

We've got to finish up Hebrews chapter 6 tonight, so turn to Genesis 12. And I know that's confusing, but you'll know more in a little bit. We can't understand Hebrews 6 until we get Genesis 12-22 down. So, we've got to fly through that, and then we'll get through Hebrews 6. So, let's go Genesis chapter 12. Very early, I mean very early in the history of man, in fact this is how early it is, God creates the entire universe, creates man and woman, Adam and Eve mess it all up, they absolutely blow it, their offspring fill the earth, they are so deplorable that God regrets even making mankind, and then that beautiful children's story happens where God kills everyone, right. And so, God sends Noah and his family into the ark, destroys the earth, kills everybody on the earth except who's in the ark, they come out of the ark, they begin to inhabit the earth again, they settle in one city, and in that city, they say, "God might destroy us again, so let's do this: Let's build a tower to the sky. And in that tower, if God ever decides to flood the earth again, we can get in that tower, and we'll be safe. Let's make a name for ourselves and build this tower." And God becomes angry with them, angry at the arrogance of man, and in this moment, it's called the tower of Babel because He, at that moment, changes the languages of mankind and disperses them throughout the earth. I believe, now this is just what I believe, this isn't in the text, I believe this is also where we get our colors. I think in this moment, God not only divides out the languages, but He also begins to change the colors. And so, if you're in here today and you're white and you're going, "So that's where they came from." No, that's where you came from, alright. Because, to steal from the mayor of New Orleans, it was a chocolate world long before it was a vanilla world, alright. So, if you're going, "That's where they came from," you're wrong, that's where you came from. And that's what makes, honestly, historically, the white supremacy idea such a ridiculous, idiotic idea, specifically when they start wanting to pull texts from the Old Testament and go, "See!" If that's even true, then God's warning them against us, not us against them. That's a whole nother soap box I'm on, we'll keep going alright.

So after the tower of Babel, very early in history, we move on and God finds a man named Abram, and this thing starts going. So let's look at Genesis 12, starting in verse 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;" Now, this doesn't sound like a big deal, when you're talking about a guy, "Hey, leave your father's house, leave the people you know, leave your relatives," because a lot of us do that all the time. I mean, we go off to college. I went off to college seven hours from my family, from my relatives, from anybody I knew. It's not a big deal in our culture to leave your father's house and head off. In this time period, it was almost suicide. There are no laws, there's no one to appeal to, there's no 911, the world is a very pagan, very dark, very dangerous place, and for God to say, "Leave the safety of your numbers, leave the wealth of your father, leave all that you know and I want you to go. And I'm not even going to tell you where to go; I'm just going to tell you, to head towards Canaan and stop when I tell you to stop." And so, God comes and says, "Alright Abram, let's go, let's get moving." And look at the covenant that God makes with him, starting in verse 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; 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." And so, here's the covenant made to Abram, God says, "I want to bless the entire earth.

Listen, we've tried this through the first 12 chapters, I've almost had to kill all of you twice, I'm gonna do this now, alright. I'm going to bless the entire earth through your offspring, but here's that I want you to do, I want you to step out on faith, I want you to believe in Me, I want you to trust in Me, and I want you to just head towards Canaan." "Well am I going to stop in Canaan?" "You just head towards Canaan, and I'll tell you where to stop when you get there." Now, let's look at

what Abram does in verse 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. Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his nephew, and all their possessions which they had accumulated, and the persons which they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan; thus they came to the land of Canaan." So, God says, "I'm going to bless the entire earth through your offspring. Through you and because of your name, I am going to bless the entire earth. So follow me. Let's go." And Abram packs up his stuff and heads out.

Now, flip over to Genesis 15, "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.' Abram said, 'O Lord GOD, what will You give me, since I am childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?' And Abram said, 'Since You have given no offspring to me, one born in my house is my heir.'" So here's what just happened, Abram then engages God and says, "You told me that You were going to bless the entire earth, that You were going to move mightily in the entire earth through my offspring, through me. The problem is I don't have any kids. And so the heir of all that I am is my second cousin Eliezer in the backwoods of Damascus. I don't even like him. Is this how this thing's going to go down? I mean, are You going to work this thing through my mom's second cousin's brother's son? That's how you're going to do this?" And so, he's going, "I don't get...I know you made this promise to me, I know you made this covenant to me, but I don't have a son. How? Are you going to do it through this guy in Damascus?" So okay, God's going to answer. Verse 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.'" And the women who have had babies in unison go, "Not his body!" Verse 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.' Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness." So, then God comes to him and says, "No, no, no. Okay, yes. The covenant I made with you, I'm going to keep and it's not going to be through your cousin in Damascus. You will have a son."

Now, flip over to Genesis 17. Verse 1, "Now when Abram was ninety-nine years old..." So, from the moment he's been given this promise that he'll have a son until now, it's been 25 years. God makes a promise, and 25 years later, nothing. So, let's go, "...the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, 'I am God Almighty; walk before Me, and be blameless. I will establish My covenant between Me and you, and I will multiply you exceedingly.' Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying, 'As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you will be the father of a multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and kings will come forth from you. I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you.'" Ninety-nine years old, God reiterates the covenant, but what are we missing? A son. We still don't have a son. But maybe you're going, "He's ninety-nine, maybe his girl's twenty-two. He is rich." Let's go, verse 15, "Then God said to Abraham, 'As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. I will bless her, and indeed I will give you a son by her. Then I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her.' Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed..." I mean, to Abraham, this is almost getting comical. Now, let's keep reading this, "...and said in his heart, 'Will a child be born to a man one hundred years old? And will Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?'" Now, I've heard a lot of teachings on this and I've read tons of sermons on this over the last couple of weeks. And you know what funny? Everybody wants to make the age here a non issue. They want to go, "Well, people lived longer back in those days." Now, I've got a problem with that, and here's the problem. The text, over and over and over again, wants you to understand that they're old, and that what's happening here is not normal. There will be an adjective, there will be a sentence added to how old they are every time we come to a new text. They're like, "They're old....When they were really old...When they were absolutely really old." So, although I've heard a lot of preachers go, "Well, people lived longer back then, the text itself is saying, "Nah, they're old. They're old."

In fact, look in chapter 18 with me. God comes to Abram in the form of three men. So, God speaks through one, the other two are angels, and in Genesis 18:9, the Lord begins to speak to Abraham now. And look in verse 9, "Then they said to him, 'Where is Sarah your wife?' And he said, 'There, in the tent.' He said, 'I will surely return to you at this time next year; and behold, Sarah your wife will have a son.' And Sarah was listening at the tent door, which was behind him. Now Abraham and Sarah were old,..." and then, they add a little exclamation mark to that, "...advanced in age." "Just in case you don't get what I mean by old, I mean advanced in age." So for all the preachers I've heard who want to say that this isn't that huge of a deal because the people lived longer then, it is absolutely apparent in the text about their lives that this is well beyond normal. Now, here we go, "Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age; Sarah was past childbearing. Sarah laughed to herself, saying, 'After I have become old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?' And the LORD said to Abraham, 'Why did Sarah laugh, saying, 'Shall I indeed bear a child, when I am so old?' Is anything too difficult for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, at this time next year, and Sarah will have a son.' Sarah denied it however, saying, 'I did not laugh'; for she was afraid." And God's going to say, "Nah, you laughed." It's great, I mean this is great. She's listening at the tent canvas, hears it, chuckles to herself, and God in three persons here, three men, two of them angels goes, "Why'd you laugh Sarah?" "I didn't." "Yes, you did." And that's kind of the conversation that's just happened here. "Then the men rose up from there, and looked down toward Sodom; and Abraham was walking with them to send them off." Twenty-five years, for twenty-five years, a promise given. For twenty-five years, a picture in the mind, in the heart of Abraham and Sarah was given. And after twenty-five years, both began to think the idea laughable.

Okay, let's celebrate with them. Genesis 21. So, Sarah is now ninety-one, which is advanced in age, and our boy Abraham is one-hundred one years old. And so, here we go, verse 1, "Then the LORD took note of Sarah as He had said, and the LORD did for Sarah as He had promised. So Sarah conceived and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the appointed time of which God had spoken to him. Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him, whom Sarah bore to him, Isaac. Then Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him." And so, after twenty-five years of this promise being given, of God giving them this picture in their mind, in their heart, finally Isaac is born. And I wish I had time to show you the celebration, because there is an epic celebration that ensues after this kid is born. I mean, he is killing half the cattle in his thing. It is the barbecue of all barbecues, alright. He's having everyone come in, and they are celebrating the birth of this little boy. And this little boy begins to grow, and God comes to Abraham basically says, "Who do you love more? Do you love Me or do you love this promise more?" And Abraham doesn't know.

So, here we go to a really, really strange text in Scripture. Genesis 22, starting in verse 1, "Now it came about after these things, that God tested Abraham, and said to him, 'Abraham!' And he said, 'Here I am.'" Now, let me clarify some things here. There is a wildly popular idea among evangelicals that's kind of catching wind among evangelicals. The proper name of the idea is open theism. It's the idea that God does not know the future. And that is not a limitation on God's knowledge, because the future has not happened. And so there's nothing for God not to know. And this is one of the key texts they like to use here, because they're saying, "Oh, God's gotta test Abraham, because He doesn't know what he'll do." Well, two things: Number one, that means God doesn't know the present, because He's testing the state of Abraham's heart now, which is a ridiculous idea.

The second thing I would point out is God is testing not because God needs to know something, but because Abraham needs to know something. Has anyone else lived through something just so that you can now know you can live through that something? No? Well yeah, it's coming for you. Verse 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.'" So, "Take you son, tie him to an altar, gut him so that all his blood runs off the altar, and then burn him alive." Hmm.

Verse 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. On the third day Abraham raised his eyes and saw the place from a distance. Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey, and I and the lad will go over there; and we will worship and return to you." Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son, and he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So the two of them walked on together. Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." And he said, "Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" Abraham said, "God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." So the two of them walked on together. Then they came to the place of which God had told him; and Abraham built the altar there and arranged the wood, and bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son." How...I'm trying to get in my mind how horrifying this moment must be for both of them. I mean, do you think Isaac just jumped up on the altar? I mean, he's seen what's about to happen. Do you think maybe Abraham has to overpower him, bind him? I can imagine that he's not going to willingly throw himself on the altar.

Verse 10, "Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." He said, "Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me." Then Abraham raised his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him a ram caught in the thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram and offered him up for a burnt offering in the place of his son. Abraham called the name of that place The LORD Will Provide, as it is said to this day, "In the mount of the LORD it will be provided." Then the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven,..." Now, verse 16 is going to be huge for what happens when we get to Hebrews 6. "...and [He] said, "By Myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son, your only son, indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies." So, God makes a promise in Genesis 12, it takes twenty-five years to be fulfilled. As it's fulfilled, God then says, "Do you love the promise more than Me?" Abraham says, "No, You're enough." And God says, "I swear by Myself that what I have promised you will come true.

Now, with all of that in your head, let's go to Hebrews 6. So, the book of Hebrews is written to a group of men and women who are really struggling. This is our 10th week in the book of Hebrews. We've kind of walked through verse by verse by verse, and if you've been here at all, you've seen how often God's been going, "Come on now. Let's make it here. Let's hold fast here. Let's not neglect our salvation. Let's run here. Let's cling..." Alright, so you've got this group of people that is just really struggling and really having a difficult time holding fast to the promises of God. So, God's going to reference here, the story that we just read. Look at verse 13, "For when God made the promise to Abraham..." What was the promise? That he was going to have a son and through that son, the whole earth would be blessed. "...since He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, saying, "I will surely bless you and I will surely multiply you." Now, we'll read this word for word in a second, but men swear by things greater than themselves. It's not by things less than themselves, alright. So, what you and I want to do when we want to make a point, like a popular one in our day is we'll go, "I swear by my mother's grave..." And what you're saying there is, "I'm telling the truth, and if I'm not telling the truth, may my mother be desecrated." Or, "I swear by my own eyes, I'm telling the truth." Now, when God swears, it puts Him in a dilemma. Why? Because nothing's greater than Him. It's not like He can go, "I swear by the...oh no, I made that. Okay...um...then I swear by...no, I made that too." So, God goes, "Alright, I swear by Myself. If I'm lying, let Me not be God. I swear by Myself." That's what He does to Abraham.

Look in verse 15, "And so, having patiently waited, Abraham obtained the promise. For men swear by one greater than themselves, and with them an oath given as confirmation is an end of every dispute." Now, we got a cultural chasm

happening here, because we don't really understand that text. But here's what He's referring to, in the Old Testament, if you say, "I swear by my family that I'm not lying," and you end up being a liar, guess who gets killed. Your family. Alright, so if someone puts his family on the line, then you probably can trust him. If I say, "I swear by my daughter, Audrey's life, I swear by my son, Reid's life...", and if you find out I'm a liar, my kids get killed. Then I'm not just throwing that out, huh? Not unless I'm absolutely depraved and deplorable. So, he's saying that that would end the dispute.

Now, look in verse 17, "In the same way God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise..." Now, the heirs of the promise are you and I. So, the promise was that Abraham would have a son, Isaac, Isaac; Jacob, Jacob on through king David, king David to a little virgin girl named Mary, who has a son named Jesus. So, the virgin Mary has a son named Jesus who then becomes the savior of the world, blesses the entire world. You and I are heirs of that promise. So He wants to show us, look at this the unchangeableness of His purpose that He interposed with an oath, that the world might be blessed through our salvation. He has not changed His mind. He has not changed His plan. He has not changed His purpose.

Verse 18, "...so that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have taken refuge would have strong encouragement to take hold of the hope set before us. This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil..." The veil being that idea that the holy of holies is separated from God's people no longer. We are anchored inside the veil. Verse 20, "...where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek." And for the next two weeks, we'll talk about Melchizedek, but for now, let me bring all of this together.

So, we are an odd place here at the Village. I mean, we just are. When I got here three years ago, there were 160 of us, and we all huddled up and this is what we prayed. We didn't want any transfer or growth at all. Like, we didn't want anybody from any other church transferring their membership and coming here. We just wanted all the down trodden and beat up and addicts and felons. I mean, we wanted this place to be dirty and gritty and nasty, and it started happening. And by the end of that first year, we were like, "Oh my God! Send us someone who owns a Bible!" I mean it was like dangerous. I started packing heat. I mean, it was just a scary place, man. We were giving invitations, I would never close my eyes when we prayed. I'd look up and my Bible would be gone. It was just kind of this really gritty place, and we just started going, "Um okay, back to the drawing board, because now, we have this huge influx of people that are really, really, really new to any of this. And we've got some really dark stuff, and we've got nobody that can even talk with them or love on them. I mean, we don't even know what to do here. And so, then we said, "Okay, send us some church people. Send us people who own a Bible and who know where to turn when I ask people to turn places." And then what happened is we got this huge influx of...and these are generalizations, cause I know some of you are like, "I was here in the beginning?!? I'm not a felon." You were an exception to what was happening at that time...Because then what happened next is we didn't get church people; we got de-churched people. We got this whole massive crowd who left church 10-12 years ago because they were beat up and killed by it. And so, now we've got this whole group of really broken, hurting, lonely, dying people. And so, we were like, "Oh my God! Please send me someone, anyone. Send me a group of people that are somewhat healthy. I'll take somewhat healthy. I'll take missing an eye with no teeth. Give me just someone who is somewhat healthy to help with all these people." And really, it's been in the last 8-9 months that we started getting people in who have a healthy walk with Jesus, and we were so giddy about it. We were like, "Please don't leave us. No, I know things are scary here. Please don't go sir." So, we're so clingy, alright. We're like that really bad date right now. We're like, "I'll call you." In the car, right after you left the restaurant, "How are you?" Here's the thing. I don't know yet, three years in, that I would call us a place of healing, but I know we're a place that hopes for it. I mean, we hope for it.

But let's be honest. Is it just me or do the promises of God sometimes take longer than we were led to believe? And the healing and the fullness and the intimacy we were promised seem to be coming slowly or doesn't seem to be coming at all. Anyone? Just me? Good. Well, three of us. That's cool. It's a little lonely up here right now. And I don't think, historically, church has helped us much, because churches, historically, love that supernatural testimony that none of us have except that dude, you know. The guy who walks up on stage and goes, "I struggled back then, and then I got saved. Now, I don't even have to read the Bible anymore because I have it memorized. And all I have to do anymore is look at people and they get saved. So, this is what Jesus does in the life of those who would submit to Him." And he walks off and you're like, "Oh my God! What's wrong with me, because my story goes nothing like that at all?" And then we begin to think that we're broken. Maybe it's just not working for us.

Or how about this one, have you what you thought was that victory, that big victory over your secret sin, you know, that one that always beats the trash out of you all the time and that you can never get any victory over yet. And you had this moment of epiphany, and you're at the altar and you're sobbing and you're like, "Never again!" And you head out, and maybe you did a great job for six or seven weeks or months. And then, out of nowhere, it's louder and stronger than ever.

Or how about, you thought you let go of all your bitterness and your anger and your rage. And you came up and said, "I forgive them." And then, like fifteen days later, that person does something and you're like, "I hate him!...No, wait. I let it go. No, I let it go." And then, all of a sudden, it's back. I mean, is it just me or do the promises of God seem to sometimes work slower than we were promised in Sunday school?

I try to get my head around twenty-five years, you know. I mean, we are a culture built on speed. And you know how I know? Like back in these days, you'd travel at a top speed of 10mph, and in our culture, people get shot on the freeway for going 60mph in the left lane. We want it fixed now. We want it all now, and it better not be difficult to get there. I mean, because if it requires me coming clean and being honest and seen as the schmuck that I am, I'm not interested. Is it just me or do the promises of healing and fullness, wholeness, do they seem to come slower than we were promised? Not by God, but by others. Like, in my own life, I have this great desire to let some things die with me, you know. Like, I have somethings that I really have to wrestle with and struggle with and get lies out of my mind and claim truth. And sometimes, I even have to get out my journal and go, "I'm an idiot. I know I'm an idiot. Let me write this out so I know," just so I can see clearly what's really the truth and what's the lie. And I so desperately want those things to go in the ground with me, like I don't want my son to have them. And I don't know that I can control all of that, but the parts, I can't control any of that.

But I keep laying my life down at Christ's feet, going, "I'll do anything. You want me in counseling? I'm there. You want me to stand in front of our people and come clean about everything that I struggle with and hurt with? I will do whatever, just let this go in the ground with me. And as adamantly as I want those things, it's amazing to me how quickly some of those things will begin to whisper to me. Are you tracking with me at all tonight?

Now, let me tell you who I'm not talking to and who I am talking to, and we'll finish it up. If you're in here tonight and you come in here every week and you hear us talk about wholeness and healing and right standing with God and all of those things, and you have not moved in obedience at all, I'm not talking to you. Because in this text, Abraham was absolutely obedient. God says, "Let's go," and he says, "Okay. I don't even know where we're going. This is going to make me look like a fool." I mean, can you imagine that conversation with his father? "I'm going to take my stuff and jet." "Where are you heading?" "I'm not really sure, not really sure. That way. I'm heading west" "You know, you're probably going to get killed out there." "Oh yeah, probably. Father, God told me He'd keep me safe." "Oh, God told you He'd keep you safe." Have you tried that one on your folks yet? "God will keep me safe, dad. I'm going." Have you tried that one yet? And so, he heads out looking the fool. So, if you're in here tonight and you've got all this secret junk and you have not...you know,

we plead with you every week, "If you can't...if you don't know what to do, you gotta go where someone can help you. Get into celebrate recovery. Head and get some biblical counseling over at the center. I mean, we've just pleaded with you to be honest about where you are. And if you haven't done that and you're going, "I don't know why I'm not healing," and "You're right, the promises of God are slow." No, you are. You're slow right now. You're the slow one in that situation. You're the slow one, not God. God's probably going, "Come one! Let Me heal you. Get in here and let's get going. Aren't you tired yet?" God's probably pleading with you to drop your junk. So, you're not who I'm talking to tonight.

But if you're going, "I'll look like the fool. Pack up the stuff. Let's go." And you're walking in obedience and still it seems so slow, God says this to you tonight in Hebrews, "I cannot lie. Don't lose hope. I have not forgotten you. I have not abandoned you. I have not forgotten My promises. Don't give up. Don't let go....Okay, it's dark today, I know. Don't give up...Okay, I know it's been three years. Don't give up. I have not forgotten you...Okay, your dark side is loud today. Don't give up. I have not forgotten you." And this hope that God cannot lie and that He has promised us salvation, healing, reconciliation and restoration, this hope that in the end, that God will, anchors our soul, that no matter how dark the night gets, we will not be tossed about. Are you tracking with me? And so tonight, listen, I know what we've got in here, man. I know some of you are barely hanging in there. I know that you're living from weekend to weekend. You're coming in and you hear us sing, and you sing, and like you try to suck in all the fuel you can, all the energy, all the vitality you can, and you leave here. And I know you're going back to really hard situations. You know, my prayer and my hope has been that you'd get in your car tonight and you're going to be all drenched and wet, and you grab hold of your steering wheel, and just maybe you'll hear tonight, maybe you'll hear enough out of the story of Abraham and God promising by His own name that He won't abandon you to breathe out and trust that the mercies of God are new every morning. And He doesn't ask you to survive this year; He gives you strength to survive tonight. And in the morning, you're going to wake up and there's going to be new mercies there. God's not going to push you beyond what you can take. He cannot lie. He has not forgotten, not abandoned, not left you to your own devices. And so, I pray that hope would be restored. Alright, so maybe you're hanging in there by just a thread tonight. I don't know what it is. I don't know what hurt is in your heart. I don't know what thing keeps haunting you. I don't know where you are. I don't know if you're being obedient or if you're walking in disobedience, but I know that we've got this great promise that goes well beyond us and historically goes deeper and longer than most of us can fathom. It's this promise that God wants to bless by...Ephesians 3 would say, showing the manifold wisdom of Himself through our salvation and our healing and our wholeness and the process that it takes sometimes to get there.

And I know there are some of you tonight, I know that you haven't gotten to that place yet where you're willing to deal with your stuff. So, my prayer this week is that maybe tonight, you'll finally be tired enough. I know that some of you aren't yet, but I'm hoping that some of you are. But especially tonight, I pray for my friends in here, my brothers and sisters in here tonight whose hearts are just hurting, and it just feels like the whole weight of their own failures is on them. And I know what happens in that moment; there can be all this self doubt and all this doubt that God can forgive and can love and walk you through. I wish we would have had more time tonight to get into Abraham's life, I mean, it's like every other chapter in his life, he screws up in this huge way. And yet, God continues to reiterate the promise. It's that grace that Michael was talking about earlier, that son that comes home, and the father just weeps and hugs and throws a ring on and throws a feast. And so, I pray for you tonight. I pray that your hope would be restored, because I know sometimes we can run out of it. And I know that sometimes, God's pace and His timing is not what we would like, and I get that. And I know that we'd like to just snap our fingers and have this gone or this here.

So, I'm going to pray for us, and then I'm just going to dismiss us. And I think Bleecker's just going to pick a little bit and sing a little bit. And if you need to hang out in here a little while and just kind of rest in the things that have been spoken tonight or maybe you need to grab a friend and go, "I need you to pray for me, because I am barely hanging in there right

now. Maybe you need to just sit there and say, over and over again, "God cannot lie. God cannot lie. God cannot lie..." Or maybe you're fine, in which case, be safe on the way home, but you're welcome to stay as long as you want.

"Father, I thank You for these men and women. I thank You that they braved some nasty conditions out there. I pray tonight that the unbelievable weight of Your grace might fall fresh on us. And I pray for my brothers and sisters who feel overwhelmed by baggage and sin. And I pray that they would restore their hope in You and that the story of Abraham, who had to wait twenty-five, years would encourage us that even in this moment, no matter how long it's been, You have not forgotten about us, You have not abandoned us, that You deeply love us, and that You, who began this thing and promised, will be faithful to complete it. And so, I pray that we, like Abraham, would patiently wait and obtain the promise. I thank You for those in this room who have obtained the promise. And I don't want to make it sound tonight, in sermon or in illustration, like we never get to heal, because I know we do, I know there are those in this room who have absolutely healed, whose day of promise has come. So, I pray that You would encourage Your saints tonight, sweet Father, that we would breathe out and know that we have not been forgotten..."

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