

Align Your Life

Okay, let's turn in our Bibles, please, to Genesis chapter 12. Now, this is a Genesis day, apparently. Psalm 105 was referenced and dealt with some of the things that Bob preached on in the morning.

It's going to deal with some of what we're going to be looking at this evening. And then Bob and I are both preaching in Genesis. You see, we're not dispensational.

We believe the Old Testament counts. Genesis chapter 12, we're going to read verses 1 to 7. Now the Lord said to Abram, get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation.

I will bless you and make your name great. And you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you and I will curse him who curses you.

And in you, all the families of the earth shall be blessed. So Abram departed as the Lord had spoken to him and Lot went with him. And Abram was 75 years old when he departed from Haran.

Then Abram took Sarai, his wife, and Lot, his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered and the people whom they had acquired in Haran. And they departed to go to the land of Canaan. So they came to the land of Canaan.

Abram passed through the land to the place of Shechem, as far as the Terebinth tree of Morah. And the Canaanites were then in the land. Then the Lord appeared to Abram and said to your descendants, I will give this land.

There he built an altar to the Lord who had appeared to him. Let's pray. Father, help us as we look at the Abrahamic covenant tonight.

What it says to us, the way in which we can understand it and hopefully live it each day of our lives, we ask in Jesus name. Amen. Now, this is a very interesting passage for me because like Abram, I'm 75.

So I understand, you know, personally, what it's like to be 75 and to uproot yourself. But I want to ask, I want to ask some questions. And I know this was very, very true when I became a believer in 1972.

And that point, like Shawn, I was in a charismatic fellowship. I started my walk with God in a charismatic fellowship in the broadly evangelical world. And people were spending a lot of time asking, what is God's plan for my life? They were asking, there's this stuff about spiritual gifts.

What are my gifts? What should I be doing, especially when you're in your 20s and you're young? That's a very obvious and relevant question because you're not tied down to very many things yet. So you have a lot of opportunity to go in different directions. What should I

be doing? What choices should I make? What about my job, career? Where should I live? Should I get married? Now, Shawn's a pastor.

You ask Shawn, you ask any pastor, and they will tell you that they are asked those kinds of questions a lot, more so in the evangelical than in the reformed world, because what people want then, they're looking for specific answers. And the interesting thing, as I'm now 75, and I've been a believer for a lot of time, I've been an elder for a long time, I've been counseling people for a long time and dealing with people, these questions don't just come from different people. What you find is the same people every so many years come to you asking the same questions.

It's interesting. Is it that God doesn't care about you? Is it that the Bible's not clear? No, that's not the case. We often search for direction from God on very minute and specific issues.

We would love it if the Bible told us what job should I have, who should I marry, where would I live, what should I eat tonight? Oh, what should I eat tomorrow night? I'm on the board of the Aquila Report, and the articles that we publish, eight articles a day, five or six days a week, the articles that are the most popular are always those things that say seven things you can do, or three things, or the best way, especially if there's a number. Americans love to get into that. We want God to tell us every step of the way what we should do, and that's particularly in that evangelical world around us.

The problem here is that when you're asking questions like that, you're asking questions from what I will call a me perspective. And if you're asking questions from a me perspective, you can get frustrated about how unclear God is for his will in your life. But you miss what the Bible does say about God's plan for you.

We often want God to be very specific with regards to details. We're facing a situation, it's very specific. What should I do? And we don't recognize that we have a glorious freedom in Christ to serve him.

So these type of questions are the wrong questions. Now I'm going to give you my thesis now. The Bible is not individualized to you.

It's not that, somewhere we have a Bible here. I'm not, there it is. It's not that, you know, you go to the Christian bookstore.

When I was born until the time I was 30 or so, there would be four or five Bibles in the Christian bookstore. And the difference was, they were different translations. And then there would be the leather bound or the cloth bound or they didn't have paperbacks back then.

Now, if you go to the Christian bookstore, there's the men's devotional Bible, the woman's devotional Bible, the child's how I should grow up Bible, the various, you know, 17 different types of charismatic Bibles. It'd be wonderful, people are looking for, this is the Bible for Trip, this is the Bible for Harry, this is the Bible for Andy. The key issue, as you see, is that Bible's not individualized.

It's not specific to you. It tells the story of redemptive history. When you get into all these various Bibles that you go to the Christian bookstore and you see, they're missing the point of the Bible.

It's talking about God's work from creation, past, to our final redemption and glorification in heaven and earth, or if we're under judgment, in hell. And in the story of redemptive history, it focuses not on individuals, but a group, God's covenant people. You're part of that people.

God's plan for your life is a portion which he's giving you in terms of his greater plan for his covenant people in the history of redemption. So I want to address you this evening, not with seeking God's will for your life, but how do you align your life to God's plan? To accomplish that, we need to start with a new question. That's a different starting point.

It's not a me perspective. We need to ask first, what is God's plan for his covenant people?

God's plan for His Covenant People

So the first point in the sermon is God's plan for his covenant people. And you can tell from the spacing I left that that's where most of the time's going to be spent.

God deals in covenant. We read that in Psalm 105. We've sung it in Psalm 105.

We read about it in our passage this evening in Genesis 12. So let's do a very quick look at that. There are six biblical covenants, and I'm going to break them into two groups, if you have never thought about it this way.

The first two covenants, the covenant with Adam, known appropriately enough as the Adamic covenant, and his covenant with Noah, known appropriately enough as the Noahic covenant, deal with all mankind. Genesis 1-3, especially 3.15-19, the covenant with Adam and Eve representing all men. The Noahic covenant in Genesis, particularly 9.8-11, made with Noah representing all men.

The next four have this difference. They are made with individuals as were the first two, Adam and Noah, representing only part of mankind. They're the Abrahamic covenant, which we find in Genesis 12, our passage tonight, Genesis 13, Genesis 15, the Mosaic covenant, Deuteronomy 11, the Davidic covenant in 2 Samuel 7, and the new covenant in Jeremiah 31.

And in this case, God's making a covenant with his people and not with others. And we want to look a little bit at the Abrahamic covenant. And the reason I want to look at the Abrahamic, I changed the way I say it, covenant is because we live in 2026.

We tend to look sometimes at the Old Testament as relevant for us and we can learn stuff from it, but we don't recognize that it's directly there for us. And the Bible is very clear about the covenant made with Abraham and that series of promises and how it impacts us

today. So in Genesis 12, verses 2 to 3, we read that the Lord said to Abraham, I will make you a great nation.

I will bless you and make your name great. You shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you.

I will curse him who curses you. And in you, all the families of the earth shall be blessed. So it's made with Abraham and his descendants.

He's going to make them a great nation. That's his family. And the interesting thing is that it doesn't say, I will bless you.

I'll make you a great nation. I'll bless you. I'll make your name great.

And everybody else I will destroy. I'll rain fire and brimstone. I'll cast them into the outer darkness.

It doesn't say that. It says that all the families of the earth shall be blessed in Abraham. And it's not, they're not going to be blessed because God's going to send the legions of angels out into the world.

It's in Abraham and his descendants that all the families shall be blessed. Well, who are Abraham's descendants? That's obviously the next important question. Well, the Jews claim to be Abraham's descendants.

Arab Muslims claim to be Abraham's descendants through Ishmael, not Isaac, and their physical descendants. But as our pastor reminds us frequently in Genesis 3.16, first, Abraham's descendants include Jesus. Genesis 3, Galatians 3.16. Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made.

He does not say, and to seeds as of many, but as of one and to your seed, who is Christ. Now that makes sense. Jesus was a Jew.

So he would be a physical descendant, but he's the specific descendant of Abraham. And then in Genesis 3.7 and 29, we learned something else. Genesis 3.7, Paul writes, know therefore that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham.

And in verse 29 of Galatians, sorry, I keep saying Genesis, Galatians 3. And if you are Christ, then you are Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise. So I'm a descendant of Abraham. You are a descendant of Abraham.

And the Jews all around us and the Muslims who are, who have not faith in Christ are not descendants of Abraham, according to God's covenant, as it is explained by Paul. Well, if we're Abraham's descendants, then what God gives, the covenant he gave to Abraham in Genesis 12 and then 13 and 15 is relevant to us. I will make you a great nation.

Well, we're part of that nation. The structure of the Abrahamic covenant, there are two parts in the Abrahamic covenant. The first, basically, God says, I'm going to bless you.

That's the first part. And then the second part at the end is that all the peoples of the earth, all the families of the earth will be blessed through you or in you. We need to think about that a little bit.

Let's go back to Galatians 3, because Paul does a great job. If you read Galatians 3, you're going to see Abraham all through that. Galatians 3.5-6, we're going to see that Abraham's justification by faith is a blessing from God.

So therefore, he who supplies the spirit to you and works miracles among you, does he do it by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith? Just as Abraham believed God, it was counted to him for righteousness. Faith is part of the blessing that God promises when he says, I will bless you and make you a great nation. So your family and your friends here in our church are part of that blessing, that promise of blessing that God gave to Abraham and his descendants.

Being blessed by God, by the way, doesn't mean that there's no hardship. Abraham journeyed from where he was to a strange land he'd never been to before. He didn't know when he was 75.

I can tell you that's something. Joseph sold into slavery, accused of adultery, thrown in prison for years. So being blessed by God doesn't necessarily mean everything's a bed of roses.

We don't believe in a prosperity gospel. We don't believe that if you just have enough faith, everything's going to be fine. Ask for it.

God will give it to you. The second part of the Abrahamic covenant, having been blessed, is to be a blessing. All peoples on the earth, all families of the earth is a way of saying everybody that's not in your culture, cultures that are different than yours, different languages than yours.

And in you, all the families or peoples of the earth shall be blessed. In you, we're going to see that that means something. So we're called to be a blessing to all the families of the earth.

In order to do that, we do not need to build a little enclave, you know, Christian land where we're comfortable because all the Christians are there. And maybe we'll put a neon sign out for everybody outside of Christian land. We need to reach out to the people that are in the world that don't know Jesus, that are in our country that don't know Jesus, that are in our neighborhoods, people that are different than us.

Because part of that covenant of being a blessing is to proclaim God's mercy, preempting judgment. Now, apart from Galatians and Genesis 12, that's not like the only place where the Abrahamic covenant appears. It's referred to again and again and again.

Bob referenced the Sodom and Gomorrah incident this morning and in Genesis 18, 17 to 18. And the Lord said, shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing? Since Abraham shall surely

become a great and mighty nation and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him. There's the Abrahamic covenant again.

And so the challenge for Abraham, in part, why he dickered with God. So you didn't say dickered. I can't remember the word you used, but he's, Abraham's called to be a blessing to Sodom and Gomorrah.

He knows what they are and he doesn't have a lot of time to do it because God is on his way to go into the town and destroy them. Bob preached about the sacrifice of Isaac. And if we pick up at verse 15 of Genesis 22, then the angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time out of heaven and said, by myself, I have sworn, says the Lord, because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son, your only son.

Blessing, I will bless you and multiply. I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as a sand on which is on the seashore and your descendants shall possess the gates of their enemies. In your seed, all the nations of the earth shall be blessed because you have obeyed my voice.

By myself, I have sworn. We don't get that in our culture. The ninth commandment about false witness.

We just missed that because people's words don't mean anything anymore. We used to say when I was growing up, my word is my bond. Now, today we have lawyers.

The taking of an oath is a weighty and solemn thing. By myself, I have sworn gives us assurance because God is promising. He's telling us this is what I'm going to do.

I have sworn that I will bless you and in your seed, all the nations of the earth shall be blessed. Hebrews chapter six, verses 17 to 18, we read, Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath that by two immutable, unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us. When God swears and takes that oath, we can count on that.

We should have that strong consolation. It should be a foundation of solid rock upon which we can build our lives. So let's go back to Isaac after he's not sacrificed.

In Genesis 26, verses four to six, we read, God speaking to Isaac and I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven. I will give to your descendants all these lands and in your seed, all the nations of the earth shall be blessed because Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my law. So the Abrahamic covenant didn't stop with Abraham.

It's reaffirmed to Isaac. Let's see who's next. Jacob 28, 14, Genesis 28, 14.

And also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth. You shall spread abroad to the West and to the East, to the North and the South, and in you and in your seed, all the families of the earth shall be blessed. Occasionally, you might say, well, let's see, we've seen

where God talks about his people being as numerous as the stars in the sky, as numerous as the grains of sand on the beach.

Here he uses dust. Why dust? Well, grains of sand on the beach pretty much stay on the beach. If you walk on them, you track them places.

The stars are in the heavens and they pretty much stay in the heavens. Dust, ask anybody who is a housewife or has had to clean a house, dust goes everywhere, sticks to everything. It's the nature of dust to spread, not to stay in little clumps.

When we clean the house, we make it into a little clump. Then we can collect it and get rid of it because by itself, dust just spreads everywhere. You've lived in Colorado very long, you understand dust, especially if you keep your car outside.

Depending on the season, every morning when I go out to my car, I run the, because I keep mine outside. It's already been killed by the hail, so it doesn't matter. You run the window washer because now I can see through the screen.

Some nights are better than others for that. So dust spreads and we are to be as the dust to Jacob, as the dust of the earth. We're to spread.

We're not to be worthless, but we're to spread everywhere. That's how in Jacob and in his seed of which we are, all the families of the earth shall be blessed. I'm doing my personal devotions in a thing called Lexham's Geographic Commentary, and I'm currently doing the gospel volume.

And I realize how much I don't know. You see, I'm an American, and the Holy Land is over there. I don't know what direction I'm pointing.

It's just over there. Eventually you'll get there, I guess. I'm geographically challenged.

I can barely find north. And that west thing doesn't work depending on which side of Colorado you're on. If you find it, that's west.

Not necessarily. The mountains aren't always west. Sometimes they're east.

But I don't really understand when I'm reading the what's going on. So I want to share with you, how are all the families of the earth blessed? Because the Old Testament is the story of God's Jewish people, right? Not quite. There are lots of stories that are dealing with Hebrews and Hebrews, but many prominent stories are cross-cultural.

And we miss that because we don't understand. They're dealing with the families of the earth, the Gentiles. Moses and Jethro.

Jethro was, wait a minute, a Midianite. Naomi and Ruth. Ruth was a Moabite.

David and the Gibeonites. David and Uriah the Hittite. Half the Psalms include language about God's desire to bless the Gentiles, the nations.

Solomon's wisdom was known over all the earth. And he basically gave what today we would call wisdom seminars. Let's go to Jerusalem and see Solomon and try and get his wisdom.

It was the Gentiles that came. Jonah went to Nineveh. Elijah and lived with the widow of Zarephath.

Elijah dealt with Naaman the Syrian. Daniel and his colleagues, we heard about Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, were in Babylon. And their actions carried a message.

The book of Esther, Mordecai, Esther, the book of Nehemiah deal with the Persian empire. They're not all success stories. But what we should learn as we read the scriptures, if we understand when we're dealing with Hebrews and what we're dealing with non-Hebrews, is that God is bringing about encounters where his people can fulfill that part of the Abrahamic covenant to be a blessing to all the nations.

Is it just an Old Testament thing? No. We've already read from Galatians, so I'll read again. Galatians 3, 7 to 9. Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham.

That's verse 7. That just excluded all the Jews. That just excluded all the Muslims, Arab Muslims. That just excluded everyone as the son of Abraham who may be a physical descendant but are not of faith.

So verse 7 again. Therefore know that only those who are of faith are the sons of Abraham. And then continuing.

And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, in you all the nations shall be blessed. So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham. We are blessed because we are of faith and we are former Gentiles.

We are blessed with Abraham. What's he talking about? Paul's talking about the gospel. Fulfilling the great commission is fulfilling part two of the Abrahamic covenant.

We are to be a blessing to all the families, all the nations of the earth. And we do that by carrying the gospel because it is only faith in Jesus Christ that provides that blessing. Continuing a little further in Galatians chapter 3 verses 13 to 14, Paul's writing to the church in Galatia, Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us, for it is written, cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree, that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the spirit through faith.

We're recipients of the blessing to Abraham because we are his descendants. God promised that he would make Abraham a great nation. We are part of that nation of Abraham because of faith in Christ.

So we are blessed. And what Paul's saying here, that we need to bring the blessing of Abraham upon the Gentiles, to those that have not faith. This is the gospel call.

This is the great commission. Go ye into all the... Sorry, when I try to do things from memory, I'm 75. You learned it in the King James when you're younger.

It sort of sticks. Besides, there's been so many translations since then, you're never sure what to remember. Go ye into all the world, into all the world.

Why? Because Christ rules. Because we are to proclaim what Christ has done. We are to call people to faith.

We are to be a blessing. You see, that's God's plan for his covenant people. That as his covenant people grow and are blessed, they are to be a blessing. That was the first point of the sermon.

Align Your Life With God's Plan

Now we're to the second point, but it's much shorter. I had said at the beginning, we needed to stop asking me perspective questions.

We needed to ask, what is God's plan for his covenant people? God's plan for his covenant people is that we proclaim the gospel, that we would be a blessing to those around us who do not know him. So we have been blessed by God. We're to be a blessing.

But notice, once again, I go back to what I said at the beginning. There aren't all these very specific ways in which to do that, especially in the West in America and in Europe for my European friends. People long to have God just, the Bible's nice, God, but can't you give me a booklet? Because it's pretty long.

With bullet points, do not reject the freedom that God gives us to fulfill the responsibility that we have under the Abrahamic covenant to be a blessing to others. So you need to align. Don't look for God to tell you what you should do today, tomorrow, next Thursday, what you should eat, what you should wear, who you should marry.

There are plenty of clear statements in scripture about how we should live, especially in dealing with ethic and moral issues. And we should follow them. But we have a tremendous freedom.

And so we need to align our lives from a me perspective to a God's covenant people perspective. And I just need to let you know that that's a long term thing that isn't, you know, done quickly. Abraham traveled for years.

Joseph's story lasts for years. We need to stop focusing on asking God, what do I do today, tomorrow? We can ask him for help. We can ask him for guidance.

We can ask him for a blessing. That's fine. But don't let your life be captured by, I need to know what God's want.

They're coming back on Monday at our house to look at the remedy or Tuesday to look at our remediation. So, you know, I can pray that, Lord, let everything be dry so they can turn these horrible fans off. I mean, they're nice because they do their job.

They're horrible because they're noisy. But I leave, you know, I leave that up to God. But how do you live your life? How do you choose a job? It's you need to align your life with God's covenant plan.

And it needs to wreck it. So it's a long term thing. Aligning your life with God's plan means recognizing God's blessings to you and his primary blessing to you is your salvation.

We have manifold blessings. Psalm 37, David writes in verses 25 and 26, I've been young and now I'm old, yet I've not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his descendants begging bread. He is ever merciful and lends and his descendants are blessed.

What? How can David write that? He'd seen the opposite in his life. You read through the history books, you read through the Psalms, David sees lots of times when God's people are not what we would think of as being blessed. But he recognized God's blessings and his judges on a different scale than our concept of worldly of the world scale.

We need to align our life with the way God thinks. It means focusing on the nations that need to hear the gospel. Those nations can be next door, they can be down the street, they can be across Colorado, they can be in the United States, they can be in the world.

Am I saying you need to sell everything you have and go be a missionary? No, you have freedom. But that needs to be part of mindset. And it doesn't mean by the way that you won't suffer.

I can do a whole sermons on this, but suffering, I'm sorry to say, if you haven't heard it, and I know you've heard it because Sean talked about it just a few weeks ago, it's part of the job description for a Christian. Romans 8, 16 to 17, the spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God and if children then heirs, heirs of God and join heirs with Christ if indeed we suffer with him that we may also be glorified together. The fact that the Bible doesn't answer very minute specific trip oriented questions or Harry oriented questions or Andy oriented questions or Betty oriented, I got to look for a woman's name, Betty oriented questions, gives us freedom.

We don't like freedom sometimes. We'd much rather be told what to do rather than grow up and be mature in our faith. So the question to you is how will you be a blessing to the nations across the world, across the country, across Colorado, next door? See the focus isn't on you but rather the opposite.

We need to have our mindset not so focused on me but on those around me that do not know Christ and rejoice, rejoice that God gives us a glorious freedom in accord with his plan to his covenant people. Let's pray. Heavenly Father we ask that you would bless this

passage, help it reverberate as we see it reverberating the covenant with Abraham through the scriptures across the Old Testament and the New Testament.

Help us to understand the freedom we have to be a blessing as you've called us to in the Abrahamic covenant as you told us we will be to the families, to the nations that do not know Jesus Christ. We might support those that can go. We might go ourselves.

We take the opportunities that and the encounters that you give us to be bold. Lord we want to recognize the freedom you give us as your covenant people to do that which you've called us to do when you created us and gave Abraham that covenant in Genesis 12. So bless us then and through your Holy Spirit we ask in Jesus name.

Amen.