

## The Trying of Abraham's Faith

February 26, 2017

### The Exercising, Maturing and Purifying of Faith by Tests and Trials

"Wherever God has given faith, it is given, among other reasons, for the very purpose of being tried." -- George Muller

Hebrews 11:1 NASB

1 Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

1 Peter 1:8-9 NASB

8 and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,

9 obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.

1 Peter 1:6-7 ESV

6 In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials,

7 so that the tested genuineness of your faith--more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire--may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Romans 4:18-22 NASB

18 In hope against hope he believed, so that he might become a father of many nations according to that which had been spoken, "*so shall your descendants be.*"

19 Without becoming weak in faith he contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah's womb;

20 yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God,

21 and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform.

22 Therefore *it was also credited to him as righteousness.*

James 1:2-4 NASB

2 Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials,

3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.

4 And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

Genesis 22:1-3 NASB

1 Now it came about after these things, that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am."

2 He said, "Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you."

3 So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him and Isaac his son; and he split wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him.

Hebrews 11:17-19 NASB

17 By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son;

18 it was he to whom it was said, "*in Isaac your descendants shall be called.*"

19 He considered that God is able to raise people even from the dead, from which he also received him back as a type.

**Abraham's faith, exercised through various trials throughout life, climaxed in this final demonstration of maturity.**

1. Everything Abraham was and had was at God's disposal. Abraham claimed nothing as his own.
2. Abraham believed nothing was impossible with God, even raising Isaac from the dead.

## **TRUSTING GOD WITH THE UNKNOWN**

*The unknown can plague the heart with unbelief, fear and self-reliance.*

### **Genesis 12:1-4 NASB**

1 Now the LORD said to Abram, "**Go forth from your country**, And from your relatives And from your father's house, **To the land which I will show you**;

2 And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing;

3 And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed."

4 So **Abram went forth as the LORD had spoken to him**; and Lot went with him. Now Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.

### **Genesis 12:7**

7 The LORD **appeared to Abram** and said, "**To your descendants I will give this land.**" **So he built an altar there to the LORD who had appeared to him.**

### **Hebrews 11:8-10 NASB**

8 **By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed** by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and **he went out, not knowing where he was going.**

9 **By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise;**

10 for **he was looking for the city** which has foundations, **whose architect and builder is God.**

## **The Exercise of Our Faith:**

### **Psalm 139:16-18 NASB**

16 Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; **And in Your book were all written the days that were ordained for me, when as yet there was not one of them.**

17 **How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How vast is the sum of them!**

18 **If I should count them, they would outnumber the sand.** When I awake, I am still with You.

### **Psalm 37:23-25 NASB**

23 **The steps of a man are established by the LORD, And He delights** (*chaphets - take pleasure in, pleased to do*) **in his way.**

24 **When he falls, he will not be hurled headlong, because the LORD is the One who holds his hand.**

25 I have been young and now I am old, Yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken Or his descendants begging bread.

## TRUSTING GOD WITH THE CIRCUMSTANCES

*The fear of circumstances is the fear of being out of control.*

### Genesis 12:10-13

10 Now there was a famine in the land; so Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there, for the famine was severe in the land.

11 It came about when he came near to Egypt, that he said to Sarai his wife, "See now, I know that you are a beautiful woman;

12 and when the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife'; and they will kill me, but they will let you live.

13 "Please say that you are my sister so that it may go well with me because of you, and that I may live on account of you."

### Genesis 12:14-20

14 It came about when Abram came into Egypt, the Egyptians saw that the woman was very beautiful.

15 Pharaoh's officials saw her and praised her to Pharaoh; and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house.

16 Therefore he treated Abram well for her sake; and gave him sheep and oxen and donkeys and male and female servants and female donkeys and camels.

17 But the LORD struck Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife.

18 Then Pharaoh called Abram and said, "What is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife?

19 "Why did you say, 'She is my sister,' so that I took her for my wife? Now then, here is your wife, take her and go."

20 Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him; and they escorted him away, with his wife and all that belonged to him.

### Genesis 40:12-15 NASB

12 Then Joseph said to him, "This is the interpretation of it: the three branches are three days;

13 within three more days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your office; and you will put Pharaoh's cup into his hand according to your former custom when you were his cupbearer.

14 "Only keep me in mind when it goes well with you, and please do me a kindness by mentioning me to Pharaoh and get me out of this house."

15 "For I was in fact kidnapped from the land of the Hebrews, and even here I have done nothing that they should have put me into the dungeon."

### Genesis 40:20-23 NASB

20 Thus it came about on the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday, that he made a feast for all his servants; and he lifted up the head of the chief cupbearer and the head of the chief baker among his servants.

21 He restored the chief cupbearer to his office, and he put the cup into Pharaoh's hand;

22 but he hanged the chief baker, just as Joseph had interpreted to them.

23 Yet the chief cupbearer did not remember Joseph, but forgot him.

### Genesis 41:1 NASB

1 Now it happened at the end of two full years that Pharaoh had a dream...

### Genesis 41:9 NASB

9 Then the chief cupbearer spoke to Pharaoh, saying, "I would make mention today of my own offenses."

10 "Pharaoh was furious with his servants, and he put me in confinement in the house of the captain of the bodyguard, both me and the chief baker.

11 "We had a dream on the same night, he and I; each of us dreamed according to the interpretation of his own dream.

12 "Now a Hebrew youth was with us there, a servant of the captain of the bodyguard, and we related them to him, and he interpreted our dreams for us. To each one he interpreted according to his own dream."

13 "And just as he interpreted for us, so it happened; he restored me in my office, but he hanged him."

14 Then Pharaoh sent and called for Joseph, and they hurriedly brought him out of the dungeon; and when he had shaved himself and changed his clothes, he came to Pharaoh.

#### The Exercise of Our Faith:

James 4:13-16 NASB

13 Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit."

14 Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.

15 Instead, you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that."

16 But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil.

Lamentations 3:25-26 NASB

25 The LORD is good to those who wait for Him, to the person who seeks Him.

26 It is good that he waits silently for the salvation of the LORD.

Psalms 62:5-8 NASB

5 My soul, wait in silence for God only, For my hope is from Him.

6 He only is my rock and my salvation, My stronghold; I shall not be shaken.

7 On God my salvation and my glory rest; The rock of my strength, my refuge is in God.

8 Trust in Him at all times, O people; Pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us. Selah.

Philippians 4:6-7 NASB

6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

## TRUSTING GOD WITH OTHER'S DECISIONS

*The inability to trust God with the decisions of other people has produced the most skillful politicians and manipulators.*

Genesis 13:5-13

5 Now Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents.

6 **And the land could not sustain them while dwelling together, for their possessions were so great that they were not able to remain together.**

7 **And there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock.** Now the Canaanite and the Perizzite were dwelling then in the land.

8 **So Abram said to Lot, "Please let there be no strife between you and me, nor between my herdsmen and your herdsmen, for we are brothers."**

9 **"Is not the whole land before you? Please separate from me; if to the left, then I will go to the right; or if to the right, then I will go to the left."**

10 Lot lifted up his eyes and saw all the valley of the Jordan, that **it was well watered everywhere**--this was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah--**like the garden of the LORD**, like the land of Egypt as you go to Zoar.

11 So Lot chose for himself all the valley of the Jordan, and Lot journeyed eastward. Thus they separated from each other.

12 Abram settled in the land of Canaan, **while Lot settled in the cities of the valley, and moved his tents as far as Sodom.**

13 Now **the men of Sodom were wicked exceedingly** and sinners against the LORD.

14 The LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, "Now lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward;

15 for **all the land which you see, I will give it to you and to your descendants forever.**

16 "I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth, so that if anyone can number the dust of the earth, then your descendants can also be numbered.

17 Arise, walk about the land through its length and breadth; for I will give it to you."

18 Then Abram moved his tent and came and dwelt by the oaks of Mamre, which are in Hebron, and there he built an altar to the LORD.

#### The Exercise of Our Faith:

Psalm 56:4 NASB

4 In God I have put my trust; I shall not be afraid. **What can mere man do to me?**

Psalm 31:19-20 NASB

19 How great is Your goodness, Which You have stored up for those who fear You, Which You have wrought for those who take refuge in You, Before the sons of men!

20 **You hide them in the secret place of Your presence from the conspiracies of man; You keep them secretly in a shelter from the strife of tongues.**

## TRUSTING GOD AS YOUR SOURCE OF PROVISION

*Nothing will test your faith in God as your Provider like your tithes and offerings.*

Genesis 14:14-24

14 When Abram heard that his relative had been taken captive, he led out his trained men, born in his house, three hundred and eighteen, and went in pursuit as far as Dan.

15 He divided his forces against them by night, he and his servants, and defeated them, and pursued them as far as Hobah, which is north of Damascus.

16 **He brought back all the goods, and also brought back his relative Lot with his possessions, and also the women, and the people.**

17 Then after his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley).

18 **And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; now he was a priest of God Most High.**

19 He blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth;

20 And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand." **He gave him a tenth of all.**

21 The king of Sodom said to Abram, "**Give the people to me and take the goods for yourself.**"

22 Abram said to the king of Sodom, "**I have sworn to the LORD God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth,**

23 that I will not take a thread or a sandal thong or anything that is yours, for fear you would say, 'I have made Abram rich.'

24 "I will take nothing except what the young men have eaten, and the share of the men who went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their share."

#### The Exercise of Our Faith:

Malachi 3:10-11 NASB

10 "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this," says the LORD of hosts, "if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows."

11 "Then I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it will not destroy the fruits of the ground; nor will your vine in the field cast its grapes," says the LORD of hosts.

### TRUSTING GOD WHILE WAITING

*Waiting on God to move is clearly one of the hardest and most agonizing tests of our faith. But remember, it is never "too late" for God. God is waiting, not for you to fail, but for the precise moment when His power can manifest in the greatest way.*

Genesis 15:1-6 NASB

1 After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not fear, Abram, I am a shield to you; Your reward shall be very great."

2 Abram said, "O Lord GOD, what will You give me, since I am childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?"

3 And Abram said, "Since You have given no offspring to me, one born in my house is my heir."

4 Then behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "This man will not be your heir; but one who will come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir."

5 And He took him outside and said, "Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be."

6 Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.

John 11:21-27 NASB

21 Martha then said to Jesus, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died."

22 "Even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You."

23 Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."

24 Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day."

25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies,

26 and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?"

27 She said to Him, "Yes, Lord; I have believed that You are the Christ, the Son of God, even He who comes into the world."

#### The Exercise of Our Faith:

Psalms 37:5-8 NASB

5 Commit your way to the LORD, Trust also in Him, and He will do it.

6 He will bring forth your righteousness as the light And your judgment as the noonday.