you, then you are not listening or you're not in environments where he can speak. And if you don't have a story to tell, if you're never telling the story of God's grace in your life, then the faith may not be real because real faith is never stagnant and it's never silent.

Share your story. Obey God's word. Finally, true faith says, "I will serve." True faith says I will go. True faith says I will tell. And true faith says, I will serve. This is in chapter 12, verses 6 to 9. It says, "Abram passed through the land to the site of Shechem at the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land." And so "the Lord appeared to Abram and said, To your offspring I will give this land." There's the lineage promise. So what does Abraham do in response?

He worships the Lord. "Abram built an altar there to the Lord, who had appeared to him. And from there he moved on to the hill country east of Bethel, and he pitched his tent," with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. He built an altar. Again, worshiping the Lord. "He built an altar to the Lord there. And he called on the name of the Lord. And then Abram journeyed by stages to the Negev." What Abraham's doing here is he's taking a little tour through the promised land. And the passage is explicit that the land is not Abraham's land yet, because the Canaanites are in the land.

But what he does is he goes from place to place to place. Here's a nice handy map. And he builds these altars and he worships the Lord. And so true faith is marked by unwavering worship. He starts here at Shechem, there's Bethel and Ai, so he's right in between there. And then he kept on going down by stages to the Negev. That's this right here. You've got Egypt over here. Next week we're going to see Abraham go to Egypt and be a fool and make some bad mistakes. But he's demonstrating his faith by his worship.

Now, we kind of gloss over these. I want a couple of key words I want you to circle in your Bible. The first word is the word altar. When he goes to these places, he builds an altar. What's he doing on an altar? An altar is not just a pile of rocks where Abraham sings "Kumbaya" or, you know, whatever they sang back then. An altar was a place that you would sacrifice an animal. And that animal sacrifice was a way of saying to the Lord, "You're holy, I'm sinful, my sin deserves death, but in my place, in the place of my rightful death I offer this sacrifice."

It's a way of saying to God, "You are worthy of it all. I give you my life, I give you everything." That's what worship is. Worship is not just singing. Worship is singing from a place of

absolute surrender. It's praying from a place of absolute surrender. And that's what Abraham's doing by doing these altars. And notice where the altars are built. The first altar is built at Shechem. Shechem, if you know your Bible, was the same place. It was located between two mountains. Mount—I can't remember the name of the mountains.

Does anybody know the mountains? I should know the mountains. If I had my iPad, I could tell you the name of the mountains. But I don't have my iPad. The place was called the place of decision. Okay? If you go back to Joshua chapter 24, Joshua is leading the Israelites into the promised land. He's calling them—actually, this is after they're in the promised land, I'm sorry. But they were kind of hedging, they were on the fence, kind of with the Lord and kind of against the Lord. And Joshua rebukes them and challenges them and says, "Choose you this day who you will serve."

You're going to serve the pagan gods, or are you going to serve the true God? "As for me and my house, we're going to serve the Lord." And that's also a characteristic of true worship. Walking by faith is a heart is characterized by a life of worship. Worship that says to God, you deserve it all. I am yours, I am absolutely surrendered, and true worship says, I will serve. My life is not my own. It is bought with a price. I will glorify you with my body. It is Romans 12:1: "Offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to the Lord, which is your reasonable service," or your reasonable worship.

Worship is marked by service to the Lord. And it's service to the Lord even in the face of hostility and opposition. Because you notice where it says Shechem was, it was next to the oak of Moreh. And you may not know this, but if you do a little background study on the Canaanite religions, you know that the oak of Moreh, the seers or the oracles, the prophets of Canaanite pagan religion, they were called the Moray or the Morai. And what they would do is they would kind of listen to the rustling of leaves and stuff like that and they'd kind of be like, "Oh, this is what the Canaanite god wants us to do because the leaves are rustling in this way, and only I and I alone can intuit the divine will."

And so what Abraham is doing with that nonsense going on is he is going into enemy territory. He is kicking over those pagan altars and he is setting up the true altar to the true God, and he's saying, "This is what worship is. This is what true spirituality looks like. This is what's true. That is false. Do this instead." That's incredibly brave. And that's what worship is. Worship is brave, it is courageous, it is in the enemy territory, it is not building a little church, isolated from the world, "us four, no more; don't bother us, we'll just kind of worship our God, don't bother anybody else."

It is taking the kingdom to the streets. It is going into the enemy territory. It is storming hell with a water pistol. It is doing whatever it takes to make the gospel known in the places that it is not known. That's what worship is. It is characterized by sacrificial service, absolute surrender, and then they go on down from Moreh down to Bethel. And you also got to

remember, Moses is writing this to the wilderness generation, right? He's writing this to a group of people who are wigging out because God is saying, take the land.

"Take the land," and they're saying, "We're not taking that land. Those Canaanites are in there and they are huge. We're like itty-bitty grasshoppers." And it's as if Moses is saying, "Well, Abraham did it. He wasn't scared. Your God is the God who split the sea. Your God is the God who flooded the earth. Your God is the God who is the God of Abraham, gave him a child, Isaac and Jacob. Press in. Move forward. Surrender. Sacrifice." And then this last one in Bethel, it's the hill country in Bethel. They call on the name of the Lord.

I love that language. If you in your Bible, you'll see a little letter at the end of that verse, and in my Bible it's the letter O. And then you go down to the cross references if your Bible has cross references and you can see. Some cross references for that phrase, call on the name of the Lord. And one of the cross references is in Genesis chapter 4, verse 26. Because in Genesis chapter 4,[1] verse 26, you see Seth who is kind of the alternative to Abel, because Abel was the godly son, but then Cain killed Abel.

And so Seth is now the new promised child. And Seth is the one who kind of carries the religion of Adam, the true religion of the true God. And with Seth and Enosh they begin to call on the name of the Lord. And people at that time begin to call on the name of the Lord. And you see that righteous remnant preserved through Noah and on down and on down you go. And now once again you see Abraham calling on the name of the Lord. It's as if Moses is tying it all together.

He's saying, here's the scarlet thread that's taking this remnant of faith, this counter-cultural community, and they are marked by unwavering worship. They are marked by surrender and sacrifice and hope-filled adoration that God is good and he is strong and he is able and he will deliver us. This is the same language that's used of Moses in Exodus chapter 33, where he says to the Lord, "Show me your glory," and the Lord comes down. And it says the Lord began to call his own name. Exodus 34 verse 30-something or another. I think I've got that up there.

You guys, no iPad, it's so difficult. Yeah, Exodus 34, verses 6 and 7: "The Lord passed in front of Moses." And he begins calling his own name out: "Yahweh is a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in faithful love and truth. Maintaining faithful love to a thousand generations, forgiving iniquity, rebellion, and sin, but he will not leave the guilty unpunished, bringing the consequences of the father's iniquity on the children and the grandchildren to the third and fourth generation." That's what worship looks like. Worship is extolling the Lord, it is praising the Lord.

When we were praying earlier, we started praying by thanking the Lord, blessing the Lord: "You are a good God, you are a speaking God, you are a strong God, you are a great God."

That is what worship looks like. It's not just saying, "God, I need this." It's recognizing the God who meets my needs is an amazing, glorious, wonderful God. That's what characterizes a life of faith. Is your life a life of worship and endurance and perseverance and gratitude? Real faith has its fruit. If the faith isn't present—I'm sorry, if the fruit isn't present, then the faith may not be real.

True faith says, "I will go." True faith says, "I will tell." True faith says, "I will serve." And finally, true faith says, "I will wait." This is not in our passage, but if you keep reading the rest of the book of Genesis, you'll see this play out. I want you to take your Bible and turn to Hebrews chapter 11, because Hebrews chapter 11 gives us a nice summary statement of what motivated the obedience of Abraham to live this incredible life of faith. True faith says, "I will wait." True faith reaches beyond.

It reaches beyond itself. It requires something from us. It releases something for us. It results in something in us, and then it reaches for something beyond us. Hebrews chapter 11, verse 8 says, "By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed and set out for a place that he was going to receive as an inheritance. He went out, even though he did not know where he was going. By faith he stayed as a foreigner in the land of promise, living in tents as did Isaac and Jacob, coheirs of the same promise."

Here's our key verse. Why did he do all these things? Why was he obedient and unwavering and all in his worship? "Because he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose architect and builder is God." Real faith reaches for something beyond us. Real faith says to the Lord, "I will wait." And what are you waiting for, Abraham? "Well, I'm not waiting for something to happen just to me. I'm not waiting for something just to happen with my son. I'm not just here for the Middle East." Abraham knew deep down this was something way bigger than that.

It was eternal, not temporal. It was global, not just the Middle East. He was looking for a better city, a city whose foundations are established by the builder who is the Lord. And that's the kind of faith that genuine faith is motivated by. There are churches who will promote a kind of faith that is kind of here and now, your best life now, your health and wealth and prosperity gospel. If you'll do what I want you to do, or if you'll have faith demonstrated by giving to my ministry, then God will give you a house and he will give you a car and he will give you the awesome job.

That is not genuine faith, that is counterfeit faith. Real faith is not about the here and now, real faith is about the sweet by-and-by. Real faith is not about some man-centered glorification. Real faith is about the builder the city that is to come, whose builder is the Lord Himself. Real faith is about heaven. Real faith is about eternal rewards. So real faith says, even in the midst of brokenness, even in the midst of hardship and hostility and difficulty, "I will wait for you, Lord. I will wait"—through the storm, through the night.

That's the faith that motivated Abraham. And that's why, listen, that's why he was obedient. Because he didn't know where he was going. He didn't know what he was getting into. He was obedient because of who he was following. Because the reward wasn't the land, the reward was the God who gives the land. It's why he told people. It's why he had his entourage, because this is better than anything that you'll ever see in this world. This is so much better. This is so much bigger. This is so much more worth it.

And it's why he, even in the face of hostility and opposition and enemy territory, he said, "I don't care. I'll lose my life because I know that the God I'm giving my life for is worth the reward." And the faith that motivated Abraham is the same faith that motivates us today, because as we saw last week, we are children of Abraham. When you repent of your sin and you put your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, you are grafted into that olive branch. That olive branch, Israel, that Abraham is the father of the people of Israel, we are grafted into that.

And so the faith that motivated Abraham is the faith that motivates us today. And we don't do what we do. We don't obey the Lord and tell people about Jesus and raise our hands in worship because we want God to do something in the here and now. Or we do want him to do something in the here and now, but it's not something that's just physical or just material. It's about God advancing his kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. It's about seeing heaven come down and visit the earth.

It's about seeing the grace of God redeem the brokenness on our earth. And even if we have to sacrifice, and even if we have to give generously, and even if we have to break up with our boyfriend or girlfriend or get a little bit uncomfortable and going to war against our sin, we will gladly count the cost and pay the price because the reward is so much greater than what obedience requires. That's what motivates us today. And if you are here this morning and you are struggling to walk by faith, I can imagine one of the reasons it might be difficult is because your eyes aren't able to see the beauty of the God who's calling.

And one of the best things you can do is to ask the Lord, "Would you give me eyes to see the reward?" Faith is believing that God exists and that he rewards those who seek him. And so would you ask the Lord this morning, "Help me to see"? If you're here this morning and you're not a Christian, would you boldly this morning say, "I need to make Jesus Lord of my life. I recognize I can't save myself, that only Jesus can save me"? Boldly, just like Abraham boldly went into enemy territory, you're amongst friends right here.

Would you say, "I need to give my life to Jesus, and I'm not ashamed to let anybody know it"? If this morning you would say, I need to take a step of faith, but it's complicated, and I need somebody to pray with me, I need some wise counsel. Maybe the Lord's speaking, but it's not clear. The altar's open, I'd be happy to pray with you. You can also use this QR code to put in your information, and one of our staff or pastors or deacons will follow up with you later this week.

I want us to respond to this message individually but also corporately as a church. One of our core values in our church is that we teach truth that transforms people's lives. If we have genuine faith as a church, it ought to be reflected in the transformed lives of the people who say they have faith. And so would you ask the Lord as a church, would you mark us as people who are obedient to your word? Help us to be people who are transformed by the gospel. Help us to be people who make Jesus known wherever we go.

Help us to be people who serve as Jesus served because our lives are lives of worship. If you're a member of our church, if you're a leader in our church, these are ways that you can be praying for our church as we respond to the Lord as he leads. Father in heaven, we thank you for this time. We give you this invitation. We thank you that every time we hear your word, that you invite us to respond, so that we don't just grow in our knowledge and information, but that we grow in our grace—or we grow in your grace— and we grow in being changed and transformed from one degree of glory to the next into the image of our Lord Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray.

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1. Transcript note: spoken as "Genesis chapter 24, verse 26"; the cross-reference he had just named, where Seth's son Enosh is born and people begin to call on the name of the Lord, is Genesis 4:26. Source: Genesis 4:25–26 (CSB), BibleGateway. ↩