

Trouble in the House of the Man of Faith!

Overview

Abraham, is known as a great man of faith. He did something that we don't know of any other person in all of history ever did. He left where he was to go and establish a new nation. Lots of people have done that. Lots of people have sailed the ocean. At the time that he did so, there were other, tribes of people who set out to discomfort other people, destroy them, and set up their own country. People would go and establish a new place and nation, but they would do it for their comfort.

They would do it to seek wealth, all kinds of things, triumph, whatever. Abraham went for none of these reasons whatsoever. He went because God called him. He went because he was totally committed to God. Great man of faith, great man of faith, and all Jewish people to this day. Think of him as their hero when they're a great man of faith. But we all know there are none righteous, no, not one. And Abraham hid his failings, and it's going to take me more than one Sunday to go through this because I think it's important. I think it's important, especially for people who are new in the faith, to not get discouraged, to see us all as angelic with our little halos, some of our halos, little bent one way or another. But they don't know our Christianese.

They don't know how to say all these words. If they were sitting in this room this morning, a new person would have no idea why we got so excited about that song, because they've never experienced the glorious moment of redemption when he set you free from your sin. So we're kind of a mysterious lot to some. But what is honest and true is every one of us has failings. Every one of us has failings. So as I go through this, I don't want you to see me as being so harsh on good old Abraham. I don't want you to see me as being unforgiving. But as a matter of fact, what I want you to see is the Lord loves you. He loves me. And when we do fail and we fall out of what we think is His favor, He is still faithful. He's still faithful. I'm going to tell you my little illustration before I get going in case I run out of time and can't give it at the end.

For a good number of years, I was going down to go back and doing ministry down there. And there was one particular church in a town called Longay where I was frequently asked to go. I would go at least twice a year. So I was there so much. It was such a lively, powerful church. I actually became sort of like one of them. And I almost learned their language except the young people taught me some bad words. And so I ended up not using any language whatsoever. And I preached their youth camps and I did all kinds of things with them. When I would go down and never stayed in a hotel, I stayed in a private home. So I became very much a part of that congregation in some unique ways.

And there was one couple that I was truly enamored with. He was such a handsome young guy and had such a great future before him as a car salesman. He had headed to the top. He was already a top salesman. And she was the cutest little gal of Portuguese descent.

So her mom and dad spoke Portuguese in the home. She had learned Portuguese there. But in school, of course, she learned French. But of course, she had to learn English. This gal had mastered five languages, a master of them. And so she was hired by the government to be a mediator, to be a translator for some of the most wonderful and gracious and well-known people in our country. Like this was a model couple. They were kind of like the Ken and Barbie. And then on one occasion, when I went down there, I looked around, and I didn't see them.

And I asked them about them. And the pastor's name was Ramon. He took me aside and he said, we've got a very sad story. And he mentioned the fellow by first name. I'll leave that out. And he said, there was a beautiful young secretary at the car dealership. And he said, you know the rest of the story. And his wife found out about it, of course. And their marriage broke up.

And he said he's gone off with her. He's left the church, brokenhearted as his wife. I spoke with her, and prayed with her at the altar one evening, and just a devastating situation indeed. And then on another occasion, I was there and I said, how are they doing? He said, well, he said, we're going through a time right now of prayer and fasting because he said, we're going to go to him. We're going to give him one more chance to get right with God. I thought that was rather, rather an interesting fact. But what they did is they took the book of Corinthians where Paul spoke of someone who was really out of line with the word. And this person had become desperately immoral.

Paul, the apostle said, kick him out, kick him out, and turn him over to the enemy. And if that doesn't straighten him out, he's gone anyhow. But be prepared to restore him. So the church went into fasting and prayer. The whole church numbered 500, 600 people, and they went into prayer and fasting. They were serious and they let him know we're praying and they're fasting for you. And then at the end, the pastor, Ramon went to see him and said, will you come back to God? And the young man said, no. And the pastor said, fine. We're wiping our hands of you. You're finished. You're finished. But if you ever want to come back to God, we're waiting for you. The next time I went there, that couple was waiting there to see me.

He got redeemed. He came back. They had a great church celebration. All of the, you know, all the sadness and all the darkness and everything was obliterated. And it was a wonderful, wonderful, wonderful reunion and a very special time. So we need to remember that there's always a door. There's always an opportunity. And we never know. You see, Ramon had no idea what was going on in this church.

He had no idea about the struggle that this young man was having because this guy when he came into the church, put on such a good face. We never know what's going on in the house of the Lord. And we always need to be prepared to love and to restore.

And so this message is to help people in case somebody is going through a struggle or someone that you know is going through a struggle. Abraham was a man who fell into trouble over time. So first of all, we're going to look at this scripture that says, well, it says it on here. Okay, here we go. The Lord said to Abraham, leave your country, your kindred, and your father's household and go to the land that I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you. I will make your name great so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you and I will curse those who curse you. And all the families of the earth will be blessed through you. Tremendous thing that the Lord spoke to him. I've been musing on this as even as I had a three-day trip down to the Maritimes and back and I was working on this sermon as I was driving my truck. And I thought, you know, we just take it for granted.

Okay, the Lord spoke to him and said, I want you to leave where you are. And I thought, how did that happen? Abraham was living in a very pagan culture. We have every reason to believe that his father was quite involved in some kind of priesthood. Abraham very likely was in line to follow in his father's footsteps and to become a priest in this pagan religion. So what, how did he ever encounter the Lord? And I believe that the Lord showed up much like he did. Remember the story of Abraham some years later, three show up at his tent.

It says, the Lord visited him there and three persons showed up. And so that's called a Theophany. I believe that the Lord showed up in a way that was so unique and so powerful and said, I want you to leave this place. I want you to leave your family. I want you to leave your house. And there's every reason to believe that he was a wealthy fellow. This is a powerful thing. And the Word of God says in the book of Romans, he did not stagger. His faith did not wobble.

The Lord came to him and said, trust me. And the Bible says that because he trusted him and because his faith reached out to the Lord, the Lord counted it unto him as righteousness. How is that possible that just because a man says, okay, I believe that righteousness would be imparted to him? What happened in those days back then, throughout the Old Testament is the Lord was preparing for everyone who was going to receive, everyone who would be obedient and would follow in faith. The blood of Jesus Christ accounts for all men of all time of all eternity. And so the Lord was looking after Abraham at that time and it was counted unto him as righteousness.

His faith was incredible. And so at the Lord's bidding, he up and left. It says in Hebrews, chapter 11 verse 8, 9, by faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and he went. Even though he did not know where he was going, by faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country, he lived in tents like Isaac and Jacob who were heirs with him of the same promise. Why is that thrown in there? Why is it demonstrated for us? And why are we told such so directly why is this even included that he lived in a house?

Because he did not build a house. When he was offered in what's called the Ur of the Chaldees, we dealt with, he had palatial homes, he had all kinds of stuff. But he forsook all of that and when he got to the promised land, he didn't build anything.

For all of his life, he lived in a tent. I used to remind my wife of that when I wanted to go tenting and we had some very bad experiences. I don't know why I would pitch a tent down in a gully when there were rain clouds up above. We know what it is to row, row, row your boat in the middle of the night in the middle of your tent. I also pitched my tent one night right beside a train track.

We were riding on a motorcycle. We were coming back from the Dakotas at a motorcycle rally. We had our tent and whatever and got late in the day. And it got quite dark. I saw a big sign saying tenting so I pulled off. It was a very humble little outfit. I said, where do I pitch my tent? Anywhere you want to. We were the only tenters there. So we just drove along this little gravel road.

It was dark. The mosquitoes were thicker than thieves. And so just very quickly, April danced around to keep the mosquitoes. This is important. You got to know you want to know this. How many want me to go and finish the story? Okay. So nobody voted. All right. So here I am putting up the tent, right? And SWAT mosquitoes all the time crawled in the tent.

It was about three o'clock in the morning. I was starting to feel the ground like this. And I hadn't even noticed that when I pitched my tent, there was a fence closer than that old organ right there. And on the other side of the organ, on the other side of that fence, there was a rail rod. And all of a sudden, that sucker landed out of a whale. Apparently, there was a road right there. Like this. I stood up in the tent. I lifted the whole thing off of its peg, poor April's.

Oh dear, tenting. Abraham said to Sarah, we're going to live an attempt and you're going to love it. Oh my. Listen to this. Galatians 3 9. So again, the apostle asks, does God give you his spirit and work miracles among you by the works of the law? Remember the Old Testament law? If you fulfill the law, God will reward you. So he's asking the new Christians, does God give you his spirit and work miracles among you because you fulfill the law or by believing what you heard? So also Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness. He goes on and says, understand then that those who have faith are children of Abraham, scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith and announce the gospel in advance to Abraham. In you, all the families of the earth will be blessed. Old nations will be blessed through you. So those who rely on faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith. So this is a true picture of this man and we're understanding from this that God was counting on his faith. I want you to see that and I'm trying to pound that nail in.

He was a man of faith and his house ran up on the rocks of destruction and he almost lost everything. Pastor, you're getting a little over dramatic. No, no, no, it came close. It came very, very close. So he staggered not at the promise of God, it says, through unbelief. This is the book of Romans, but was strong in his faith giving glory to God and being fully persuaded that what God had promised, he was able also to perform. So this is the story and the picture we have of this man. And so when we read this out of Paul and he's stating to us that he did not stagger, he did not waver.

When God said, this is what I'm going to do, I'm going to make your children as the stars of the, as the stars of the sky, as the sand of the seashore. And yet we have the story of Hagar. And I've done my biblical research. Where did Hagar come from? I may not get to it today, but this story is going to blow your mind. It was Abraham's fault from the beginning, that turkey. And I just want to encourage you this morning, I was thinking about, you know, how close to Abraham have I walked.

Well, as a man of faith and power and love and whatever. I've made my mistakes and I've had to apologize publicly to churches more than once because my mouth got a little ahead of my brains. I know you don't believe that, but it happened to me, and I've had to, I've had to humble myself before the people. I've made mistakes. The people nicely forgave me and I'm happy to report to you the God for you. I'm no angel. I'm a bad person just like you. If you want to know how bad I was, never mind it's none of your business.

But every one of us fails, every one of us falls in a pit stop, every one of us falls in potholes. We go through difficulties. Don't give up now, bunkie. Hang on because God still believes in you. The biggest problem that so many Christians have, we don't believe it ourselves. We don't believe in ourselves. Being fully persuaded, He took Hagar into His tent. Are you serious Abraham? You believe in God, you're a man of faith. What are you up to?

He even got his wife to lie for him. What a story that is. Romans 4, therefore the promise comes by faith so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring. Now watch this. See I've done the lettering in white, all of his offspring. Not only to those who were of the law, the Jewish people but also to those who have the faith of Abraham. He's the Father of us all. I got thinking about that. I haven't heard about a cult that's gone off the deep end on this one.

But there are some nutty professor-type pastors here and there who would take a verse like this and say, He's the Father of us all. And they would draft up some humongous theology and make all kinds of hay out of this. You ought not to start to say, Abraham, Abraham, Abraham. Jesus is the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, and nobody gets to the Father but by him. But the Word says he's the Father of us all. No, he's the Father of us all in this regard. We learned from the Scripture how to exert faith in God. We learned it from Abraham.

He was the first Jew. He was the first real believer and now we're called his sons because we're taking after him. We have not got his nature. We've got the nature of Jesus. But we love what Abraham did. He followed God when God said, this is what I want you to do. So God made promises to him. Well, he's still in this pagan culture. He said, I want you to go to a land I will show you.

And he didn't even show him on a GPS or a world atlas. He just said, trust me. And so I can see him sitting down and saying to his wife, you know that guy that I had tea with today at Tim Hortons? He said, pack up and let's go. And we're going to do it. Where are we going? I don't know. We're going to get on a bus. We're going to get on a bus. You know how

they put the destination up on the top, right? They boarded a bus and no destination was up on the window. Where are you going, Abraham? I don't know, but I'm sure it's a.... I can't wait to get there. We took our kids to Florida a couple of times back when. And your parents, you've heard this. Are we almost there yet?

We'd have to say three more sleeps. Are we going to get there today? Two more sleeps. Big was saying, here's Sarah saying to Abraham, when are we going to get there Abraham? Do you know how long it took them? A long-time bunkie. It took them along. Are we there yet? Even every time, every time he came around the corner of a mountain, he'd stand there and look at it and say to Sarah, do you think this is it? They had no idea. Every day that they woke up and they saw a beautiful lake, a river, or whatever they saw, they had to. . . Is this it? And they didn't get the nod from the Father? Keep going. You're not in heaven yet. You haven't seen the clarion call of Jesus.

Is He coming yet? He's coming soon. When? We don't know. This is the walk of faith. This is the journey. You're going to a place you've never seen before. It's called heaven. You've got more information on your side with your journey following the Lord than Abraham could have ever hoped to have. You're doing okay, aren't you?

God promised Abraham land. Specifically, God promised them the land of Canaan. What might now be called Greater Israel? There are some people in the U. S. Congress who are shouting at Neat Nahu. Get out. You have no claim to that whatsoever. That belongs to the Muslim Arab. That belongs to the Palestinians.

And yet they know these verses. Do you know that Abraham is also a hero, somehow or other, in the Islamic culture? But they are totally disregarding everything that Abraham went through. He was a Jew, he was not a Muslim. And God said I'm going to give you the land. But God made another promise. I'll make you a great nation. Not until 1948. 1948, the United Nations finally said, we grant you nationhood. And immediately they were under attack by all the Arabs. Now go away, go away, go away. I will make you a great nation. And I got thinking about all the different empirical warriors, and would-be heroes all down through the centuries. Everybody that tried to snuff out Israel miserably failed. And there are some people that are miserably failing now. And the devil's man. And whenever you hear people shouting down with Israel, down with Israel, that's the voice of Satan.

Hello? He will have children and grandchildren and further descendants, enough to populate a whole great nation. And you'll make your name great. God promised to bless Abraham and to make his name great. There's probably no more name, more honored in the whole world. He's honored among the Jews. He's honored in Islam. And he's honored in Christians. You say his name anywhere. You say his name anywhere you want. Go to a village in Kenya. Show one ass of the freeway. That means praise God. The people will come running. And all you have to do is say, how many know who Abraham was? And they'll respond. Yes, amen. Praise God. He's known to the humblest, illiterate people all over the world. Going to make your name great.

I will bless those who bless you. And I'm going to be a real air irritation to those people who say from the river to the sea. God also promised he would bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you. Your children of Abraham is the father of us all. Anybody curses you. They're picking a fight with the Lord. That's kind of exciting, isn't it? Historically speaking then, I went over this.

Nations have treated Jewish people well. And those nations that treated them well, were blessed. But when the Greeks overran Palestine and desecrated the altar in the Jewish temple, they were soon conquered by Rome. When Rome killed Paul and many others and destroyed Jerusalem under Titus, Rome fell. Spain was reduced to a fifth-rate nation after the Inquisition of the Jews. Paul and fell after the programs. Hitler's Germany went down after its orgies of anti-Semitism and Britain lost her empire when she broke faith with Israel. I got that from Donald J. Barnhouse, an old, old book that I still have. Look at all the nations that have tried to scrub the name of Abraham from the face of the world. It ain't going to work. They may as well go home and order spaghetti like they're not going to do it. All the nations are turning against them. Joe's turned against them. Justin's turned against them. Mark on all these people have turned against them.

Go ahead. Shake your fists in the face of God. Ain't going to work. Promise in you all the families of the earth will be blessed. You've read this in the book of Revelation. They sang a new song saying, you're worthy to take the scroll to open its seals. For you were slain and have redeemed us to God by your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, Revelation 5:9. Abraham, if you leave Ur of the Chaldees and if you follow me through, many are going to come and be blessed. When we all get to heaven, Abraham's going to be not overly celebrated. Jesus is the one. But folks, going to be kind of excited to see that bearded wonder. I'm sure he had a beard. That's why I trim mine just a little bit this morning. The work of Jesus is touching every group of people all over the world. But here's the rub. We're going back to something I already read. Okay, Abraham.

Here's what I want you to do. Get out of your country from your family, from your father's house to a land I'll show you. So Abraham obeys almost. He took his father with him and he took his nephew. Lot was the son of Abraham's brother. But Abraham's brother died early, so he took Lot with him. The Lord said, in essence, leave your father behind. He took him with him and they ended up spending some years along the way. They went and did a whistle-stop for a few years until the old gent died. His journey was delayed right then and there. And when he took a lot along with him, remember all of the stories that we have on Lot. How lot ended up down. Think about all the stuff that you read. And you pour lot and Abraham rescued. No, go back to the point where God said, don't take Lot, but no Abraham wouldn't live. The man of faith almost had it together.

Leave them behind and follow after me. Jesus talked about if anyone is not willing to forsake his mother and his father and his kin for me, he's not worthy. It's not being demanded that we would walk away from family, but it happens at times. We had a group of people come, I mentioned this recently to Vancouver when I passed there, we brought these people from Taiwan that we've been reaching out to.

We brought about, I don't know, 15 or so young people and they came and they'd given their hearts to the Lord. They were scared to death to be water-baptized because they knew that was the cutoff point. That was a physical demonstration. They could kind of live their little silent, little secret of following the Lord, but to be water-baptized was the cutting-off point.

They'd have to tell their friend, they'd have to tell their mother and father and to do so they'd be ostracized. They'd be kicked out. One of my favorite preachers is now teaching over in Belgium. He's a brilliant, brilliant mind. He was trained. He was attending the University of Western in London and he was raised a thoroughbred Jew one night he decided to head home to Toronto to visit with his folks and he's out on the 401. This is his story and this wild, you know, remember the old Volkswagen vans? Remember those funny-looking things? One came along, it was all painted up kind of weirdly, and stopped and let them in as they were driving along the 401, the driver started talking to him about Jesus and he told about how they ended up somewhere on the 401 before they got to Toronto.

This guy pulled over the side of the road on the 401 and he said, in the back of that van, I gave my heart and my life to Jesus. But then he had to go home and tell his Jewish mother and father, I've given my heart to Jesus and they basically said, you may as well drink arsenic and go. Like, you're wasted, you're done. It cost him incredibly and I don't know the rest of his story with his parents but I can tell you, he's an incredible preacher of the word. I've known so many people, it costs them their families. When I was going down to Quebec, as I mentioned to you, the majority of the people that I was ministering to in the variety of churches and I went to all the little villages, all the common theme among them all was, I've left all to follow Jesus. Their sisters wouldn't speak to them. Their mother and father wrote them off, they would have nothing to do with them. They weren't welcome to go to a funeral, they weren't welcome to go to a wedding. No, they paid it all, they paid it all to follow Jesus. They paid for it all.

Get out of your country and leave your family, it's going to cost you, Abraham. But if you disobey, there's going to be an extra fee along the way because of your own decisions. So Abraham departed as the Lord had spoken to him and he took a lot with him. Interesting if you go back one chapter here. So I have just been teaching you out of Genesis 12. Go back to Genesis 11. In the end, it talks about his daddy going with him and everything that they could, like they packed their camels, they took everything with them that they possibly could.

They were following the Lord and faith, but they took some insurance policies with them. So Abraham arrives in Canaan. Abraham passed through the land to the place of Shechem. This was his first stopping point and I found this and I just have to share it with you. Shechem is the first place that he landed in what we know is the land of Israel. The place, the place that so many people today are saying, the Jews have no claim. They were never there. They just showed up recently.

They have no claim. Watch this. Shechem means shoulder and it's assumed by archeologists that its name is a reflection of its position. Shechem is kind of like a valley and it's shouldered by two mountains, Mount Gerasim, and Mount Ebel.

So it's a lovely lush valley and that's where Abraham chose to pitch his tent. This is where Jacob came safely when he returned with his wives and children from his sojourn with Laban. As he was heading back to speak to his angry brother, he stopped there. Why?

Because this was a famous place for Jewish families. This is where Jacob bought a piece of land from a Canaanite named Hamer for a hundred pieces of silver. You'll find that in Genesis 33. This Shechem is where Jacob built an altar to the Lord and called it El Olewe Israel. This established the connection between Jacob and what became known as Jacob's Well. I think I just messed up. Shechem was the place where Dinah, the daughter of Jacob, was raped and the sons of Jacob massacred the men of the city in retaliation.

This was the plot of ground that Jacob gave his son Joseph. Land, Jacob had conquered from the Amorites with his sword and bow in an unrecorded battle, Genesis 48. This is where the bones of Joseph were eventually buried when they were carried up from Egypt, Joshua 24. This is where Joshua made a covenant with Israel, renewing their commitment to the God of Israel and proclaiming, as for me and my house, we'll serve the Lord. That happened at Shechem. Shechem's New Testament name is called Saikar. That's where Jesus met the Samaritan woman at the well.

This is the very place in the midst of Judea. It's almost the center point of all of that piece of property over there and it's where they say Israel has no claim. I've got to close because my time's running out and I told you I won't get to the end of it and you're saying, well, you said you're going to make them look bad. I'll just give you this little one up. Things got bad in Shechem. Things got bad in that whole part of the world and famine came. And so in the land that God said, I'm going to give you this land, I'm going to provide everything for you, everything's going to be fine. But when difficulty came, Abraham thought he'd help the Lord. So he walked by faith. He did not stagger in his faith, but he thought he'd help out the Lord. So he packed up his tent and where did he go? He went to Egypt, the fertile plains all along the Nile. He went there and he was well-received for one reason. The word tells us that Sarah was a very beautiful lady, just like she was about 75, 78 years old at the time.

So beautiful and radiant, just like the 78-year-olds here today. Very desirable among the young princes of Egypt. And so Abraham said to her, and it makes sense. He's providing for her by taking her to a place of stability safety and security. He's going to take her there where they can get some food because the promised land is going through a famine. We believe God to get us there, but we don't believe that there's going to be men anytime soon or chickens flying over and having a heart attack and feeding us meat. So we're going to go down there. But Sarah, you're a beautiful woman and if they think you're my wife, they will savagely kill me and fight over you.

So here's our plan. We're not really telling a lie because you know Sarah, you and I have the same daddy, but we do not have the same mama. So you're not really my sister, but you sort of are. So I want you to tell the Egyptians a lie. I'm going to tell them a lie. I'm going to tell a lie and you're going to swear to it. We're trusting God all the way. Abraham is a man of power and faith and stability, but he's going to tell a lie. He believes he's going to have children and he believes it's through Sarah that it's going to happen, but he doesn't trust God to protect him in Egypt.

He believes he's going to be the father of many nations, but maybe not. So it was his choice to go to Egypt out of disobedience, hello. And on his way to disobedience, he has to make a second mistake and that is he has to lie about who his sister is. She was a half-sister. Pharaoh himself got enthralled and told all of his young princes back off and Sarah, Sarah, the Pharaoh came to Abraham and said, I love your sister. Can I have her in my harem?

And what's Abraham going to do? He says, be my guest. So she goes to live in the house of the Pharaoh. Now, when you really do, and I've done as much research as I can, there are those who believe that he never really got to her because of something that he said later on. He said he got upset when the Lord started to bring judgment upon Egypt and somehow or other the Pharaoh figured it out. We don't know how he figured it out. And he came to Moses and he said, you lied to me. That's not your sister. That's your wife. And you brought problems to my house. I could have married her. Now, what you and I don't fully understand is what marriage would have meant to him. Lots of people back in those days sort of had common-law relationships with each other and all over the place. And then eventually they got married. I saw that happening in Africa among the Maasai tribe. The young men got to go and visit the mothers of all their buddies.

And they try everybody out in the town. And finally, they chose one for themselves, go and kill a lion, barehanded. And that's how they won their wife. And so like this may have been how it was in Egypt that Pharaoh may have visited her. We don't know. They were taking, Abraham was taking a chance. Let Sarah go in and be in the house of Pharaoh. But that's supposed to be the womb that's going to supply you with a miracle child. This is a woman selected by God. Horrors. You know, if the story had kind of leaped forward and little Mary had been no kind of going out to the local bee bop and hanging out with the guys and putting on her little mini skirt and carrying on, somebody would have had a conniption. Wait a minute. There's going to be an angel coming and visiting you. You've got to be pure and wonderful. It's that bad that Sarah would go into the house of Pharaoh. Man of faith. Man of wisdom. I'm sorry Abraham.

I just have to, I just have to give you your do. You're a wonderful man and God chose you and at times I'm wondering why. But then I look in the mirror and I say, I guess I do have some understanding. You know, why did God choose me? Why did God choose you? The Lord decides who he will choose. God never chooses losers, but he does choose frail people. And in our frailty, God looks upon us and he says, I see something good. I see something I can work with. Moses, what's that in your hand?

Just a dry stick, Lord. It's just a dry stick. And the Lord said that dry stick will do. And that stick became known as the rod of God. That's the very rod that he held over the Red Sea. You see, God can take the meanest, the cruelest things and make something of beauty. That even my life and yours today with all of the difficulties wouldn't have been through thus far. And many of us have been through. This song amazing grace through many trials. How does it go?

You know, many trials and difficulties I've already come and grace has got me through. I've really thought so many times of, you don't know my wife's total story. I don't know if she'll ever tell you. It's a sad story in so many ways. But before I ever met her, she went through some difficult times in her home life. She lost her daddy when she was only 12 years of age.

And then from there, the story actually goes downhill. And so, but when I met her, she was angelic and she was a wonderful little gal, coming really out of a dysfunctional home. So my wife's story really is like, you know how the ladies can take all these pieces of fabric and knit them all together and make a lovely blanket? What do you call that? A quilt. A quilt. It can truly be said. I mean, if everybody here was to tell all of your stories, not just the wonderful, oh, Jesus did this and Jesus did, but if you were to tell some of your history and some of your, some of your personal downfall, some of your failure, some of the disappointments, some of the things you've never told a living soul, those things are part of the fabric of your life. And God still loves you. You know what?

All the mistakes that Abraham made God still honored the promise he made to him. When God makes a promise, he makes a promise. I'm very close right here in this moment to saying, I think I believe partially, at least in eternal security, that the devil can't take me because God won't let him do it. There's security when God gives you a promise, a covenant. And when you fail him, or when you think you failed him, so many of our failures are self-made up here. And we haven't failed at all, but we put ourselves down with such a bludgeoning, hard, fist attack on our own selves. And we wooed our own, our own spirits. And we put our own souls into a cage when God is saying, will you shut up for a moment?

I already forgave you for all of that. Like our children disappointed us. Our kids are disappointments. I never thought of throwing them out of the house. No, I'm a papa. I love them. There's nothing that could have done that. I want to kick them out. Nothing, nothing, nothing. Had they committed the worst thing, I still would have stood with them. Disappointed indeed, may be embarrassed, but I would have been like the old grandpa in look 15. I would have been waiting for my son to return. Aren't you glad that you came back from wherever you went? I was never a drug addict. I was never a philanderer. I had a reputation that I didn't deserve. April's mother tried to talk. She says I've heard about that young man. And April told me about it. And I said, where'd she get that? I said, no. She was my first real girlfriend. I never did all that wacky stuff. But I had a reputation. I think it was the, I think it was my Elvis haircut. I'm being silly here. I know. But, but, but, but, but some people have gone to the bottom. And you know what?

That not not to be your testimony. I got weary of all the testimonies that came out of Teen Challenge. I got to know Nikki Cruz. I got to know another one that I went to Bible school with. And their whole story was, I was the worst sinner you ever. I could have drank more booze and all of you put together. And their story was not about mercy and grace. The big part of the story was how low they got. That's not my story. My story is saved by grace and mercy. I'm a trophy of heaven. He calls me brother. I'm called the son of God. I'm a son really in a unique way of Abraham. I'm a man who's looking for a city I've yet to see. It says he looked for a city whose architect and builder is God. For you and I, that's heaven. And we're looking for it.

It's coming right around the corner. Glory be to God. Trouble came to the house of Abraham, part two, next Sunday. Heavenly Father, thank you for mercy and grace. Thank you for salvaging us. Thank you for forgiving us to always trying to be your helper. You said you do this and that for us. And then we just have to continuously stir the pot. Lord God, you know my own heart how I've had to so many times at an altar give you the ministry back and say, I'm sorry Lord.

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I'm sorry Lord. I'm giving you back your church. I have to stop fussing so much. I give it back to you. Lord, we say we're following you and we say we're trusting you. And then hours later we seem to be falling back into the old path. Lord God, thank you for forgiving us again and again and again and again and a thousand times again. You forgive. You forgive. You forgive.

That means we keep on getting saved. Not like at the original, that was the glorious birthing. But we're growing moment by moment, challenge by challenge. Jesus on the outside, changing what's wrong on the inside.

All glory be to God in Jesus' name.