

## **To Know Him and Make Him Known**

We have been privileged to walk with Abraham through the peaks and valleys of a life well lived.

We have seen him leave his homeland to walk with God by faith.

We have witnessed his successes and his failures.

We have seen him as he experienced the joy of childbirth and watched as he willingly gave that child up to the will of the Lord.

Abraham's life has been filled with the best and the worst that life can dish out.

Genesis 22 took this man to the pinnacle of faith and obedience.

This chapter takes into the depths of the valley of the shadow of death.

Here, as we watch him say goodbye to his wife Sarah, we see a man who has learned to walk by faith as he weathers the storms of life.

This evening, I would like for us to watch Abraham in these verses as he teaches us how to live the life of faith even when tragedy enters our view.

I want to preach for a while on the thought Standing Up Before The Dead.

### **1) IT WAS A TIME OF FAREWELLS—vs. 1-3a**

- a) The Sadness Of Separation –
  - i) We are told that Abraham's wife of some 70 years has died.
  - ii) This kind of separation is part of everyone's life, Heb. 9:27, but when it comes, we are never quite prepared for the hurt it brings.
  - iii) Thank god, the cruel messenger of death will be done away with forever one day,
  - iv) **Rev. 21:4—" and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be *any* death; there will no longer be *any* mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away**
  - v) **1 Cor. 15:26—" The last enemy that will be abolished is death**
- b) The Sting Of Sorrow –
  - i) When death entered the home of Abraham, it broke his heart.
  - ii) The Bible says that he came to "mourn" and to "weep".
  - iii) These words mean "to wail" and to "shed tears", respectively.
  - iv) By the way, this is a natural reaction to death!
  - v) There are times when we hear people tell us not to weep over our dead, but when they are stripped from our presence, it is impossible not to weep for and miss them.

- vi) **F. B. Meyer said this, "Tears relieve the burning brain, as a shower the electric clouds. Tears discharge the insupportable agony of the hearer, as an overflow lessens the pressure of the flood against the dam. Tears are the material out of which heaven weaves its brightest rainbows. Tears are transmuted into the jewels of better life, as the wounds in the oyster turn to pearls."**
- vii) When death has intruded into the land of the living, do not fear their cleansing needful ministry in your life.
- c) The Strength Of Steadfastness –
  - i) The Bible tells us that "Abraham stood up from before his dead".
  - ii) This means that when the mourning period was over, Abraham moved on with his life.
  - iii) You see, grief is a normal part of living, but there is a time when grief must reach an end.
  - iv) Sorrow over death is natural, but sorrow that does not end is unnatural.
  - v) A woman told me yesterday that she has grieved for her parents for over 15 years. Folks that is not godly sorrow!
  - vi) We are told in the Bible, "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope."
  - vii) **1 Thess. 4:13—" But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope**
  - viii) May we learn to rejoice over our loved ones who, like Sarah, have entered the realms of light,
  - ix) **2 Cor. 5:8—" we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord**
  - x) One day, we will join them there!
- 2) **IT WAS A TIME OF FAITHFULNESS—vs. 3b-16**
  - a) Abraham has been given all the land by the promise of God.
  - b) However, He does not own one square inch of the land at this point.
  - c) He goes to speak to the men of the city to acquire a place to bury the dead.
  - d) V. 4a Abraham Declares His Identity –
    - i) He tells the men of the city that he is still a pilgrim among them.
    - ii) He has lived here some 62 years at this point, but he has never settled down.
    - iii) He says that he is a "newcomer" and is just one "passing through".
    - iv) Even after all this time, he has never set down his roots in this world.
    - v) What a lesson to the children of God!
    - vi) As long as our roots do not go too deeply in this world, we will not become too entangled in its affairs.
    - vii) May we never forget our identity!
    - viii) We are pilgrims and strangers,
    - ix) **1 Pet. 2:11—" Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul**
    - x) in this world.
    - xi) Let us so live and not settle down, but keep traveling, looking for that city that will be our eternal home!
  - e) V. 4b-16 Abraham Demonstrates His Integrity –

- i) In order to secure a place to bury his wife, Abraham strikes a deal with one of the sons of Heth, a man by the name of Ephron.
- ii) Abraham mentions a certain piece of property and Ephron offers to give it to him, but Abraham refuses, because he does not want to be indebted to any man, v. 13
- iii) This is a good lesson for every child of God!
- iv) We need to beware that we owe no man anything but love, Rom. 13:8.
- v) When Ephron sees that he has the advantage over Abraham, he charges him far more than fair price, but instead of standing up for himself, Abraham humbly accepts the offer.
- vi) Note: Having to pay for land that God has promised to give him might have caused many men to stumble, but Abraham was able to see beyond the present into a future where it was all his anyway.
- vii) Even in trials, Abraham was a man of integrity!
- viii) How you conduct yourself when the pressure is on says more about you than how you act when things are good!
- ix) One of the best example in the Bible of integrity under pressure is Job,
- x) **Job 1:20-22—" Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head, and he fell to the ground and worshiped. He said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked I shall return there. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD." Through all this Job did not sin nor did he blame God**
- xi) Note: "In all this..."

### 3) IT WAS A TIME OF FAITH—vs. 17-20

- a) The fact that Abraham buried his wife in the cave in Hebron, shows the depths of his faith in the Lord God.
- b) Of course, Abraham's faith is well known and documented, even in the New Testament,
- c) **Heb. 11:13-16—" All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own. And indeed if they had been thinking of that *country* from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better *country*, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them.**
- d) In Abraham's life, we can see faith exhibited in three areas.
- e) We See His Faith In The Promises Of God –
  - i) He was able to buy the cave with confidence seeing that he already owned the land in trust.
  - ii) It had been given to him by the precious promise of God,
  - iii) **Gen. 13:15-17—" for all the land which you see, I will give it to you and to your descendants forever. "I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth, so that if anyone can number the dust of the earth, then your descendants can also be numbered. "Arise, walk about the land through its length and breadth; for I will give it to you."**
  - iv) He knew that one day, he and his descendants would be buried in this very cave.
  - v) But, he was able, by faith, to see far beyond this.

- vi) He was able to see a day when he would stand with Sarah, in the presence of the Lord in Heaven,
- vii) **Heb. 11:9-10—" By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign *land*, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise; for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.**
- viii) Note: This same faith dwelled in the heart of Job,
- ix) **Job 19:25-27—" As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, And at the last He will take His stand on the earth. "Even after my skin is destroyed, Yet from my flesh I shall see God; Whom I myself shall behold ,And whom my eyes will see and not another. My heart faints within me!**
- x) It should dwell in our hearts as well,
- xi) **John 14:1-3—" Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. "In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, *there* you may be also**
- xii) Note: When we are able to look beyond the present to the things we have been given in promise, by faith, it secures the heart, frees the mind and strengthens the hands to work,
- xiii) **Heb. 11:1—" Now faith is the <sup>a</sup>assurance of *things* <sup>b</sup>hoped for, the conviction of things not seen**
- xiv) When we know we are going home some day, it makes the trials of this journey bearable!
- f) We See His Faith In The Plan Of God –
  - i) Abraham knew that even as he buried Sarah here, there would come a day when his descendants would inherit this land and would dwell there.
  - ii) Because of this great knowledge, Abraham was able to endure his grief, his pain and his losses.
  - iii) He knew that God's plan is always best,
  - iv) **Rom. 8:28—" And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose**
  - v) Note: If we could ever grasp that truth it would change our lives!
  - vi) It would spell the end of our second guessing, our worrying and our "whys?" and "What if's".
  - vii) Note: God has a perfect plan and it is not meant to hurt you, but it is meant to produce His image in your life,
  - viii) **Rom. 8:29—" For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become conformed to the image of His Son*, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren**
  - ix) It is meant to glorify His name and to further His kingdom in this world.
  - x) The best thing we can ever do is to submit humbly and wholly to what the Lord is doing in and around us!
- g) We See His Faith In The Power Of God –
  - i) Even as he stared death in the face, Abraham was able to walk in victory because he knew that he was serving a God Who controlled all the affairs of life and of death!

- ii) He knew that even though his pain was great and his loss was terrible, in the end, he would come out a winner because God resides on the throne!
- iii) Note: Would to God we could remember that tonight!
- iv) We are not going to be in this world with all its pain and heartache forever!
- v) The day is coming when we will leave this world for a new home in glory.
- vi) When that day comes, we will enjoy the victory!
- vii) The bottom line is this: I have read the conclusion of the book!
- viii) We have already won all there is to win, we must just wait until the victory we already hold by faith is beheld by the eyes!

Conc: There are times when we all look at an impossible situation and wonder how much more we can take.

Let me tell you now that God's grace is sufficient for you in everything you will face in this life,

**2 Cor. 12:9—" And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me**

He will give you grace to stand up from your dead and to go on for His glory, until the battle is over.

I do not know what you might be facing this evening, but I do know that faith where your victory lies,

**1 John 5:4—" For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith**

What will it take to get you to stand up from your dead?

Whatever it is, the Lord has it.

Come get it!