



# Sermon Highlights

## **Two Natures: Living as Spiritual People in a Fleshly World**

### **Sermon Summary:**

This sermon explores the fundamental divide between two natures that exist in humanity: the fleshly (natural) nature and the spiritual nature. Using the lives of Abraham's sons— Ishmael and Isaac—as illustrations, pastor Bruce Gordon explains that every person is born into a natural, fleshly state separated from God, ruled by natural desires and destined for spiritual death. However, through faith in Jesus Christ's sacrifice on the cross, believers can become spiritual people, with the old man crucified and a new creation brought to life. The sermon emphasizes that spiritual living requires separation from worldly systems, obedience to God's Word, and daily reckoning the old nature as dead. It warns against placing confidence in human leaders or ministries rather than God Himself, and challenges listeners to examine which nature governs their lives. The message concludes with the sobering reality that everyone will be "gathered to their people"—either to the spiritual or the natural—based on the choice they make regarding Christ.

### **Key Points:**

- God's work continues beyond individual people; ministries must be built on Christ, not personalities, to survive leadership transitions
- The Old Testament provides the framework for understanding New Testament spiritual truths
- Humanity is divided into two natures: the fleshly (natural) man and the spiritual man
- The fleshly nature is the natural state every person is born into, ruled by natural desires and separated from God
- Ishmael represents the fleshly nature—living according to natural desires, prospering in worldly terms, but ultimately "falling down" at death
- Isaac represents the spiritual nature—living in obedience to God, seeking God in prayer, and finding satisfaction in God's will

- Believers must separate from the world system to live spiritually, though not isolate themselves from affecting the world
- Salvation occurs when a person recognizes their inability to change their sin nature and accepts that Christ killed the old man on the cross
- The spiritual life is a daily battle between the dead old nature and the new spiritual nature
- Yielding to Christ strengthens the spiritual man; yielding to the flesh weakens spiritual vitality
- Knowledge of and obedience to God's Word is essential for spiritual living—church attendance alone is insufficient
- Every person will be "gathered to their people"—either to spiritual rewards with God or to judgment with the natural world

#### **Scripture Reference:**

- Genesis 25:12-21 (primary passage)
- Galatians 4:28-31 (supporting New Testament framework)
- Romans 6 (reference to reckoning the old man dead)

#### **Stories:**

- The account of Ishmael's genealogy, life, and death—illustrating the natural man who lives according to the flesh, has worldly success (12 sons who became princes), but ultimately "falls down" at death rather than dying satisfied
- The account of Isaac's obedience to his father Abraham—including his willingness to be sacrificed and his trust in allowing his father to choose his wife, Rebecca
- Isaac's barrenness for 20 years (ages 40-60) and his response of pleading with the Lord rather than taking matters into his own hands
- The illustration of cats and dogs to explain natural behavior—just as a cat doesn't decide to be a cat but simply is one, people don't decide to be natural but are born that way
- The playground illustration of choosing sides for games—comparing it to the spiritual choice between God's team (the predetermined winner) and the devil's team, with God inviting people to switch sides

- References to successful ministries built on Christ rather than personalities (Billy Graham's ministry continuing through Franklin Graham, John MacArthur's church continuing after his death)