

FAITH FOR DAILY LIVING

A non-denominational guide to confident Christian living published by the
Faith for Daily Living Foundation, a duly registered non-profit Trust

Some time later God tested Abraham.

He said to him, “Abraham!”

“Here I am,” he replied.

Genesis 22:1 (NIV)



**IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT THIS BOOK
THE FAITH FOR DAILY LIVING FOUNDATION**

<i>Postal Address</i>	<i>Street Address (for collections only)</i>
P O Box 3737	Methodist Connexional House
Durban	450A Che Guevara Road
4000	Durban
Republic of South Africa	
Phone: (031) 304-8696	website: www.ffdl.co.za
E-mail: office@ffdl.co.za	

Office Hours: Monday to Friday 8.30 – 12.30

If you wish to receive regular copies of the book please email us at office@ffdl.co.za or apply via our website www.ffdl.co.za

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Great is thy Faithfulness

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Between ourselves

Dear Friends,

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, through the power and ministry of the Holy Spirit in each of our lives.

The blessing of God's Word is as it continues to speak to us down the corridors of time. Passages that we have possibly read many times over, continue to speak into our lives with fresh meaning and insight. I have discovered this for myself as I have explored the life of Abraham, which we will continue in the days to come. I was reminded of a Sunday School song, which is not just for children, but all of us:

Father Abraham had many sons

Many sons had Father Abraham

I am one of them and so are you

So let's just praise the Lord.

(He not only had sons but daughters as well.)

The wonderful and blessed reality is the Lord fulfilled His promise to Abraham, the "friend of God", the "father of faith", despite his moments of failure. We can only praise the Lord for being the sons and daughters of Abraham, through our faith in Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, our Saviour and Lord, through the power and ministry of His indwelling Holy Spirit. Despite our own faith failures, as the Lord loved Abraham, He loves us, and continues to be faithful to His promises to us, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Now that's something to praise the Lord for, in these days in which we find ourselves.

So let's just praise the Lord!



(Jonathan Christie)

Resting in the Steadfast Love of the Lord

“Let them thank the Lord for His steadfast love, for His wondrous works to the children of man! For He shatters the doors of bronze and cuts in two the bars of iron. Some were fools through their sinful ways, and because of their iniquities suffered affliction; they loathed any kind of food, and they drew near to the gates of death. Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and He delivered them from their distress.”
(*Psalms 107:15-19*)

The Steadfast Love That Saves, Strengthens, Sanctifies, and Satisfies

Psalm 107 is a song of redemption, a vivid tapestry woven with stories of God's steadfast love, rescuing His people from every form of distress. In *verses 15-22*, we see a people trapped in the consequences of their own sinful ways, afflicted and near death, yet delivered by the Lord's unwavering love when they cry out to Him. This love – God's *hesed*, His covenantal, unfailing commitment to His people – is the heartbeat of the psalm and the foundation of our hope. It is most gloriously displayed at the cross, where Jesus bore our sins, shattered the chains of death, and opened the way to eternal life.

The psalmist reminds us that God's love is not a passive sentiment but an active, transformative force. It *saves* us, as He delivers us from the gates of death (*verse 18*). It *strengthens* us, breaking through barriers of bronze and iron that no human effort could overcome (*verse 16*). It *sanctifies* us, as His Word heals and restores us from the destruction of our sinful ways (*verse 20*). And it *satisfies* the deepest longings of our hearts, turning our cries of distress into songs of joy

(verse 22). This is the love that meets us in our weakness, not with condemnation, but with deliverance and grace.

Yet, how often do we, like the psalmist's people, feel the weight of our own weak love for God? We are commanded to love Him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength (*Deuteronomy 6:5; Mark 12:30*), but our love falters. We stumble in sin, grow weary in devotion, and feel ashamed of how short we fall. In those moments, it's tempting to focus on our failures, to withdraw in shame, or to try harder in our own strength. But Charles Spurgeon, the great preacher, offers a better way. He wrote: "When we are conscious of the feebleness of our love to the Lord Jesus, let us not so much consider our love as consider His love. The way to increase our love is to think much of the love of Christ to us. Our love is cold because we think too little of His love. Oh, that we could get a sight of His love, a new revelation of it to our souls, and then our love would blaze!"

Spurgeon's words reflect the rhythm of *Psalms 107*. When we focus on our weak love, we spiral into despair. But when we lift our eyes to the greatness of God's love – demonstrated most clearly at the cross – we are moved to cry out for mercy, to trust in His deliverance, and to overflow with praise. The psalmist shows us this pattern repeatedly: "Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress" (*Psalms 107:28*). Our response to His love is not to wallow in our shortcomings but to call on Him, to rest in His rescue, and to "offer sacrifices of thanksgiving, and tell of his deeds in songs of joy" (verse 22).

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FROM THE TRUSTEES

Dear Faith Readers,

In the Jan/Feb 2026 issue we published a poem 'An African Blessing'. At time of going to print we did not know who the author of this most beautiful poem was. One of our readers informed us that the poem was written by a former Anglican Bishop, Bishop Eric Pike. Eric was called to higher service on the 17th June 2021. Many of our readers have expressed their delight in reading this truly South African poem.

Kindly ensure that you keep your contact details updated at all times. Accurate and up-to-date contact information is essential to facilitate the smooth delivery and collection of parcels and booklets. This will prevent delays and allows us to communicate promptly should any issues arise. Your cooperation in keeping your details current is greatly appreciated and will help us maintain an efficient and reliable delivery service. Many emails fail to be delivered and as a result we cannot communicate with you.

We are very grateful for all the donations and bequests we have received. We rely entirely on the generosity of our readers to be able to keep distributing Faith. The booklet is never sold. As Faith for Daily Living has been a blessing to you over the years, please consider blessing Faith with your donations.

We have endeavoured to stay current with our digital options, and encourage you to explore these various options. See the quick and easy access QR codes at the back of the booklet.

Blessings

Ingrid

Trustee and Administrator

Tuesday 1st September

LOT

“The two angels arrived at Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gateway of the city. When he saw them, he got up to meet them and bowed down with his face to the ground.”

Genesis 19:1 NIV

Lot had every advantage imaginable to know the Lord and to live life to the fullest. He was taken in and reared by Abraham when Abraham first trusted God and began his journey of faith. But he apparently paid little attention to the testimony and witness of Abraham (*Genesis 12:4-5*). He was given the first choice of land by Abraham, but he chose selfishly and settled close to Sodom (*Genesis 13:5-18*). He was rescued from enslavement when captured by the invading army of kings from the East (*Genesis 14:12-16*). But instead of returning with Abraham, he chose to return to Sodom. He loved Sodom and the opportunities the city offered him both for business and personal pleasure. He coveted the city's bright lights, the opportunity for wealth, possessions, pleasure, and position. Scripture gives a graphic picture of Lot's love for Sodom, the declining stages he went through in moving closer to Sodom and its carnal and wicked way of life: Lot lifted his eyes and looked upon Sodom and the rich, fertile valley of the Jordan in which the city sat (*Genesis 13:10-11*). Lot then chose to move, pitching his tent toward Sodom (*Genesis 13:12-13*). Lot later moved into the city (*Genesis 14:12*). Lot finally is seen sitting at the gate of Sodom, which meant that he was most likely some city official (*Genesis 19:1*). Lot's life is a graphic picture of backsliding, a dangerous threat to us all.

PRAYER THOUGHT

Lord, open our eyes to the dangers of becoming like Lot.

Wednesday 2nd September

COMPROMISE

"My lords," he said, "please turn aside to your servant's house. You can wash your feet and spend the night and then go on your way early in the morning." "No," they answered, "we will spend the night in the square." *Genesis 19:2 NIV*

We have a picture of Lot's compromise with the world. Remember, the Lord had stayed behind with Abraham. Only the two angels went to Sodom. Lot is found sitting in the gateway of Sodom. He was there for one of two reasons. Lot was either the mayor or a city official responsible for city government and for settling disputes between citizens. City officials, acting as judges, sat at the gate for that purpose (see *Deuteronomy 21:19-21; 22:15; Ruth 4:1*). Abraham had saved Sodom from foreign conquest as we saw in *Genesis 14:1-24*. Perhaps the citizens had honoured Lot, making him a city official because of what his uncle had done for them. Lot had compromised his values and was now living with the worldly. Perhaps he was at the gate, the public gathering place, either to conduct business or just pass the time away with the worldly. Yet he was "walking in the counsel of the ungodly, standing in the way of sinners, and sitting in the seat of the scornful" (*Psalms 1:1*). There was some inner goodness within Lot. There was more to Lot's invitation than just Eastern social tradition and kindness. There was an urgency, an anxiety in his invitation. He knew the city and the people, the moral degradation. He knew the threat and danger to the strangers. There was a spiritual awareness, an inner goodness, still seen even in Lot's failure. The danger of compromise lies within all of us!

PRAYER THOUGHT

Lord, keep us alert to the dangers of compromising our stand for You.

Thursday 3rd September

THE SLIPPERY SLOPE

Lot went outside to meet them and shut the door behind him and said, “No, my friends. Don’t do this wicked thing. Look, I have two daughters who have never slept with a man. Let me bring them out to you, and you can do what you like with them.”

Genesis 19:6,7,8 NIV

Here is the tragic picture of the slippery slope of compromise! Lot went outside to meet the mob and called them friends. Lot knew these people. They were his day-to-day friends, acquaintances, neighbours, and business associates. He had lived among the worldly too long; he had no testimony before them. In their minds, he was like them, one of them: loving the world and the things of the world. They expected him to grant their wish. Lot’s compromised situation was leading to one sinful act after another. A horrible, unbelievable scene is revealed. Lot offered to give his daughters to the mob in exchange for the guests. How could he do this? Was he trying to save his own life, standing face to face with the mob, fearing their threats? Was he so threatened and so fearful that he was in a confused state of mind? Did he know that his guests were angels, and he was willing to sacrifice his two daughters to save them? Scripture does not say, but whatever the case, Lot was sliding down that slippery slope. He had attempted to influence his fellow citizens for good. He had sat at the city gate as one of the ruling officials of the city, judging and censoring many, but he had lived a compromising life. The mob accused Lot of living a hypocritical life, shouting that they would tolerate it no more, leading to a tarnished testimony.

PRAYER THOUGHT

Holy Spirit, strengthen our witness so that it will not be tarnished in any way.

Friday 4th September

LINGERING

“When he hesitated, the men grasped his hand and the hands of his wife and of his two daughters and led them safely out of the city, for the Lord was merciful to them.”

Genesis 19:16 NIV

The two angels warned Lot. He needed to hurry, take his wife and two daughters and get out. Flee the city otherwise they will all be consumed. But Lot lingered. The very thought of leaving home, business, and possessions, his attachment to the world and the things of the world, made it very difficult for him to leave. But the Lord had mercy upon him, the two angels grabbed the hands of Lot, his wife, and daughters leading them out of the city. A picture of incredible spiritual weakness is revealed. Despite his having just been saved from a catastrophic death by the glorious mercy of God. Despite his facing impending judgment. When the angels led Lot and his family outside the city, the angels warned Lot again and urged him to escape for his life, to flee to the mountains out of the plain otherwise he and his family would be consumed. But Lot pleaded against the Lord's will (*verse 18*): Lot claimed to be physically incapable of reaching the mountain, that he might not be able to climb it in time to escape the destruction. But this was a camouflage, self-deception for a worldly heart. God was saving him from the coming judgment, and God would have strengthened him for the journey to the mountain. Lot knew this, but he pleaded for the right to escape to a city nearby, to Zoar (*verse 20*). The Lord accepted Lot's choice. The Lord pleaded no more, He gave Lot up to his choices!

PRAYER THOUGHT

Lord, stop us from lingering at the places that lead us away from You.

Saturday 5th September

ABRAHAM PRAYED

“So when God destroyed the cities of the plain, He remembered Abraham, and He brought Lot out of the catastrophe that overthrew the cities where Lot had lived.”

Genesis 19:29 NIV

Abraham arose early to see what had happened. What he saw, no doubt, struck him with the deepest sorrow and emotional strain. The whole plain was filled with a dense smoke soaring up into the sky, a smoke so dense that it seemed to be furiously flowing up from a huge burning furnace, a furnace so large that it seemed to cover the whole area. The Lord's remembrance of Abraham's prayer is recounted. Lot was not saved for his own sake. He had not followed the Lord nor been a witness for the Lord. He had lived for this world, lived for the bright lights, pleasures, money, wealth, property, position, honour, and possessions of this world. He had lived a worldly life. There was no reason for the Lord to save and keep him upon this earth. He just was not a witness for the Lord. In fact, he damaged and disgraced the Lord's name. He had a tarnished testimony, living a hypocritical life. Lot was saved for one reason and for one reason only. Abraham, his uncle, had prayed for him; and the Lord heard and answered his prayer. “Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.” (*James 5:16*) May we never stop praying for one another, keeping our own lives pure before the Lord.

PRAYER THOUGHT

Holy Spirit, strengthen us as we pray with compassion for one another.

Sunday 6th September

REMEMBER LOT'S WIFE

“But Lot’s wife looked back, and she became a pillar of salt.”

Genesis 19:26 NIV

Luke 17 verse 32 we have the words of Jesus, “Remember Lot’s wife!” Jesus in *Luke 17* had been asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God will come. His answer is to warn them to be ready for the coming of the kingdom is like the flash of lightening that instantly lights the sky. It is compared to the coming of the flood in Noah's day, and to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah in Lot's Day. Those who hear are warned to be ready to go when the Lord comes, and they are warned against turning back for anything. In the midst of His teaching, Jesus tells those listening to Him that they should "remember Lot's wife." Nowhere in the Bible are we told to remember Abraham, Isaac or Jacob. We are not commanded to remember Ruth or Rahab, David or Joshua, but we are commanded to remember Lot's wife! We are told to awaken our sluggish memories and look back to the death of someone who passed through this world, lived in sin and died in sin. We are told to remember Lot's wife. What is there to remember? She was married to Lot and she lived in Sodom. Before God's judgment came on Sodom and Gomorrah, she, along with her husband and two unmarried daughters were forced from the city. They were all commanded not to look behind them as they fled, but she disobeyed and was instantly transformed into a pillar of salt. Remembering Lot's wife, does not mean we revive an ages old, painful story, but be reminded that this life we are living is fleeting.

PRAYER THOUGHT

Lord, we choose to live for Your glory each day, for life is fleeting.

Monday 7th September

REMEMBER HER PRIVILEGES

“But Lot’s wife looked back, and she became a pillar of salt.”

Genesis 19:26 NIV

Lot’s wife was privileged to be married into the only family on the earth that was serving the one true God. She had seen the clear faith of Abraham. She had witnessed his dedication to the Lord. She had seen his altars and his worship. She had seen him operate in the power of the Lord and deliver her husband from sure death in *Genesis 14*. She was privileged to be associated with one of the greatest godly men who ever walked this planet! She saw the cloudy faith of her husband. He traded his tent for a townhouse! Because of her relationship with Lot and Abraham, she learned a few things about the Lord. She certainly knew who the Lord was and how one approaches Him. She had learned this from her husband and his uncle. Yet, she never followed through with it. The Lord had even graced her by sending angels to warn her and her family of the impending doom. Still, she refused to flee from the wrath of the Lord. She was privileged in her responsibility. She knew the facts and was given every opportunity to act upon them. She was given the chance to change, the chance to believe, the chance to be saved. Yet, she squandered those chances. The privilege of conviction is this: When the Lord calls, it isn't to harm us, but it is to remind us that He loves us and wants to save us by His grace and give us life and life in all its fullness through His Son, Jesus Christ our Saviour and Lord!

PRAYER THOUGHT

Lord, thank You for the privilege of conviction to experience Your grace.

Tuesday 8th September

WHY DID SHE LOOK BACK?

“But Lot’s wife looked back, and she became a pillar of salt.”

Genesis 19:26 NIV

For thousands of years many have wondered why this woman looked back. She looked back because she did not believe that the Lord would do what He said He would do! She thought He was bluffing! Many still make the same gamble today! Ask the Rich Man of *Luke 16:19-31*. Ask Judas Iscariot! The Lord isn't bluffing! Sin is a hard taskmaster. She, along with all the others, had been commanded not to look back. But there was something within her that caused her to turn back toward Sodom. The problem with Lot's wife was that she had her eyes on all the wrong things. She was looking back at a lost life, a lost lifestyle and a lost city. Wherever our gaze is fixed it will determine the path taken by our feet. The prodigal son's gaze was on the world and his feet followed. Having our gaze fixed on the wrong things is a dangerous way to live! The Lord's plan, as it is laid out in His Word, is a perfect plan! Those who follow His plan enjoy His blessings and His peace even in the deepest and darkest trials. Where is your gaze today? Lot's wife had a problem with her focus. Her body was out of Sodom, but her heart was still there. I am reminded of a song by David Baroni: “Lord, You took me out of Egypt. Now take Egypt out of me. You delivered me from Pharaoh. Now set me free from me. And let my heart become a promised land. Where the desert used to be. Lord, You took me out of Egypt. Now take Egypt out of me”. Do you keep looking back?

PRAYER THOUGHT

Lord, You took me out of Egypt, now take Egypt out of me.

Wednesday 9th September

LOT'S DAUGHTERS

Lot and his two daughters left Zoar and settled in the mountains...One day the older daughter said to the younger, "Our father is old, and there is no man around here to give us children – as is the custom all over the earth."

Genesis 19:30,31 NIV

Finally, we come to Lot's daughters. What a story. It's about the origin of the Moabites and the Ammonites, which would be very important for the history of Israel. But it's about more than just a historical lesson. Often when we think of *chapter 19*, we remember Sodom and Gomorrah, and we want to stop there, and forget the last section. But here's the lesson from *verses 30 through 38*: You can take God's people out of Sodom, but there still may be the spirit of Sodom in God's people. Which brings us to the expression "as is the custom all over the earth." The eldest daughter was thinking about their future. They chose to walk not by faith, but only by sight. For as far as they know, all the men are gone. How are they going to have children? How are they going to have purpose? How are they going to extend their father's line? They get him so drunk two nights in a row and lay with him and produce offspring, unbelievably so, by their father. Do you recall when Lot was in a difficult situation. He wanted to preserve his guests, and so he's willing to give up his daughters. Now his daughters are in a difficult situation, they want to preserve their lineage, and so they're willing to give up their sexual purity. The seeds of walking by sight, not by faith, always bring an unwanted harvest!

PRAYER THOUGHT

Lord, You have called us to walk by faith and not by sight.

Thursday 10th September

SIN AND THE SAINT

Now Abraham moved on from there into the region of the Negev and lived between Kadesh and Shur. For a while he stayed in Gerar, and there Abraham said of his wife Sarah, "She is my sister."

Genesis 20:1,2 NIV

G*enesis chapter 20* portrays a horrible failure in the life of one of the Lord's choice servants, known as "the friend of God." If you remember Abraham's journey down into Egypt in *Genesis 12:10-20*, you will notice some similarities between this chapter and *chapter 12*. It is never pleasant to see failure in the life of one of the Lord's children. What a blessing it is to see that the Lord, through the Scriptures does not sweep Abraham's sin under the carpet. I am grateful that the Lord saw fit to record the event in the pages of Scripture. I am grateful because, like Abraham, I struggle with sin as I am sure you do too. What we need in the midst of our struggle is some encouragement! What we need is the blessed assurance that we have hope in the midst of our failures! This chapter offers that hope to our hearts! It may seem like this is a chapter of darkness, gloom and failure, but it is a chapter filled with hope and help for you and me. Abraham is 100 years old when the event in this chapter occurs. When he did this same thing in *Genesis 12*, he was just beginning his walk with the Lord. Here, he should be at the height of his maturity as a believer. Abraham was still prone to failure, as are we. But there is grace!

PRAYER THOUGHT

Lord, may we always be aware that we are not beyond sin in our lives.

Friday 11th September

SIN DOESN'T HAVE AN EXPIRATION DATE

For a while he stayed in Gerar, and there Abraham said of his wife Sarah, "She is my sister." *Genesis 20:2 NIV*

Remember that Abraham is 100 years old when this event occurs. When he did this same thing in *Genesis 12*, he was just beginning his walk with the Lord. Here, he should be at the height of his maturity as a believer. This is a sin Abraham has carried with him for many decades. (See *Genesis 20:13*) For us the point is clear. There will never be a time when we will be beyond falling! Therefore, we need to avoid some of the mistakes that Abraham made. May we never stop trusting the Lord to take care of us. Why was Abraham in Gerar? In *Genesis 12*, he went because of a famine, not believing that the Lord would take care of him. This time, we are not told why he went. He probably thought that all the area would be burned up. When we come to the place where we no longer trust the Lord to meet our needs and to get us through the trials of life, we are headed for disaster! Abraham had a fear that some man would kill him so that he could have Sarah. When he felt this fear, he was inclined to lie to save his hide, not believing that the Lord would be able to take care of him. If we know that we have a problem in some area of our lives, we are foolish to place ourselves in a position to be tempted! When temptation comes, we need to be like Joseph: Run! (see *Genesis 39*). May we never come to think that we have arrived at a place where we cannot sin, or where we are free from the temptation to commit a particular sin. As sure as we let down our guard, we are headed for trouble.

PRAYER THOUGHT

Lord, teach us not to drop our guard and to flee temptation.

Saturday 12th September

SIN CANNOT OVERCOME GRACE

“Then Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech, his wife and his female slaves so they could have children again.”

Genesis 20:17 NIV

Even though Abraham is clearly out of the Lord's will at this time in his life, he is still enjoying the Lord's blessings! That may mess up our theology, but it is still true! You see, even when Abraham is in a place of his own choosing and is not doing what God asked him to do, he is still being blessed by the Lord. Look at the blessings that came his way. The Lord forgave him of his sins as implied in *verse 17*. The Lord protected him from harm in *verses 2-9, 18*. The Lord blessed him Financially in *verses 14-16*. The Lord used Abraham for His Glory (*verse 17*). What does this teach us? Simply the truth that who we are in Christ Jesus cannot be invalidated by our sin! We all know that the Lord disciplines His children as we are reminded in *Hebrews 12:6-12*. However, how many of us could testify to the truth that there have been times when we were miles away from the Lord and He still blessed our lives! What is this? Nothing less than grace! This just serves to remind us that our Lord deals with us based on who we are rather than based on what we do! BUT this does not give us a license to sin! After all, those who have been saved by the grace of the Lord are going to want to serve the Lord and will not rest until things are right between them and the Lord. It is also true that after a while God will deal directly and completely with the sin that resides within our hearts. Praise to our Lord, even our sin is unable to separate us from the love we have in Jesus Christ (*Romans 8:38-39*)!

PRAYER THOUGHT

Lord, saved by Your grace means we desire to always be right with You.

Sunday 13th September

SIN CANNOT DERAIL GOD'S PLAN

"And Abimelech asked Abraham, "What was your reason for doing this?""
Genesis 20:10 NIV

When Abraham left the promised land to enter Gerar, he placed the plan of the Lord in jeopardy. The Lord had promised to send the promised seed within a year, *Genesis 18:10-14*. Abraham showed very poor judgment! If Abimelech had been allowed to sleep with Sarah, it could have short-circuited the Lord's plan. But the Scriptures tell us that the Lord prevented anything like that from taking place! Another problem is the fact that Abraham is the sole representative of the Lord Almighty, *verse 7*. He has been commissioned to be a blessing to all the families of the earth. Instead of being a blessing and a witness for the Lord, Abraham's life could have been a hindrance to prevent Abimelech from coming to the Lord. Despite Abraham's sin, the Lord spoke to Abimelech and dealt with him anyway, *verses 6-7*. Regardless of what we do, the Lord's plan will be accomplished! You and I cannot hinder the Lord from doing His work! We might miss out on the blessing of being a part of what He is doing, but God will accomplish His will in the church and in the world whether we cooperate or not! There is no indication that Abraham ever acknowledged his sin or repented of it! But think about this: Abraham's sin was used as testimony to the greatness of the Lord Almighty. Abimelech would have never known that the Lord was the Lord of mercy, grace, forgiveness and restoration if that old saint had never fallen into sin! But, because he did, the Lord was able to demonstrate His power through forgiving and restoring Abraham by grace. Let us never forget that sin has consequences!

PRAYER THOUGHT

Lord, because of Your grace our sin cannot derail Your plans.

Monday 14th September

SIN CANNOT BE HIDDEN

Abraham replied, "I said to myself, 'There is surely no fear of God in this place, and they will kill me because of my wife.'"

Genesis 20:11 NIV

Do you remember the story of "The Emperor's New Clothes". Sin is just like that. It attempts to camouflage itself, but it never realizes that its camouflage is flimsy and transparent. In fact, everyone can see through it, except the sinner. When Abraham is confronted by his sin, he does not repent, but instead he offers up excuses. They aren't much, but they are the same one's people still use today. Abraham claimed that he had acted out of fear. It wasn't fear that caused this terrible event, it was a lack of faith! He twisted the facts (*verse 12*). Sarah was his sister, but she was more than that, she was his wife! He hid behind his past failures (*verse 13*). He tells the king that this is the way we have always done it. Abraham's response to being confronted is to attempt to hide behind some very flimsy excuses. Like the Emperor, Abraham did not even realize that he was fully exposed. When we sin and are found out, we always try to make excuses for our behaviour. There are a thousand ways we can handle sin, but only one way will bring cleansing, restoration and the blessing of the Lord. Sin must be confessed! It must be dragged kicking and screaming into the open and it must be exposed for what it is: black, dirty and wicked! This is the Lord's way, read *1 John 1:9*. What excuses are we hiding our behaviour behind? We will never get past our sin until we can see it for ourselves and deal with it the Lord's way!

PRAYER THOUGHT

Lord, thank You that we can never hide our sin from You.

Tuesday 15th September

ABIMELECH

But God came to Abimelech in a dream one night and said to him, "You are as good as dead because of the woman you have taken; she is a married woman." *Genesis 20:3 NIV*

The Lord warned king Abimelech of judgment. He was in danger of dying because he was about to commit adultery with Sarah. This is serious in the eyes of the Lord. The world of Abraham's day was an immoral world. People did their own thing, did what they wanted when they wanted. One wife for one man was a rarity, if it existed at all. But again, we see the Lord's attitude in dealing with Abimelech, His laws still stood. Abimelech was as good as dead if he touched Sarah. He appealed to the Lord. He claimed that he and his people were innocent and blameless, for he had not gone near Sarah. Moreover, he had no idea that she was Abraham's wife, for they had both claimed to be brother and sister (*verses 4-5*). It is interesting to note that Abimelech called God "the Lord" (Adonai). The Hebrew word means Lord of All. Abimelech apparently was God-fearing and recognized that the God of his dream was the Lord of all. This is seen in the fact that Abimelech acknowledged that the Lord had the power over all persons and nations. As well as the question he asked: Was the Lord going to destroy an innocent nation, him and his people (*verse 4*)? Abimelech also acknowledged that the Lord was just and righteous, He did not punish people unjustly. Abimelech acknowledged that the Lord must know that he had acted in the integrity of his heart, that his conscience was clear and his hands clean in the whole affair.

PRAYER THOUGHT

Lord, as One who knows all things, You are still just and righteous.

Wednesday 16th September

THE LORD REVEALED

Then God said to him in the dream, “Yes, I know you did this with a clear conscience, and so I have kept you from sinning against Me. That is why I did not let you touch her.”

Genesis 20:6 NIV

The Lord revealed Himself to Abimelech as the true God (Ha 'elohim). The Hebrew means the true God. Abimelech was not only talking with the Lord of All (Adonai) in his dream, but he was talking with the true God (Ha 'elohim). The Lord revealed three things to Abimelech. He, the true Lord has knowledge of all, He knew that the king was innocent. He has power over all persons and their affairs; He had kept Abimelech from touching Sarah. The Lord had afflicted the king and his household with some kind of disease that kept them from having sex and bearing children. The true Lord expected and demanded that the king not commit adultery, and return Sarah to Abraham (*verse 7*). He told Abimelech that Abraham was a prophet and that Abraham would pray for the king's healing. But if he refused to return Sarah, he would die, he and his whole family. The point is this, the Lord cared for Abraham and Sarah and He could not allow His promise to be stopped. The promised son had to be born through Sarah. He had to intervene on behalf of Abraham and Sarah despite them not being honest. The Lord miraculously stepped in to save Sarah from being touched by the king. The Lord will do whatever is necessary to demonstrate His care for us, even intervene miraculously.

PRAYER THOUGHT

Lord, thank You that You will do whatever it takes to care for us.

Thursday 17th September

ABRAHAM'S PRAYER

“Then Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech, his wife and his female slaves so they could have children again.”

Genesis 20:17 NIV

Abraham's act of praying for Abimelech serves as a profound reminder that our faith can have a ripple effect on others. It challenges us to think about how we can intercede for those around us – friends, family, even strangers – who need healing or restoration. Abraham's actions encourage us to acknowledge our own imperfections and the ways in which our actions might affect others. Just as Abraham's deception led to a crisis, our choices can have far-reaching consequences. Recognizing this, we are called to foster integrity and seek God's guidance in our decisions, understanding that He is always ready to restore and heal. The Lord's response to Abraham's prayer reassures us that no situation is beyond His reach. It invites us to trust in His sovereignty, knowing that He can bring healing and restoration, even in the most challenging circumstances. Despite the failures of Abraham and Sarah, they still became instruments of the Lord's grace and mercy. May we grasp the fact that despite our own failures we can become vessels of the Lord's grace, committed to praying for others, fostering healing, and embodying the compassion that is central to our faith journey. Let us never forget, even when we cave in to the pressure of this world and its attractions, our Lord will twist, turn, and manoeuvre to work all things out for our good and His glory.

PRAYER THOUGHT

Lord, despite our failures You will work all things for Your glory.

Friday 18th September

THE GREAT DAY

“Now the Lord was gracious to Sarah as He had said, and the Lord did for Sarah what He had promised. Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the very time God had promised him.” *Genesis 21:1,2 NIV*

At last, the great day came: the promised son was born. The hope and longing were finally realized. It had been twenty-five years since the Lord had given Abraham the promise of a son, twenty-five long years. The waiting was over. Sarah bore Abraham a son, the promised son, the son from whom kings and nations were to be born and from whom the Saviour of the world was to come. The Lord always fulfils His promises. He fulfilled His promise to Abraham, and He will fulfil His promises to us. How does the Lord fulfil His promises? He proves Himself, His Word and power. He uses His power to do exactly as He has promised. The Lord kept His Word. He had promised a son to Abraham and Sarah, and He gave them a son. He did exactly what He had promised He would do. The birth was a miracle. Abraham and Sarah were both too old to bear children. The birth was controlled by the Lord from start to finish, controlled by His power. He kept His Word, His promises, but He sometimes delays His promises just as He did with Abraham. It is in the delays we grow in our faith. Learning more endurance and hardness. For whatever reasons the Lord may not immediately fulfil His promises in our lives. Two facts are always true: God is faithful to His promises. God will always do exactly what He promises He will do.

PRAYER THOUGHT

Lord, thank You that You keep Your promises.

Saturday 19th September

ISAAC

“Abraham gave the name Isaac to the son Sarah bore him. When his son Isaac was eight days old, Abraham circumcised him, as God commanded him.” *Genesis 21:3,4 NIV*

Abraham's joy can just be imagined. Remember when the Lord first told Abraham that the time had finally come, the son was now to be born, Abraham fell on his face in worship (*Genesis 17:17*). He was so full of joy that he burst forth in laughter, a laughter of faith. The Lord was so pleased with this experience of worship and joy that He instructed Abraham to memorialize the event forever in the name of the child. The name Isaac means "he laughs," "he joys." The long wait for a son was over. Abraham's joy must have broken loose in a praise and worship of the Lord beyond expression. It is not Abraham's joy that is stressed in these verses. It's Abraham's obedience to the Lord. This is very significant, for the Lord would not have fulfilled His promise to Abraham if Abraham had not been an obedient follower of the Lord. Abraham obeyed the Lord all throughout his life, not perfectly, but consistently and diligently. Therefore, the Lord was able to fulfil His promises in the life of Abraham. Abraham circumcised Isaac when he was eight days old. This, too, was in obedience to the Lord. The Lord had instituted the ritual of circumcision with Abraham some years before (*Genesis 17:10-14*). Abraham recognized his dependence upon the Lord. The Lord and the Lord alone had given him a son. Obedience enables us to receive the promises of the Lord. This does not mean that we must be perfect but believe the Lord and diligently seek to follow Him.

PRAYER THOUGHT

Lord, may we diligently seek to follow You, even in our failings.

Sunday 20th September

JOY

Sarah said, “God has brought me laughter, and everyone who hears about this will laugh with me.” And she added, “Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age.”

Genesis 21:6,7 NIV

The Lord stirs joy and rejoicing over His power. Sarah was just bubbling over with joy. She had given birth to the promised son. Remember her response when the Lord first told her that she was to bear the promised son: she had laughed – probably a snickering laugh – in unbelief. She was about ninety years old, well beyond childbearing years. The thought that she could bear a child was just beyond any possibility in her mind (*Genesis 18:9-15*). Here Sarah was, holding the child, having given birth at ninety years of age. Her joy and praise focused entirely upon the Lord and His power, upon the Lord and what He had done: It was the Lord who had made her laugh. It was the Lord who had caused everyone to rejoice with her, everyone who had heard of the promised son. At first, Sarah did not believe the Lord's promise concerning the promised son. Nevertheless, the Lord fulfilled His promise, and the godly line was preserved, the line through whom the promised seed, the Saviour of the world, was to come. God gave Sarah a son named Isaac. Isaac had two sons, Jacob and Esau. Jacob became the father of the twelve sons who would give rise to the twelve tribes of Israel. Israel, some centuries later, would give the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, to the world. The Lord always keeps His promises.

PRAYER THOUGHT

Lord, what joy arises within us as we see You keeping Your promises.

Monday 21st September

CONFLICT

“The child grew and was weaned, and on the day Isaac was weaned Abraham held a great feast.” *Genesis 21:8 NIV*

Very simply, sin caused the conflict within Abraham's family, and sin is usually the cause of conflict among most of us. It began with the birth of Ishmael, arising from Abraham and Sarah being impatient with the Lord. Abraham threw a great feast for Isaac when he was weaned from his mother's breast. It was a great feast! This was apparently a Near East custom of that day when a child reached 2-3 years old. During the feast, Sarah saw Ishmael mocking Isaac. Ridiculing, poking fun, being mean-spirited and bitter toward him. Remember, Isaac was just a baby, two or three years old, and Ishmael was sixteen or seventeen years old. Just imagine a young man that old mocking and ridiculing a baby. Ishmael always displayed bitterness and anger toward Isaac; he was always mocking and being mean-spirited to the baby. What would cause Ishmael to be so mean to Isaac? Because Abraham was always heaping attention upon Isaac, the attention that Ishmael had once received before Isaac's birth. Abraham's attention was now split two ways, and he was more focused upon the baby, Isaac, than upon Ishmael. Ishmael should have understood, he was old enough to know that the baby was bound to become the focus of attention. He was old enough to understand that the baby needed more attention, that the baby was bound to be a special joy to Abraham because he was born in Abraham's old age, that the baby was the promised child, miraculously given by God. But Ishmael refused to accept the baby's presence within the family, refused to accept Isaac as the promised child.

PRAYER THOUGHT

Lord, may we never forget the seeds of sin bring a harvest.

Tuesday 22nd September

CONFLICT CONTINUED

“But Sarah saw that the son whom Hagar the Egyptian had borne to Abraham was mocking.” *Genesis 21:9 NIV*

Sarah saw the mockery time and again. Apparently, the ridicule reached a peak at the great feast celebrating Isaac's weaning, and Sarah witnessed the ugly scene. It was all she could take, enough was enough, and she boiled over. She demanded that Abraham send away, cast out, drive out, get rid of the slave woman and her son, Ishmael. Ishmael had sinned through his mockery and jealousy and his failure to trust the will and care of the Lord. Now Sarah was sinning by over-reacting. There is a huge difference between a reaction and a response. A response arises from carefully thinking through the actions one is going to pursue and the implications of those actions. A reaction is the opposite and usually has negative results. Sarah was demanding a cruel solution to the conflict. She took matters into her own hands instead of seeking the Lord for an answer to the conflict. She was overtaken by a spirit of distrust toward the Lord and of cruelty toward Ishmael and his mother, Hagar. Remember, Hagar had been Sarah's personal servant for decades. But Sarah was apparently so overtaken with anger that she just ignored the Lord and reacted against Ishmael and Hagar. The effect upon Abraham was devastating, for he loved Ishmael, loved him with all his heart. What we learn about conflict and strife - it is very dangerous. Only the right attitude is necessary to handle conflict.

PRAYER THOUGHT

Lord, teach us to learn the difference between reaction and a response.

Wednesday 23rd September

THE RESPONSE

“The matter distressed Abraham greatly because it concerned his son.”

Genesis 21:11 NIV

Being forced to send a child away is almost more than any loving parent can bear. Sarah's demand to get rid of Ishmael was a heavy pressure upon Abraham. But the Lord knew. He knew all about Abraham's heavy heart and distress, all about his perplexity, just not knowing what to do. No doubt, Abraham prayed and discussed the matter with the Lord. He heard and cared about Abraham's need and set about to meet Abraham's need. He spoke to Abraham, encouraging him and relieving the distress and grief. We need to take note when the Lord spoke to Abraham: at night (*see verse 14*). Apparently, Abraham was doing what we all do when we are under heavy distress: pray. He was either lying in bed or up during the night, praying and thinking the conflict through. And the Lord met him and met his need. As for Sarah, she was right. Ishmael needed to be sent away, for his mocking and ridicule was too imbedded in him to change. The conflict would only grow worse. But Sarah's attitude of cruelty toward Ishmael was wrong, and her failure to seek and trust the Lord for an answer was wrong. She had broken Abraham's heart and caused heavy distress and grief for him. The Lord reminded Abraham of His great purpose in Isaac, the promised son. The Lord will always speak to us through His Word meeting the needs of our hearts, relieving our distress and grief, relieving whatever conflict wages within our souls. It encouraged Abraham and it encourages us.

PRAYER THOUGHT

Lord, as we turn to You in our conflict, You guide and encourage us.

Thursday 24th September

THE LORD'S ASSURANCE

But God said to him, “Do not be so distressed about the boy and your slave woman. Listen to whatever Sarah tells you, because it is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.”

Genesis 21:12 NIV

The Lord assured Abraham that the conflict would be resolved. Ishmael would be looked after and richly blessed by the Lord. He would grow into a great nation of people. The Lord would see to it. Not for Ishmael's sake but for Abraham's sake. Ishmael's egotistical, superior attitude over Isaac had apparently become imbedded and extremely sinful. Consequently, the Lord could not act for Ishmael's sake, He could not sanction Ishmael's sinful ways by acting in his behalf. But Abraham was a different matter, he loved and followed the Lord; therefore, for Abraham's sake, He would bless Abraham's son Ishmael. The point is the Lord knew all about the conflict, all of Abraham's distress and perplexity, that he did not know what to do, that he did not know how to handle the conflict. The Lord reminded Abraham of His great purpose and assured Abraham that the conflict would be resolved. The Lord would take care of Ishmael and bless him. The Lord's answer to conflict is the same for every generation, for every one of us. No matter what the conflict is the answer is found in His Word, the Scriptures. Our task is to search His Word for the peace we need and for the answers to our questions. No matter what the solution to the conflict may be, the Lord will take care of us and our needs if we will trust and believe Him, just as Abraham did.

PRAYER THOUGHT

Lord, as we search Your Word in our conflict, You give us an answer.

Friday 25th September

THE RESULTS

“Early the next morning Abraham took some food and a skin of water and gave them to Hagar. He set them on her shoulders and then sent her off with the boy.”

Genesis 21:14 NIV

These were the results of the conflict and they were devastating. There were the broken hearts, the separation, and divorce. The conflict was deeply imbedded within Ishmael's heart, apparently so imbedded that he would never change. God knew this, so the only way the conflict could ever be resolved was for Ishmael and Hagar, his mother, to be sent away. Picture the scene as Abraham arose early in the morning, taking bread and water to Hagar. There was bound to be tenderness, warmth, love, and brokenness as Abraham set the two leather straps over the shoulders of Hagar and Ishmael and sent them away. The piercing pain and hurt must have been almost unbearable. The results of conflict are often devastating. Many have had their hearts broken because of conflict, conflict that led to separation, divorce, the loss of a loved one. Scripture does not say where Hagar was heading, but she was probably traveling back home to Egypt. For some reason, she lost her way. She was at a loss, not knowing where to go or what to do next, all because of the conflict. Hagar's experience pictures the experience of so many who are wandering about in the world, lost, not knowing where to go or what to do next – all because of some conflict. The loneliness and desperation of the situation are often almost unbearable. Yet all is not lost for the Lord never abandons us!

PRAYER THOUGHT

Lord, amid our lostness and loneliness You are there.

Saturday 26th September

CONQUEST OVER CONFLICT

God heard the boy crying, and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, "What is the matter, Hagar? Do not be afraid; God has heard the boy crying as he lies there."

Genesis 21:17 NIV

Hagar wept bitterly and lifted her voice in prayer. Hagar and Ishmael would soon die, all because of the conflict that raged within the soul of Ishmael. Hagar had reached the end of her strength, done all she could. She simply could do no more, not within her own strength. Sitting there, she wept bitterly and did the only thing she could do, lift her voice and cry out to the Lord in prayer. Too often, this is the position we need to be in before we will cry out to the Lord. At the end of our rope, no strength, no way to do anything within ourselves. It is in such moments we discover that the Lord loves us and cares for us. Let us, therefore, cry out to the Lord, whether early or late, whether facing mild or desperate need. The Lord heard Hagar's prayer and spoke to her. He gave her His Word to meet her need. The Lord stirred her to think about her problem. "What is the problem, Hagar?" When we face problems and crises, we desperately need to go to God's Word for guidance, crying out to Him for help and direction. We need to do what the Lord was stirring Hagar to do: think through the problem facing us. If we sincerely seek the Lord in prayer and in His Word, thinking through the problem to the best of our ability, He will help us. We will be able to conquer and triumph over all conflicts, problems, and crises.

PRAYER THOUGHT

Lord, thank You for meeting us when we have no strength.

Sunday 27th September

TWICE HEARD

“Do not be afraid; God has heard the boy crying as he lies there. Lift the boy up and take him by the hand, for I will make him into a great nation.” *Genesis 21:17,18 NIV*

Apparently, Ishmael was also praying, weeping, and crying out to the Lord. Most likely, he was asking for forgiveness, knowing that it was his mocking and ridicule that had brought him and his mother to the point of death. The Lord stresses the fact that He heard the voice of Ishmael. He says this two times. This suggests the utter necessity of repentance, of crying out to the Lord to forgive our sins when we have done wrong. It is then that the Lord hears us, for we cannot hide sin in our hearts and expect the Lord to listen! Hagar experienced the Lord's provision, encouraging her was not to give up. She was to arise, walk over to Ishmael, and lift him into her hands. For the Lord was going to use the young man to found a great nation. Hagar was prompted to act. She had to obey and trust Him before she would see the Lord's answer to her prayer. So it is with us. We are called to show our trust in the Lord by obeying Him. It is then that we will experience His marvellous provisions. Hagar obeyed the Lord, rising to a new beginning. When she arose and began walking over to Ishmael, the Lord opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water. The desperate prayer of repentance and the act of obedience will lead to the Lord's provision and beginning of something new in our lives.

PRAYER THOUGHT

Lord, thank You, that repentance and obedience brings Your provision.

Monday 28th September

WHAT IF?

“God was with the boy as he grew up. He lived in the desert and became an archer. While he was living in the Desert of Paran, his mother got a wife for him from Egypt.”

Genesis 21:20,21 NIV

What if Hagar had not obeyed the Lord? Remember her exhaustion and thirst. She could have easily said that she just could not do any more. If Hagar had failed at this, failed to obey the Lord, she and Ishmael would, most likely, not have been saved. They would have perished. But she obeyed, did exactly what the Lord said. The Lord calls us to obey Him. We obey, then He helps and blesses us. Hagar and Ishmael received the Lord's continued, unbroken care and provision. Very simply, the Lord was with Ishmael as he grew into full manhood. This strongly points to Ishmael's repentance and crying out for forgiveness. Hagar and Ishmael accepted their God-given call, environment and life. They did not travel on down into Egypt but remained in the desert of Paran. Why? Scripture does not say, but the Lord must have given Hagar some direction about the matter. Whatever the case, the point to see is this: they accepted the Lord's call to live apart from Abraham. They adjusted and adapted to a most harsh environment, living out in the desert. Ishmael had to become an archer to hunt and feed himself and his mother. Hagar got Ishmael a wife from Egypt. Conflict can be conquered and overcome. How? Through prayer, listening to the Word of the Lord, thinking through the problem. In repentance and obedience, receiving the Lord's continued, unbroken care. Accepting the call of the Lord wherever we are and experiencing His provision. God does promise us victory!

PRAYER THOUGHT

Lord, disobedience does not lead to life, but obedience does.

Tuesday 29th September

BUILDING GOOD RELATIONSHIPS

At that time Abimelech and Phicol the commander of his forces said to Abraham, “God is with you in everything you do.”

Genesis 21:22 NIV

Human relationships are falling apart. Lust, greed, and selfishness are producing a society of immoral, lawless, and power-hungry people. Good relationships are a rarity. Just think about it: how few good relationships really exist. How many good and healthy relationships, do we honestly know? Whether it be between husband and wife, parents and children, government officials, workers, nations. There are some good relationships within each of these, within each institution of society. But we must all admit that there are far too few. If there has ever been a time when we needed to tackle the problem of disintegrating relationships, it is now. In *Genesis 21* from *verse 22* onwards, we are given steps on how to build good relationships, through an event of a king seeking to build a strong relationship with a powerful sheik, Abraham. The first step in building good relationships is developing a godly, consistent testimony before others. It had been about four years since Abimelech, the king of the Philistine territory, had given Abraham permission to live wherever he wished throughout the land. During the four years, Abimelech noticed a striking fact that the Lord seemed to be with Abraham in everything he did. No matter what Abraham did, the Lord was with him - guiding, encouraging, and blessing him.

PRAYER THOUGHT

Lord, may others see that You are with us in everything we do.

Wednesday 30th September

WHAT DID ABIMELECH NOTICE?

At that time Abimelech and Phicol the commander of his forces said to Abraham, “God is with you in everything you do.”

Genesis 21:22 NIV

What kind of things was Abimelech noticing? It had to be things that we notice about people. He noticed Abraham's dealings with other people. Abraham was kind, fair, and honest in all his dealings. He noticed Abraham's business interests. Abraham made the Lord a partner in his business, and as all his business interests grew, he gave the credit to the Lord. He noticed Abraham's worship and witness. Abraham was consistent in his worship and witness for the Lord. Abraham sought to live a moral and just life, a life that brought honour to the righteousness of the Lord he proclaimed. Abraham's testimony of faith was clearly seen, as he bore testimony to the Living Lord. Abraham was living for God, living a consistent life for the Lord, and Abimelech noticed his life. The Lord was with Abraham in all that he did, richly blessing him. Abraham was apparently the richest and most powerful sheik throughout the land, so powerful that kings sought his friendship. Abimelech wanted to make sure that the good relationship between him and Abraham continued. He wanted to establish a permanent relationship with Abraham, a peace treaty, a non-aggression pact. So, he took his military chief of staff with him to meet Abraham. We need to take note of what Abimelech said to Abraham, what it was that had caught his eye and brought him to Abraham. It was Abraham's striking testimony for the Lord.

PRAYER THOUGHT

Lord, let our testimony for You, create healthy relationships.

Continued from page 7

Again, the cross is the ultimate revelation of God's steadfast love. There, Jesus took our iniquities, endured our affliction, and shattered the gates of death itself. His love is not deterred by our failures; it pursues us, heals us, and draws us into His presence. When we feel the poverty of our love for God, let us not turn inward but upward, fixing our gaze on the One who loved us first (*1 John 4:19*). His love is the fuel for our love, the source of our strength, and the song of our salvation.

Oh, let us know His steadfast love, rest in it, and tell of it to the world. For in His love, we find our salvation, our strength, our sanctification, and our deepest satisfaction. "Let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love, for his wondrous works to the children of man!" (*Psalms 107:21*).

Prayer: Heavenly Father, we thank You for Your steadfast love, which never fails and never fades. Thank You for the cross, where Your love broke through our sin and shame, delivering us from destruction. Forgive us for focusing on our weak love instead of Your great love. Help us to gaze upon Jesus, to rest in His finished work, and to respond with cries of trust and songs of joy. May our lives proclaim Your wondrous deeds to the praise of Your glory and grace. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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1. Great is thy faithfulness, O God, my Father;
There is no shadow of turning with thee.
Thou changest not, thy compassions, they fail not;
As thou hast been, thou forever wilt be.

Refrain:

- Great is thy faithfulness,
Great is thy faithfulness,
Morning by morning new mercies I see.
All I have needed thy hand hast provided;
Great is thy faithfulness,
Lord unto me.
2. Summer and winter and springtime and harvest,
Sun, moon, and stars in their courses above
Join with all nature in manifold witness
To thy great faithfulness, mercy, and love. **[Refrain]**
 3. Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
Blessings all mine and ten thousand beside. **[Refrain]**

Thursday 1st October

A STRONG COMMITMENT

“Now swear to me here before God that you will not deal falsely with me or my children or my descendants. Show to me and the country where you now reside as a foreigner the same kindness I have shown to you.” *Genesis 21:23 NIV*

Building good relationships is making a strong commitment that one will not deal falsely with other people. Abimelech had been fair, honest, and just with Abraham. Four years earlier, he had returned Sarah to Abraham and given him a large herd of oxen and sheep, and he had given Abraham the right to live any place he wished within Philistine territory. Abimelech had done everything he could to build a good relationship with Abraham. Now, he asked Abraham to seal their relationship with a permanent peace treaty. He wanted Abraham, himself, their sons, and grandchildren to always live in peace. He wanted the land to be protected from the ravages of injustices and war. Abraham swore to never deal falsely with Abimelech nor with his descendants. He swore to always be fair, honest, and just with Abimelech and his people. Building good relationships is making a strong commitment to never deal falsely with people. We destroy relationships if we deal falsely with people, if we are unfair, dishonest and unjust. Paul reminds us in *Ephesians 4:25*, “Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbour, for we are all members of one body.” Let us make a strong commitment to be fair, honest, and just with people in all our dealings. This is true of nations and of us as individuals.

PRAYER THOUGHT

Lord, may we seek to never deal falsely with all people.

Friday 2nd October

OPEN AND HONEST

Then Abraham complained to Abimelech about a well of water that Abimelech's servants had seized. But Abimelech said, "I don't know who has done this. You did not tell me, and I heard about it only today". *Genesis 21:25,26 NIV*

Building good relationships means being open and honest. A problem had arisen that Abimelech knew nothing about. Some of his workers had seized a well that Abraham had apparently dug for his own herds and workers. Remember, the land belonged to Abimelech and his people. The king had only allowed Abraham to live there as a good gesture. Sitting there negotiating the treaty, Abraham ran the risk of bad feelings arising if he brought up the well matter. But if he failed to mention the seizure, it could lead to far more trouble in the future. There would be an unfair, dishonest, and unjust matter that was not settled at the sealing of the treaty. Abimelech's workers could interpret Abraham's silence as weakness, and seize other wells in the future which would lead to a growing, perhaps explosive problem in the future. Abraham knew this. The only way to maintain a good relationship with Abimelech was to be completely open and honest. Therefore, he shared the seizure with Abimelech. We must be open and honest if we wish to build good relationships. Lies and deception only destroy relationships. This is true in business, lies and deception will destroy business relationships. This is true in all relationships of life. We must all be open and honest in order to build good relationships. Paul reminds us in *Romans 12:17*, "Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone."

PRAYER THOUGHT

Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of Truth, lead us to be open and honest.

Saturday 3rd October

GIVING AND SHARING

Abraham set apart seven ewe lambs from the flock, and Abimelech asked Abraham, "What is the meaning of these seven ewe lambs you have set apart by themselves?" He replied, "Accept these seven lambs from my hand as a witness that I dug this well." *Genesis 21:28-30 NIV*

Building good relationships means giving and sharing with one another. Abimelech had already made a gift to Abraham when he returned Sarah and gave him a herd of oxen and sheep. He had also given Abraham the right to live wherever he wished within Philistine territory. Now, to seal the good relationship between them, Abraham made a large gift of sheep and oxen to Abimelech. They then made a covenant between themselves, perhaps sacrificing several of the animals. But this was not all. Abraham made a very special gift of seven female lambs to Abimelech. He made a special gift to help overcome the dispute that had arisen over the well. Abraham reached out beyond what the covenant relationship called for. He made a very special gift to establish their relationship more firmly. Giving and sharing always binds people together. As the Lord has been so giving and sharing His Son with us, let us do the same. We are reminded of these words of Paul to Timothy (*1 Timothy 6:17-18*), "Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share."

PRAYER THOUGHT

Lord, as You are so giving and generous, may we be the same.

Sunday 4th October

OUR COMMITMENT

“So that place was called Beersheba, because the two men swore an oath there.”

Genesis 21:31 NIV

Building good relationships means consecrating and remembering one's commitment. Abraham named the place where the covenant was sealed Beersheba. Abraham was memorializing his commitment by naming the place where the commitment was made. The commitment was of critical importance, and Abraham wanted to keep it ever before his mind. Every time he thought or heard of the place Beersheba, he would remember his commitment and renew it before the Lord. May we be reminded each time we celebrate the Sacrament of Holy Communion, of our Lord's commitment to us and our commitment to Him. In building good relationships, it is absolutely essential for us to remember our commitment to our Lord and others. When we make a commitment, it is made before the Lord as well as before others. We give our word that we will keep the commitment; therefore, we must remember our commitment and do what we promised. The Scriptures are very clear: “If you make a vow to the Lord your God, do not be slow to pay it, for the Lord your God will certainly demand it of you and you will be guilty of sin.” (*Deuteronomy 23:21*); “All you need to say is simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.” (*Matthew 5:37*). When we fail to abide by our commitment, it creates mistrust, breaking down our relationship with others. Praise the Lord that He never fails to keep His commitment to us.

PRAYER THOUGHT

Lord, as You are committed to us, may we keep our commitments.

Monday 5th October

WORSHIP

“Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba, and there he called on the name of the Lord, the Eternal God.”

Genesis 21:33 NIV

Building good relationships means acknowledging the Lord and our need for His help in building relationships with people. After Abimelech and his military chief left, Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba. This was a small bush or tree that grows well in desert areas. Its leaves often provide shade to desert travellers. Abraham then worshipped the Lord, calling upon the name of the eternal, everlasting LORD. Abraham, was stressing how the Lord took care of him eternally. How the Lord had brought about a permanent, everlasting covenant for him with Abimelech. How much he needed the Lord's help to keep this covenant and to live as he should for the remaining years of his life. We all need the help of our Lord in building good relationships with others. We need His help to build relationships that last and do not end. Relationships that endure and do not give up, that live in peace and not argument. We need His help in showing the love of Christ and not hatred, seeking to build up and not destroy. How do we secure the Lord's help? By doing what Abraham did. Calling upon the name of the Lord, the eternal, everlasting Lord. Ask Him, through the power and ministry of His indwelling Holy Spirit to help us build and maintain good relationships. As Paul declared in *1 Thessalonians 3:12*, “May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you.”

PRAYER THOUGHT

Holy Spirit, through Your power touch our relationship with Your love.

Tuesday 6th October

THE SUPREME TEST

Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied. *Genesis 22:1 NIV*

The Lord tests Abraham, putting him in a severe crisis. Let us be reminded, this was not the only major test or crisis Abraham had to face. The Lord has brought Abraham through four very definite crises, each of which was a real exercise of his soul, a real strain upon his heart. First of all, he was called to leave all of his relatives in Ur of the Chaldees. He was just to leave the whole group. That was a real test for Abraham. He didn't do it very well at the beginning, but, nevertheless, the break finally came. Then there was the test that came with Lot, his nephew. Abraham loved Lot, he wouldn't have been carrying Lot around with him if he hadn't. But the time came when they had to separate, and Lot went down to Sodom. Then there was the test with the son of Hagar, Ishmael. Abraham just cried out to God, "Oh, that Ishmael might live before You!" He loved Ishmael, he hated to be separated from him. Now Abraham comes to this supreme test, the fourth great crisis in his life! He is asked to give up Isaac. Abraham does not quite understand all the details for the very simple reason that God has told him, 'In Isaac your seed shall be called'. Abraham believed God would raise Isaac from the dead (*Hebrews 11:19*), but as far as Abraham is concerned, he is willing to go through with the sacrifice. The challenge of absolute surrender!

PRAYER THOUGHT

All to Jesus I surrender, all to Him I freely give.

Wednesday 7th October

ABSOLUTE SURRENDER

Then God said, “Take your son, your only son, whom you love – Isaac – and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain I will show you.”

Genesis 22:2 NIV

The Lord God asked Abraham to do a most difficult thing. To offer his son as a sacrifice to the Lord, the son whom he loved ever so dearly. We need to take note of how the Lord stressed Abraham's love for his son, “Take your son, your only son, whom you love.” Abraham was given Isaac in his old age. He had been hoping for the promised son for decades, and he had all his dreams wrapped up in him. Why would the Lord demand such a thing from Abraham? Very simply, He was putting Abraham to the supreme test of life, the absolute sacrifice and surrender of himself to the Lord. Step by step the Lord led him to the point of absolute surrender. How? He led Abraham to absolute surrender by taking the most precious thing in his life and leading him to surrender that thing as an offering, as a sacrifice to Him. It was Abraham's heart, his willingness, his spiritual surrender that the Lord was after, not Isaac's life. The Lord always has to use the language and the things of our environment if He wishes His message to be communicated and understood. In Abraham's day the sacrifice of human beings was the supreme act of worship by some of the religions, for example Canaanite religions. When the Lord told Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, Abraham knew exactly what the Lord was saying to him. Abraham knew that the Lord was after the absolute surrender of his heart, his will, his spirit.

PRAYER THOUGHT

All to Jesus I surrender, worldly pleasures all forsaken, take me, Jesus.

Thursday 8th October

KNOWING YOUR OWN HEART

Then God said, “Take your son, your only son, whom you love – Isaac – and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain I will show you.”

Genesis 22:2 NIV

The Lord did not test Abraham that Abraham might prove himself to the Lord. The Lord knew Abraham's heart. For the Lord knows all things. But Abraham needed to know his own heart, and all future believers needed a picture of what absolute surrender to the Lord means, a testimony that a person can love the Lord supremely. We can make an absolute surrender and sacrifice of ourselves to the Lord, and discover that the Lord can take care of us, no matter what may confront us. Thus the testing of Abraham took place in order to show and teach several things to both Abraham and succeeding generations. Abraham demonstrated that a person can know the Lord personally. A person can actually have a personal relationship with the Lord. This is shown by the name used for the Lord - Ha 'Elohim (*Genesis 22:1*). The Hebrew name here stresses the personal, true LORD. It was the personal, true LORD (Ha 'Elohim) who spoke to Abraham, not just the Lord (Elohim, the general name used for God). Abraham demonstrated that a person can love the Lord supremely. A person can love the Lord before all else, even before their son or daughter. Abraham demonstrated that a person can glorify the Lord above all else by obeying the Lord's Word just as it is given, no matter the cost. Abraham demonstrated that a person can be completely surrendered to God and discover one's own heart.

PRAYER THOUGHT

All to Jesus I surrender, make me, Saviour, wholly Thine.

Friday 9th October

THINKING THROUGH

“Early the next morning Abraham got up and loaded his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God had told him about.”

Genesis 22:3 NIV

Absolute surrender means thinking through the sacrifice. The Lord's instructions had pierced Abraham's heart, cut him to the core. He was hurting within, suffering the most severe pain imaginable. His thoughts were bound to be bouncing around wondering, questioning: How could the Lord tell me to offer my son as a sacrifice? Is this not against His law that forbids murder (*Genesis 9:5-6*)? How can I sacrifice my own son, the son of my heart and of my life? Would I not rather die myself than him? Why would the Lord want such a thing? Why, O Lord, why? What about the promise? Lord, you promised and gave Your Word that Isaac was the promised son, that he was to be the father of nations, that through his descendants the promised seed would come, the Saviour of the World? If I sacrifice Isaac, how can all this happen? How can you fulfil your promise? How can I ever face Sarah again, or for that matter, face anyone? And what about my testimony before the world? What are the unbelievers going to think – all those who know me? What kind of testimony will this be to them? Lord, sacrificing Isaac does not match Your promise. I cannot reconcile all this in my mind. How can You fulfil Your promise if I do this thing? How could you ask me to sacrifice Isaac? Abraham's inability to resolve the problem did not keep him from obeying the Lord. What is keeping us from obeying the Lord?

PRAYER THOUGHT

Trust and obey for there is no other way.

Saturday 10th October

THINKING AND OBEYING

“Early the next morning Abraham got up and loaded his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God had told him about.”

Genesis 22:3 NIV

This fact of thinking things through is of extreme importance. While Abraham was thinking through the sacrifice, he was obeying the Lord, and while he was obeying the Lord, he was thinking through the sacrifice. Not understanding the problem did not keep Abraham from obeying the Lord. Abraham was committed to obeying the Lord whether he understood the problem or not. Abraham arose early to begin making preparations. He himself saddled the donkey and cut the wood. He had hundreds of workers, but he did it all himself. Why? He probably did what many of us do when we face problems. He sought solitude in physical work while he thought through the sacrifice and problem. The journey to Moriah took three days. Abraham had three days to think through the sacrifice. Imagine! Three days to either rationalize his way out of the sacrifice or to more deeply surrender himself to the Lord's command. The sacrifice of our lives to the Lord, making an absolute surrender, demands thought, the deepest and most serious thought possible. Any person who hears God's call to absolute surrender, to sacrifice their life totally to the Lord must know what they are doing. They must think through the Lord's call, just what it means to totally sacrifice their life to the Lord. What it means to give up their life, to make an absolute surrender to the Lord. (See *Luke 9:23*).

PRAYER THOUGHT

Lord as we process our absolute surrender, we choose to obey You.

Sunday 11th October

TRUST

He said to his servants, “Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you.”

Genesis 22:5 NIV

Absolute surrender means trusting the Lord and His power to raise up and use the sacrifice. Abraham trusted the Lord and trusted every Word the Lord had said. Abraham believed that God would raise up Isaac from the dead, if need be. An astonishing belief, nevertheless, it is exactly what Scripture says. Abraham instructed the servants to wait at the bottom of the mountain while he and Isaac went to the top and worshipped. He then said that both he and Isaac would return. Abraham was not lying to the men, he believed they both would return. Hebrews tells us what Abraham was thinking: God would raise Isaac from the dead, if need be (*Hebrews 11:17-19*). Abraham knew the Lord's promise was true. His son would live and give rise to nations of people and to the promised seed, the Saviour of the world. Therefore, the Lord would raise Isaac from the dead, if need be, to fulfil His promise. Abraham's trust in the Lord had grown so much that he believed that the Lord would resurrect Isaac. Abraham was learning what total surrender meant. He was casting himself completely upon the Lord and His promise. Let's keep in mind, Abraham had never seen any person raised from the dead. But the thought crossed his mind, and he gave great thought to the idea. He believed that the Lord would raise Isaac to fulfil His promise. What faith! What great belief in the Lord, His promises and His power! Abraham was surrendering to God all the way through this experience.

PRAYER THOUGHT

Lord, we trust Your promises and power in the process of surrender.

Monday 12th October

THE WALK OF FAITH

“Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them went on together.” *Genesis 22:6 NIV*

Abraham and Isaac had a tender walk together up to the top of the mountain. Abraham was bound to be hurting, his heart suffering a piercing pain as though a knife had been thrust into his soul. He would have been preoccupied, in deep, intense thought. As they walked along together, drawing closer to the place of sacrifice, Isaac would have sensed that something was bearing ever so heavily upon his father. Isaac asked where they were going to get a lamb for the sacrifice. Abraham again showed his great trust in the Lord by simply saying that the Lord Himself would provide the lamb for the offering. Abraham knew that the Lord could raise Isaac from the dead if need be. But Abraham also knew that the Lord could stop him and provide a lamb if He so willed. These two beliefs were flooding Abraham's mind. He had no idea what the Lord was going to do, but he trusted Him. He believed that the Lord would do whatever was necessary to fulfil His promises. What is it that stirs us to sacrifice our lives to the Lord, to make an absolute surrender to Him? Trust! Believing that He has the power to raise us up and use us. And He does! He does have the power to take our lives, raise them up, and use them for His glory throughout the whole world. Will we trust Him?

PRAYER THOUGHT

Lord, we trust You to take our lives and use them for Your glory.

Tuesday 13th October

FOLLOWING THROUGH

“When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.”

Genesis 22:9,10 NIV

Absolute surrender means following through with the sacrifice. It had been three days since the Lord had instructed Abraham to make the supreme sacrifice, to offer his own son as a sacrifice to Him. Abraham had three long days to agonize over the matter. For three days – days that had passed far too quickly – Abraham had taken weary step after weary step, with a heart so heavy that he must have felt as though it would burst. Now, father and son had reached the fatal place. Abraham made final preparations. He built an altar and laid the wood on the altar, and then the fatal, final moment came to bind and offer the sacrifice. Would Abraham do it? Did Abraham love the Lord enough to obey His Word, to make the supreme sacrifice to the Lord? To offer his own son as a sacrifice to the Lord? Scripture tells us in tense, graphic statements: “Abraham bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood. And Abraham stretched forth his hand and took the knife to slay his son.” Abraham was an elderly man, and Isaac was probably around twenty years old. Isaac could have easily overcome his father and fled away, but Scripture says nothing about a struggle. Isaac entrusted himself to the Lord and his father. Are we willing to follow through in our surrender?

PRAYER THOUGHT

Lord, we surrender our struggles in following through our surrender.

Wednesday 14th October

HE DID IT!

“When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.”

Genesis 22:9,10 NIV

Abraham actually offered up the sacrifice, made the absolute surrender to the Lord. He reached out and took the knife to slay his son. Abraham was obeying the Lord. He loved the Lord more than anything; therefore, he would obey the Lord no matter the cost. He was willing to sacrifice everything, to give and offer everything to Him. Abraham was totally, absolutely surrendered to the Lord. Have you offered up your life as a sacrifice to the Lord? Have you made the absolute surrender of your life to the Lord? Have I? Do we love the Lord more than anything? Are we willing to sacrifice ourselves totally for the Lord and His cause? Are we willing to sacrifice everything for the Lord, to give Him everything, our lives and our possessions? Again, are we willing to take the gospel of Jesus Christ to the uttermost part of the earth? Are we willing to obey Him totally, no matter the cost? Abraham was. “And He [Jesus] said to all, ‘If anyone would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me.’” (*Luke 9:23*) “For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?” (*Luke 9:24-25*)

PRAYER THOUGHT

Lord, Abraham surrendered all, help us to do the same.

Thursday 15th October

ACCEPTED!

But the angel of the Lord called out to him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied.

Genesis 22:11 NIV

Now comes the great joy of sacrificing everything to the Lord. The Lord accepted the sacrifice and surrender of Abraham's heart. He called out to stop Abraham from sacrificing Isaac. When Abraham reached out and took the knife to slay his son, the Lord knew that Abraham was totally surrendered to Him. He knew that Abraham's heart belonged to Him, totally and absolutely. Nothing, absolutely nothing, stood between Abraham and the Lord. Abraham would sacrifice anything and do anything for the Lord. Abraham would obey Him, no matter the sacrifice or cost. The Lord was the most precious person and the most treasured thing in Abraham's life. The Lord acknowledged this. He knew Abraham feared Him, revered and trusted Him above all else. He knew Abraham loved Him more than his own son. Within his heart, Abraham had offered the supreme sacrifice to the Lord. Within his heart, Abraham had made the absolute surrender of himself to the Lord. The point is this: The Lord is after our hearts, the surrender of our spirits to Him, not the slaying of our bodies. He wants living sacrifices, not dead sacrifices. He wants the bodies of people, but He wants living bodies, not dead bodies. He wants a human sacrifice, but He wants the sacrifices living, not dead. "Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God – this is your true and proper worship." (*Romans 12:1*)

PRAYER THOUGHT

Lord, we offer our entire lives as living sacrifices to You.

Friday 16th October

THE HEART!

“Do not lay a hand on the boy,” he said. “Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son.” *Genesis 22:12 NIV*

The Lord accepted the sacrifice of Abraham's heart. It is always the willingness, the surrender of the heart that makes the offering of a sacrifice acceptable to the Lord. The Lord is after our heart, not the sacrifice. Our hearts must reach out to the Lord before we lay a sacrifice before Him. Hear these words from *1 Samuel 15:22* “But Samuel replied: “Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the Lord? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams.” The words of David in *Psalms 51:16-17*, “You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise.” In response to Abraham's obedience the Lord gave Abraham a ram to offer as a substitute for Isaac (*verse 13*). Abraham in response to the Lord's provision worshipped Him and memorialized the place forever (*verse 14*). He named the place the mountain of the LORD, Jehovah-Jireh. The Hebrew means the LORD provides. And provide He did! The LORD met Abraham's need: He gave Abraham a substitute sacrifice instead of his son. Have we grasped that the Lord has never changed, and He never will. What He did for Abraham, He has done for us in His one and only begotten Son, Jesus Christ our Saviour and Lord. The Lord has provided and will provide for you.

PRAYER THOUGHT

Lord, help us grasp how You have provided for us in every way.

Saturday 17th October

THE OFFERING

So Abraham called that place The Lord Will Provide. And to this day it is said, "On the mountain of the Lord it will be provided."

Genesis 22:14 NIV

Let us be reminded afresh that Abraham's offering his son Isaac is a picture of the LORD offering His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, as a sacrifice for us and all of humanity. The sacrifice of Isaac is a type-a symbol, a picture, a prophecy-of the sacrifice of Christ at Calvary, the sacrifice of God's very own Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, for the sins of the world. Abraham was asked to give up his most cherished possession to the Lord. He has given up His most cherished possession to humanity. Abraham was asked to sacrifice his own son for the Lord, and the Lord has sacrificed His only Son for us all. Abraham believed that the Lord would raise up his son, if need be. We know He did raise up His own Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. It can even be said that Isaac was as good as dead (sacrificed) in the heart of Abraham during the three days of travelling before the resurrection. The resurrection of both Isaac and Christ took place three days after their death (*Genesis 22:5*). Isaac was apparently willing to obey God and be sacrificed, for there is no evidence of a struggle. Isaac was obedient to death even as Christ was obedient to death. The ram was provided as a substitute for Isaac; the lamb of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, was provided as a substitute for all of humanity. There is no other substitute, but Jesus Christ our Saviour and Lord.

PRAYER THOUGHT

**Lord Jesus Christ, we rejoice that there is only one substitute,
You!**

Sunday 18th October

HE CARRIED!

So, Abraham called that place The Lord Will Provide. And to this day it is said, "On the mountain of the Lord it will be provided."

Genesis 22:14 NIV

Isaac carried the wood upon which he was to be laid as a sacrifice; Christ carried the cross upon which He was to be hung as the sacrifice for the sins of the world. Abraham offered Isaac as a sacrifice upon Mt. Moriah, the very mountain upon which Jerusalem was built (*2 Chronicles 3:1*). Our heavenly Father offered up His one and only Son, Jesus Christ on Calvary, right outside Jerusalem, upon the very same mountain ridge or range where Isaac was offered. This tells us why He had Abraham travel three days to offer Isaac on Mt. Moriah. The offering of Isaac was planned by Him to be a type of His offering of His one and only Son. Abraham called Mt. Moriah Jehovah-Jireh, "the Lord will provide." God provided a substitutionary sacrifice for Abraham. Our Heavenly Father has provided a substitutionary sacrifice for us in the Lord Jesus Christ. As Isaac faced the consuming fire; Jesus Christ has borne the consuming fire of the Lord's holiness and judgment against sin. Abraham received the great joy of God's promise because he willingly sacrificed his will to the Lord's will. Our Saviour and Lord Jesus Christ experienced the fulfilment of His joy because He totally surrendered His will to Father's will and sacrificed Himself for the sins of the world. As Hebrews reminds us, "fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before Him He endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."

PRAYER THOUGHT

Lord Jesus Christ, thank You for carrying our sins through Your Cross.

Monday 19th October

PROMISES RENEWED

The angel of the Lord called to Abraham from heaven a second time and said, “I swear by myself, declares the Lord, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you....”

Genesis 22:15,16,17 NIV

The Lord renewed His promises to the heart of Abraham. Abraham was to be rewarded for his obedience, and no greater reward could be given. The Lord gave Abraham a solemn oath, the most solemn oath He could give. He swore by Himself. He staked His promises upon His own nature and name. God could swear by no greater name or person than Himself. He and He alone would stand behind the promises of His Word. Why was He giving Abraham so great a confirmation of the promises: because Abraham had obeyed God, done exactly what God had told him to do. He had offered his son as a sacrifice to the Lord. The Lord renewed the promise of the promised seed, meaning the Saviour of the world. The great promises of our Lord are sure, guaranteed and confirmed by Himself. He has sworn that He stands behind every single promise. Every promise will be fulfilled, literally and completely fulfilled. The omnipotent power of the Lord guarantees their fulfilment. The promises are given, to those who are obedient to His call. The person who sacrifices all, who absolutely surrenders their heart to the Lord, will have the promises of the Lord take effect in their life. Be reminded of the words of Peter (2 Peter 1:4), “Through these He has given us His very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature...”

PRAYER THOUGHT

Lord, thank You that You always keep Your promises, as we obey You.

Tuesday 20th October

NAHOR

Some time later Abraham was told, “Milkah is also a mother; she has borne sons to your brother Nahor.” *Genesis 22:20 NIV*

Abraham gets word about the children of his brother Nahor, this information was sent all the way from the city of Nahor, about a 1126km journey north-northeast of Beersheba. This was a great distance in the days of Abraham and prevented all contact between Abraham and his brother Nahor. Evidently, a traveller in a caravan train brought news to Abraham regarding his brother. It was no coincidence that this traveller ran into Abraham with information regarding his brother Nahor after so many years of having no contact with him. The Lord providentially saw to it that this traveller, who is unknown to us, ran into Abraham with this information regarding his brother since Rebekah, who would eventually marry Abraham's son Isaac, was the granddaughter of Nahor according to *Genesis 22:20-23*. What appears to take place by chance from the human perspective is from the divine perspective a part of an orchestrated plan by the Lord from eternity past. This outworking is called the “providence of God.” The doctrine of providence expresses the fact that the world and our lives are not ruled by chance or fate but by the Lord Who reveals the purpose of providence through the work of Christ on the Cross. *Isaiah 46:9-10*, “Remember the former things, those of long ago; I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me. I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say, ‘My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.’” Our Lord keeps His promises and fulfils His Word.

PRAYER THOUGHT

Lord, thank You for Your providential care, even when we don't see it.

Wednesday 21st October

THE PILGRIMAGE OF DEATH

“Sarah lived to be a hundred and twenty-seven years old. She died at Kiriath Arba (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan, and Abraham went to mourn for Sarah and to weep over her.”

Genesis 23:1,2 NIV

The pilgrimage of death must be taken by everyone. Our loved ones die, and we die. We die far, far too soon. Life is extremely short. In fact, one of the most shocking facts of life is the brevity of life. When we reach older age, the shortness of life strikes us with a shock that can be most disturbing. The sense that life is soon to be over is an ever-present reality. We know that our bodies are about to wear out and run down, that the cold, dark hands of death are about to snatch us out of this world, and that there is nothing, absolutely nothing, we can do about it. Death is going to take us away. Facing death can be made much easier by studying and remembering this experience of Abraham. Just as Abraham's faith enabled him to deal with the death of his dear wife Sarah, so our faith as believers can empower us to confront the death of our loved ones. In *Genesis 23*, we see Abraham expressing sorrow and grief. He wept and mourned. He acted responsibly for he arose and did not allow himself to become overwhelmed with grief. He confessed his faith even though he was a stranger and sojourner on earth whose hope was for a permanent home. He gave strong testimony in all funeral arrangements, and he buried his loved one, Sarah, in faith and love. We, like Abraham, are called to be the same, strengthened through our faith in the Risen Ascended Lord Jesus Christ.

PRAYER THOUGHT

Lord Jesus, we face the pilgrimage of death in Your Risen Presence.

Thursday 22nd October

DEALING WITH DEATH

“She died at Kiriath Arba (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan, and Abraham went to mourn for Sarah and to weep over her.”
Genesis 23:2 NIV

How can we deal with the death of a loved one? By expressing sorrow, by mourning and weeping. Sarah, Abraham's wife, died. She died when she was 127 years old. Remember who Sarah was, how great a life she had lived for the Lord. She had willingly followed her husband, Abraham, in his call from the Lord. She had willingly left her home, family, and friends, all she had, to follow her husband. She had willingly travelled all about as Abraham sought to follow and obey the Lord. She had been steadfast right along with her husband all through the years, steadfast in following the Lord and in believing His promises despite the impossible odds. She was called a princess (*Genesis 17:15*). She is an excellent illustration of the grace of our Lord. She is listed in the great Hall of Faith as one of the great believers of faith (*Hebrews 11:11*). She is the only woman whose age and death are given by Scripture. No wonder Abraham mourned and wept. Abraham loved her for her commitment and faithfulness. She would no longer be his partner in life, no longer be by his side, no longer be labouring with him. Abraham mourned and wept over the passing of his dear wife. There is nothing wrong with shedding tears over the death of a loved one. Tears are not a sign of weakness nor of weak faith. Tears are a release for the pain we feel. Tears help to heal our broken hearts. Tears are even a testimony, a tribute to the importance of the loved one.

PRAYER THOUGHT

Lord, thank You for gathering our tears in our grief.

Friday 23rd October

NOT OVERWHELMED

“Then Abraham rose from beside his dead wife and spoke to the Hittites.”

Genesis 23:3 NIV

How can we face the death of a loved one? By being responsible and not becoming overwhelmed with sorrow and grief. Abraham stood up and walked away from the side of his dead wife. He walked away on his own; no one had to help him. The point is this, Abraham did not allow himself to be overcome with sorrow. He was not overwhelmed with grief. In dealing with death, Abraham was not crushed, bewildered, defeated, confounded, destroyed, confused, demoralized, devastated. Abraham's life was not wrecked because Sarah died. Yes, the pain pierced his heart, cut him so much that he sorrowed, mourned, and wept because he hurt so much. But after he wept, he acted responsibly. He got up and went about his affairs and daily duties. There was a reason why Abraham was not crushed with sorrow and grief. He knew that Sarah had followed the counsel of the Lord throughout her life; therefore, the Lord had taken her to glory. He knew that Sarah had gone to the heavenly country and heavenly city of our Lord. Very simply, Abraham did exactly what the New Testament teaches. He did not sorrow like others who sorrow, others who have no hope. But Abraham believed the Lord, believed His great promise that He would save those who followed Him, save them through the promised seed, the Saviour of the world. Abraham believed He would give the promised land to believers, a heavenly land that would last eternally. Hallelujah!

PRAYER THOUGHT

Lord, we do not grieve without hope, but in the reality of eternal life.

Saturday 24th October

CHOOSING NOT TO BE OVERWHELMED

“Then Abraham rose from beside his dead wife and spoke to the Hittites.”

Genesis 23:3 NIV

We can choose not to allow sorrow or grief to overwhelm us. We can choose not to sorrow as those who have no hope. We can choose not to be overwhelmed and crushed by sorrow. For we have hope, the greatest of hopes. We have the hope of being present with the Lord, of being immediately with him, when we die. “We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.” (2 Corinthians 5:8) We have the living hope of the Lord's return and of being reunited with all our loved ones. We have the living hope of a far better life in the next world. “I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far.” (Philippians 1:23) We have the living hope of being made just like Christ. We have the living hope of being where Christ is and of receiving a building, a home, a mansion of glory made by God Himself. “For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands.” (2 Corinthians 5:1) We have the living hope of receiving a new and perfect body. We have the living hope of appearing in glory. We have the living hope of having all pain, sorrow, and tears wiped away forever. We have the living hope of receiving treasures. We have the living hope of having the heavens and the earth remade into a new and perfect heaven and earth. (Isaiah 65:17)

PRAYER THOUGHT

Lord, we are not overwhelmed for we have a living hope in You Jesus.

Sunday 25th October

CONFESSING FAITH

He said, "I am a foreigner and stranger among you. Sell me some property for a burial site here so I can bury my dead."

Genesis 23:4 NIV

We are called to confess our faith in facing the death of a loved one. Confessing we are but strangers and sojourners upon earth, believers whose hope is for a permanent home in the promised land of heaven. This is what Abraham confessed. His words are very significant. He confessed that he owned no land in Canaan, that he was only a stranger and a sojourner. A stranger is an alien, a foreigner who is passing through a country, not staying long enough to settle down or to rent a place. A sojourner is also a foreigner, but they are staying long enough to settle down and lease a house within a country. They are not a permanent resident; their home is elsewhere. When Abraham used these words, he was confessing his faith. Upon earth, he had lived only in tents, often moving about from here to there. He was only a stranger and a sojourner upon earth. But his hope and the longing of his heart was for a permanent home, a permanent home on this earth, yes; but more than that, he longed for a permanent home with the Lord. Briefly stated, Abraham's home was not upon this earth, but with His Lord in heaven. How do we know this is what Abraham was confessing? Because Scripture tells us. (See *Hebrews 11:8-10*). Down through history, Scripture and the people of our Lord have always referred to themselves as strangers and sojourners upon earth. The Lord Himself called His people strangers and sojourners upon earth. We are passing through on our way to glory!

PRAYER THOUGHT

Lord, thank You that we are sojourners on our way to glory.

Monday 26th October

OUR TESTIMONY IN GRIEF

The Hittites replied to Abraham, “Sir, listen to us. You are a mighty prince among us. Bury your dead in the choicest of our tombs. None of us will refuse you his tomb for burying your dead.”

Genesis 23:5,6 NIV

Our testimony in facing the death of a loved one is crucial. Here is a lengthy but interesting business transaction between Abraham and a man called Ephron. It gives us a clear picture into the customs of the day, as to how people went about handling business transactions. The courtesy is especially striking. Abraham went beyond the usual courtesy, paying far more for the land than what it was worth, and by so doing he gave a strong testimony for the Lord. Abraham had always had a strong testimony among his neighbours. They recognized him as a mighty prince among them. The Hebrew is actually a prince of the LORD. The people knew that Abraham was a man favoured and blessed by his Lord. Abraham had always borne a princely faith before his neighbours, and he was bearing a princely testimony to his faith now. Abraham bore a testimony of courtesy and appreciation. The Hittites offered Abraham a free tomb for Sarah. Abraham stood up and bowed. This was apparently the custom of the day, the way a person showed appreciation for an offer. Abraham bore a testimony of tact. He asked the city officials to intercede in securing a particular piece of land, the cave of Machpelah (*verses 8-9*). Abraham bore a testimony for being fair and just in his business transactions. Ephron offered to give the land to Abraham, but Abraham refused to accept the land as a gift. Abraham willingly paid an exorbitant price for the land, about twenty times its value.

PRAYER THOUGHT

Lord, may we bear testimony to You, even in our grief.

Tuesday 27th October

FAITH AND LOVE IN GRIEF

“Afterward Abraham buried his wife Sarah in the cave in the field of Machpelah near Mamre (which is at Hebron) in the land of Canaan.”

Genesis 23:19 NIV

In facing the death of a loved one, we bury our loved ones in faith and love. Facing Sarah's death and his own grief, Abraham expressed a great act of faith, an act of great princely faith. It involved far more than a mere business transaction. Abraham could have buried Sarah anyplace in the desert, just as any nomad would do. He could have even taken her back to their original home, Ur of the Chaldees, and buried her there. But three things kept him from doing this. Abraham believed the promises of God. God had promised the land of Canaan to Abraham, the land that is referred to as the promised land. Abraham believed that he and his seed, descendants, were to receive the land, that they were to be the permanent residents of the land. But the land was not yet his. Thus, when he sought a permanent burial ground for his family, he was acting in faith. He knew that he and his descendants would someday inherit the land and live there permanently. They would, therefore, need a permanent burial ground. In fact, several generations of Abraham's family were to be buried at this site: Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Leah. Abraham and the other patriarchs looked for the land of Canaan to be given to them. This was their great hope. But behind this earthly hope was a heavenly hope that was far greater, the hope for a better land, a heavenly land that was eternal and perfect. (*Hebrews 11:10*) We too look forward to the same!

PRAYER THOUGHT

Lord, in our grief let us express faith and hope for our loved ones.

Wednesday 28th October

A MEMORIAL

“Afterward Abraham buried his wife Sarah in the cave in the field of Machpelah near Mamre (which is at Hebron) in the land of Canaan.”

Genesis 23:19 NIV

Abraham wanted a memorial place to remind his seed of the promises of the Lord. He had promised Abraham's seed the land. The land was to be theirs by faith. They would need some place to help them keep their eyes upon the day when the Lord would give the land to them. Their father, Abraham, had believed; they too were expected to believe. Sarah was the Lord's choice to be the mother of the promised seed, and she was the first mother to believe in the promised land. He wanted her faith always to be remembered. By her having a permanent burial site, her great faith in the Lord would always be remembered. And it has been so remembered. We are to bury our loved ones in faith and love. Our faith in the Lord is to be expressed, believing the wonderful promises of the Lord about the promised land of heaven. We are also to bury our loved ones in love. We show our love by giving them a permanent burial site and by declaring their faith in the great promised land of heaven. “My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.” (*John 14:2-3*) This is our promise, which we express in faith and love.

PRAYER THOUGHT

Lord, we rejoice in the promises of a room prepared by You.

Thursday 29th October

FAITH AND GUIDANCE

“Abraham was now very old, and the Lord had blessed him in every way.”

Genesis 24:1 NIV

Genesis 24 is the longest chapter in the book of Genesis and focuses on a pivotal event in the life of Abraham's family. Finding a wife for Isaac. Abraham, now advanced in age, sends his servant on a mission to his homeland to find a suitable wife for Isaac, who will continue the line of the covenant promises. The chapter focuses on themes of faith, divine guidance, prayer, and the Lord's providential care. Abraham's servant is divinely guided to Rebekah, a relative of Abraham, who agrees to marry Isaac. The servant's faithfulness, Rebekah's willingness, and Isaac's acceptance of her all point to the Lord's hand in orchestrating this union. The story reveals the Lord's providence in continuing His promises to Abraham through Isaac, and it emphasizes the importance of prayer and seeking the Lord's will in important decisions. All this occurs after the death of Sarah, and it focuses on ensuring the continuation of the Lord's covenant promises through Isaac. In the ancient Near East, marriages were often arranged within family or kinship networks, and finding a suitable wife for Isaac was of paramount importance to Abraham. Abraham is trusting the Lord to provide a wife from among his own people. His servant plays a central role, and his actions highlight the importance of prayer and dependence on the Lord for success in fulfilling the mission. *Genesis 24* teaches us to seek the Lord's guidance in all decisions and trust that He will provide direction in accordance with His will. Let us pray for guidance and wait on the Lord's timing.

PRAYER THOUGHT

Lord, in all our decisions we seek Your guidance, trust in Your leading.

Friday 30th October

FAITH AND PROMISES

He said to the senior servant in his household, the one in charge of all that he had, “Put your hand under my thigh. I want you to swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and the God of earth, that you will not get a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I am living.”

Genesis 24:2,3 NIV

In finding a wife for Isaac we once again see Abraham's faith in the Lord's promises and his trust in His guidance. Abraham instructs his servant to return to his homeland to find a wife for Isaac, trusting that the Lord will direct the process. Abraham's instructions demonstrate his faith in the Lord's covenant promises and his desire for Isaac to marry someone who shares his faith in the one true LORD. The entire narrative hinges on divine guidance, as the servant prays for specific signs to confirm the woman who will be Isaac's wife. The servant's prayer reveals his faith in the Lord's ability to lead him to the right person. We read in *Genesis 24:12* “Then he prayed, ‘God of my master Abraham, make me successful today, and show kindness to my master Abraham’”. This prayer and the subsequent events highlight the importance of seeking the Lord's will in decision-making, trusting that He will guide and provide for those who follow Him. The servant's prayer gives us a model of faith and dependence upon the Lord. He asks for specific guidance, trusting that the Lord will direct him to the right woman for Isaac. The servant's prayer and worship highlight the importance of living in dependence on God's provision and direction. Through this we are encouraged to cultivate a prayerful and worshipful attitude, relying on the Lord's faithfulness.

PRAYER THOUGHT

Holy Spirit, teach us to be dependent upon the Lord for His guidance.

Saturday 31st October

THE LORD'S PROVIDENCE

“Before he had finished praying, Rebekah came out with her jar on her shoulder. She was the daughter of Bethuel son of Milkah, who was the wife of Abraham’s brother Nahor.”

Genesis 24:15 NIV

The Lord’s providential care is evident throughout *Genesis 24*, as He orchestrates events to bring about His purposes. Rebekah’s appearance at the well is not a coincidence, but a direct answer to the servant’s prayer. The speed with which Rebekah appears, and her willingness to fulfil the sign that the servant had prayed for, demonstrate that the Lord is actively involved in the details of life and responds to the prayers of His people. The story emphasizes our Lord’s faithfulness to provide for His people, and He ensures that His covenant promises will continue through Isaac and Rebekah. The Lord’s orchestration of these events reminds us that He is in control of all circumstances. Can you recall on a time when the Lord orchestrated circumstances in your life in an unexpected way, demonstrating His providential care for you. All too often we get so caught up in the circumstances of our lives that we fail to see the Lord’s providential care and love for us. This is usually the result of us making decisions without seeking the Lord’s guidance. We are called to trust in His providence and recognize His hand at work in their lives, especially in moments of uncertainty or challenge. Let us be reassured again that our Lord is in control of the details of life and that He works all things together for good (*Romans 8:28*). Why? Well, the faith of Abraham, and the example of Abraham’s servant should encourage us that the Lord has not changed. (Read *Malachi 3:6*)

PRAYER THOUGHT

Lord, as one Who does not change, we trust in Your providential care.



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Your September 2026 Bible Readings

(As supplied by and with grateful acknowledgement to the I.B.R.A)

READINGS IN ISAIAH Chapters 1-39 (2)

1 Provision from God

Tuesday	1	Isaiah 27:2-13
Wednesday	2	Isaiah 28:1-6
Thursday	3	Isaiah 29:13-24
Friday	4	Isaiah 30:15-26
Saturday	5	Isaiah 32:1-8

2 Delivery through God alone

Sunday	6	Isaiah 32:9-20
Monday	7	Isaiah 33:2-13
Tuesday	8	Isaiah 33:14-17
Wednesday	9	Isaiah 36:13-20
Thursday	10	Isaiah 37:9-20
Friday	11	Isaiah 38:1-21
Saturday	12	Isaiah 39:1-8

AUTHORITY AND GOVERNANCE

Sunday	13	Deuteronomy 17:14-20
Monday	14	Judges 2:6-19
Tuesday	15	Luke 22:24-30
Wednesday	16	Matthew 21:23-27
Thursday	17	Hebrews 5:1-10
Friday	18	1 Peter 2:13-25
Saturday	19	Colossians 3:12-4:1

STOLEN FROM GOD: SLAVERY (1)

Sunday	20	Deuteronomy 20:1-14
Monday	21	Leviticus 25:39-55
Tuesday	22	2 Kings 4:1-7
Wednesday	23	Exodus 21:2-11
Thursday	24	Exodus 21:20-27
Friday	25	Deuteronomy 15:12-18
Saturday	26	1 Samuel 9:5-10

STOLEN FROM GOD: SLAVERY (2)

Sunday	27	Philemon 1:8-18
Monday	28	1 Corinthians 12:12-14
Tuesday	29	Galatians 3:27-4:7
Wednesday	30	Ephesians 6:5-9

Your October 2026 Bible Readings

(As supplied by and with grateful acknowledgement to the I.B.R.A)

STOLEN FROM GOD: SLAVERY (2)

Thursday	1	1 Corinthians 7:17-24
Friday	2	Titus 2:9-15
Saturday	3	1 Timothy 1:8-11

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW (5)**1 Insights**

Sunday	4	Matthew 20:1-16
Monday	5	Matthew 20:17-34
Tuesday	6	Matthew 21:17-22
Wednesday	7	Matthew 21:28-46
Thursday	8	Matthew 22:1-14
Friday	9	Matthew 22:15-33
Saturday	10	Matthew 22:34-46

2 Warnings

Sunday	11	Matthew 23:1-22
Monday	12	Matthew 23:23-39
Tuesday	13	Matthew 24:1-28
Wednesday	14	Matthew 24:29-51
Thursday	15	Matthew 25:1-13
Friday	16	Matthew 25:14-30
Saturday	17	Matthew 25:31-46

SETBACKS AND COMEBACKS**1 Reason for hope**

Sunday	18	Job 1:13-22
Monday	19	Job 42:10-17
Tuesday	20	John 8:1-11
Wednesday	21	Luke 22:54-62
Thursday	22	John 21:15-19
Friday	23	Genesis 39:11-20
Saturday	24	Genesis 41:39-57

2 Confounding expectations

Sunday	25	Luke 15:11-32
Monday	26	Esther 4:4-14
Tuesday	27	Esther 7:1-10
Wednesday	28	John 9:1-12
Thursday	29	1 Samuel 23:7-20
Friday	30	2 Samuel 5:1-5
Saturday	31	John 11:38-44

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ABBREVIATIONS

GNB	–	Good News Bible
NIV	–	New International Version
NLT	–	New Living Translation
NKJV	–	New King James Version
RSV	–	Revised Standard Version

The Lord's *goodness* and
unfailing love will pursue me
all the days of *my life*.

Psalm 23:6

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