

Hear It Again

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Preacher: Dr. Daniel Heeringa

[0 : 00] Everybody will turn to Genesis chapter 22. Am I on? Can you hear me? That's why y'all were so, you couldn't hear me. I almost did all that again, but I'm not going to. I picked up the phone recently, and a friend said, I, cancer.

His voice broke, as he told me. I knew that tests had been done. I knew that he was somewhat anticipating it.

I said, you broke up, tell me again. And he said, I don't have cancer. I needed to hear it again. Wednesday morning at 4 a.m., my daughter, oldest daughter, left, packed like a mule going down the road.

I took a picture as she left. I told her I loved her and to be careful.

She got to probably about Pickens County Airport, and we realized she had left something that she needed, that she had bought for the first days of school, and she needed it.

[1 : 23] And so we called her. She turned around. At 4.10, I met her in the road, in front of the house, put her package in the car, and said, I love you.

Be careful. I wanted her to hear it again. Sometimes you need to hear things again.

Sometimes they need to be repeated. And Abraham, who we've been studying, offered up his son Isaac on the altar as God instructed him.

And an angel comes to Abraham after he does that and speaks words that he has already heard. But sometimes we need to hear it again.

Let's hear it again this morning. Genesis chapter 22, beginning in verse 15, it says this, And the angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven and said, By myself I have sworn, declares the Lord, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore.

[2 : 55] And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemy. And in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed because you have obeyed my voice. So Abraham returned to his young men and they arose and went together to Beersheba.

And Abraham lived at Beersheba. Let's pray together. Heavenly Father, I am thankful for the word that you give us and the words that sometimes you give us a second time.

Those things that we often sometimes, not only a second time, but maybe more, need to hear again. God, I pray today that in the things that we face in our lives, help us, oh God, to hear what we need to hear again today.

In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. I really believe verse 15 through 19 is a reboot for Abraham.

He desired a son to carry on the lineage that God had promised him. Having that son and watching him grow and then God asking him to sacrifice his son.

[4 : 19] Willing to trust the Lord, he followed the command, trusting that somehow God would intervene. Somehow, if God took his son, he'd bring him back. He told others that both of them would be back.

Right there at the foot of the hill, when they followed him most of the way, he told them to wait and he and the boy would be back. He had confidence that God was going to do something to bring them both back safely.

God provided the ram that they noticed as the knife was raised over Isaac. That is slightly intense, folks. Where do we go from here?

Well, you remember what you already know. You hear what you've heard again. So I want to be clear this morning. I may not tell you anything new today, but there are three truths that I want you to hear again.

I think they apply to anything and everything in your life that you're concerned about. Three truths. [5 : 38] First one is this. God gives us his word. God gives us his word. The angel came a second time.

The first time the message was when the covenant of God was formed with Abraham. It's found in Genesis chapter 15 and before Abraham even had Isaac, he promised him that he would. With an uncertainty of how it could be done when his wife was past the age of bearing children, Abraham made other arrangements with Hagar, the lead maidservant, against the wishes of God. God promises Isaac again and then Isaac is born. Miraculously. We get to this event in Genesis chapter 22 on Mount Moriah and God provides a ram so that there's no need for Isaac to die there. In the aftermath, God reiterates, underlines what he said to start with because God keeps his promises. Whether it's his promises or whether it's the promise, he keeps it.

[6 : 58] And when I say the promise, I mean that once you are saved by the grace of God, your salvation is secure. That's the promise of God.

The promise of God is that if you'll surrender your life to the Lord Jesus Christ, if you'll admit that you're a sinner and ask him to come into your life and to save you, that he will do it. It's a promise of God. Once he does that, you can rest in that. That never changes. You'll change. God doesn't change. But the salvation that you receive from him will never change.

It is secure. Not only does it secure your eternity, but it upticks your life here because you are empowered now by the Holy Spirit of God to rise above the temptation that you face in this life. That is the promise of salvation. The promise of God. But beyond that promise, there are the promises of God.

[7 : 59] And I want you to understand that God's other promises are just as secure as your salvation. Notice the angel says, because you have done this.

Remember, Abraham has went up the mountain with Isaac, offered his son to the Lord. The son did not require him. Excuse me, the Lord did not require his son. And now the angel says, because you have done this.

Abraham was blessed because he was obedient. But I want you to be clear about something. God knew Abraham would obey him.

God knew Abraham would obey him before he ever established the first covenant with him. God knew Abraham would obey him before he was even created, before Abraham was even born.

The promise of God came before he knew beforehand what he was going to show Abraham and how Abraham would respond. He has promised Abraham that his descendants would be numerous.

[8 : 58] Here the angel takes it a step further. And in that promise of the legacy of Abraham, he's described for the first time here in this angelic message, that that legacy is to be as numerous as the stars in heaven, which are too numerous to count.

Now that's hard for us to grasp in Pickens County because we're blessed with trees and hills and mountains. Two weeks ago, I spent some nights in South Dakota on the backside of nowhere in Big Sky Country.

And when we went out at night, we saw the stars. Too numerous to count. Never before until this angelic message was his legacy described as numerous as the sands on the seashore.

If you were to take a cup of sand and this afternoon, take that cup of sand and go to your dining room table and pour that cup of sand out and start counting out the grains of sand as if you were counting coins, well, one, you are a very boring person.

But number two, you won't get it done today. I believe they're probably beyond what you're at least willing to calculate.

[10 : 43] That's the example that he gives. God's promises are that his blessings will be too numerous to count.

I want you to notice something else too. In verse 17, I love this passage. It says this, And your offspring shall possess the gates of his enemies.

Now understand the gate of the city. We're talking about walled cities. Okay? The gate was the main part of the city. If you came into that city, if you went out of that city, you had to go through the gate of the city.

It was the meeting spot. It was the social spot. If you want to know what was happening, that's where you went to see what was happening.

It was literally the gateway into the city. Now, you can try to tear down the wall. If you're trying to take over that city, you can try to build a ramp to go over the wall.

[11 : 52] They did such as that. You can ladder up or try to break through or tunnel under, but the real place to get through was the gate. And even if you did go over or under the wall, the first thing that an army would do if it went over the wall or under the wall was to get to the gate and open it up so the rest of the army could come in.

You defeat the enemy by possessing the gate. And God says here, Your offspring, because of your obedience, shall subdue the enemy.

You know what that means to us, Christian? Well, let me remind you of what Jesus said at Caesarea Philippi. Matthew chapter 16, beginning in verse 15, he said this, He said to them, But who do you say that I am?

And Simon Peter replied, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered him, Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah. That just means his daddy's name was Jonah. Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I'll build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. That word for Peter there means rock, like a small stone.

[13 : 14] But the reality is, when he says, and on this rock, that's a different word, more like a boulder. I had a New Testament professor that described this passage as meaning this.

He said, I wasn't there, but if I was there, I believe I would have seen this. And he said, Peter, and you are now rock. His name was Simon before he changed him to small stone.

You are rock. And on this rock, I'll build my church. And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. I want to be clear. No matter what denomination you come from, the church is not built on Peter. It's built on Christ. He is the foundation, the cornerstone, and the capstone.

That's where the strength comes from. But get this point. The gates of hell shall not prevail. In other words, if you go with God, we will possess the gate.

[14 : 19] If we go with God, we will subdue the enemy. If we go with God, we will win the battle, triumph over the enemy in the war. With God, friend, we win.

And the angel had to say that a second time to Abraham. He needed to hear it again or he wouldn't have repeated it. Maybe you need to hear it again.

I know I do from time to time. I need to be reminded that with God, we win. That is the blessings of believing. That is the blessings of obedience.

You will gain things from the Lord that you do not deserve because God gives us his word. Second truth is this.

You've heard this before. You need to hear it again. God challenges us to believe. Abraham had to believe God before Isaac was born.

[15 : 27] Abraham had to believe God when God asked for Isaac. Abraham had to believe God in the midst of the journey when he kept looking at that place, dreading the top of that mountain where he was going, looking up to that place.

He had to trust God in that. Abraham had to believe God when he told his servants, wait here, we'll be back. We'll be back, both of us.

Abraham had to believe God as he bound his son. Abraham had to believe God as he lifted that knife. Abraham had to believe. It was a challenge of belief.

And he's not the only one. Think about David. When David walked in to the valley of Elah and saw that blasphemous giant of a man, Goliath, breathing out his sacrilegious threats, David had to believe in God.

I mean, they tried to fit him with Saul's armor. And another passage said Saul was a head taller than every other man. It didn't fit on David. He couldn't believe in the armor.

[16 : 41] He had to believe in God. When Saul told him, you're just a boy, he had to believe in God. When David went and picked up five smooth stones, praying for accuracy, he had to believe in God.

And he referred back to what God had done for him in the past. He said, when I was keeping sheep and a bear came along, God enabled me to protect the sheep.

When the lion came along, God enabled me to protect the sheep. David had to believe that God had prepared him for this. He saw all that shepherding as a training ground for this valley, for this time.

David had to believe that when he went with boldness against those that defy the living God, that God would come through. David had to believe.

And when he went into that valley and when he took his shot and when he struck down the enemy, David had to believe. But he's not the only one. When Peter was in that boat in the midst of the storm, he had to believe.

[17 : 47] When he saw Jesus walking on the water, he had to believe. When Jesus told him to walk out on the water, he had to believe. And as long as his eyes stayed on Jesus, he stayed up.

And when he looked at the storm, he began to sink. I promise you folks, if you watch the storms in life, it'll weaken your faith every time.

But you keep your eyes upon the Lord and he will lead you to believe. Because God challenges us to believe. He did it in Abraham's life.

He did it in David's life. He did it in Peter's life. Oh, I could go on. We can talk about Joseph. We can talk about Moses. Y'all don't want lunch today, do you?

We can talk about Joshua. We can talk about Samson. We can talk about Nehemiah. We can talk about Esther. We can talk about Job.

[18 : 46] Let's get over to the prophets. Let's turn over to the apostles. All the way through, you will find that they had to believe.

God challenges us to believe, not just for biblical folks, for folks today. God challenges us to believe.

So I want to ask you this morning, have you ever believed on the Lord? 1 John 1, 9 says, if we confess our sins, he's faithful and just to forgive us of our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Leave that up a minute. I love this passage. And what I love about it is, if God was, if God was willing to do it but couldn't do it, we'd be in a mess.

And if God could do it but wasn't willing to do it, oh man, we'd be in a mess. But thank God, he's willing to do it and he can do it and not only does he forgive us of our sins, but listen, if you start naming your sins today, if we all do that, this place is going to get ugly.

[20 : 02] Okay? If we start confessing our sins but I'll tell you, we can make a list as long as we possibly can think of and we'll still not name them all. We'll miss some out.

And what I am thankful about is when we bring our known sin to God, he is willing and able to forgive us of our sins and look at what it says, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

He cleans the slate when we believe. Have you ever believed on the Lord? If not, that's your challenge today because he challenges us to believe.

Third thing is this. God keeps his promise. God populated a nation through Abraham just like he promised.

He used Abraham because of his obedience. Think about another man that obeyed God. Noah obeyed God. He built a boat in the desert when it hadn't even rained.

[21 : 11] Why did he do it? Because God told him to do it. And all the storms and the floods, when Noah reached dry land, the first thing he did was build an altar to the Lord in Genesis chapter 9.

It was after the sacrifice that God promised he would never again destroy the earth by flood and then he put his bow in the sky.

All that fight over the rainbow if they only knew. Let me tell you what literally the Hebrew mind would see when they look at that passage. is that when the wrath of God is coming upon the people of the land that it is as if God has a bow and arrow and he is using that primitive weapon to display his wrath toward folks.

That's what the flood was doing. It was God using his wrath toward the earth and when he made that covenant with Noah after he went to that altar, God, thank God, hung up his bow.

in the sky he was done. And every time you see a rainbow you can be reminded thank God the wrath of God has been spared from my life because God's hung up his bow.

[22 : 29] I didn't make that up. The Hebrew language tells us that. Hagar was used by Abraham and Sarah to have the baby that they thought they could not have.

It was not in God's will and it made for a messy hairy situation but God promised her before her child was born that he would father descendants without number.

Job went through the worst. I can't imagine the losses he took the accusations that people made the hardship that he suffered but after he went through his trial the scripture says he received a

double portion of all that he had lost.

Why? Because God is faithful. He keeps his promise. Now I want you to recognize something. Abraham when he was going up that mountain with his precious son Isaac did not know this was a test of God.

He didn't know that till afterwards. Job when he went through all his suffering didn't know it was a test that he was going through until he suffered the losses that he did.

[24 : 08] I say that because we usually do not recognize the test that we face when we're walking in the midst of it. It's not until after the fact when we look back and see God's hand lead us through it that we understand what was going on.

It's just too real to us. It's right there before us. The test of God are not pre-scheduled on some syllabus that God gives us when we give our heart and life to him so we can know when it's going to come and when the deadline is.

They come unexpected. But God's promises God promises that he will not leave us alone in the midst of our difficulty and God keeps his promise.

Not only that but he blesses those who trust him and turn their way to his way. I like the way Kent Hughes put it.

He said this it's all so simple we grow in faith as we believe the bare word of God. The process is this God comes to us with his word and we're challenged to believe.

[25 : 22] When we believe his word he tests us by stretching our faith so that it can grow to greater dimensions than before. There are always valleys next to the hilltops of faith.

There are ups and downs but God grows our faith incrementally so that we are enabled to give our Isaacs to God.

so so so what changes does God want you to make in his life?

What changes does God want you to make in your life? Resting upon the promises of God being reminded of those things that most of you when you walked in this place already knew how does that apply to your life today?

What does his word and the conviction of his spirit speak to you about in regards to a change that needs to come in your life? You may be in that spot where you say well pastor listen I'm not hearing anything from God.

[26 : 40] I'm just not hearing it. and my first question would be it's not accusative it's a question are you listening? Are you attentive?

Are you taking personal time in his word? Because my friend the word of God is God breathes. It is a living active declaration of what he'll work and move not only in the people's lives that are listed in this book but what he'll do in our lives as well.

And when you ask the Lord Jesus God as I read this will you show me how it applies to my life?

God will you interact with what I'm dealing with in my life today as I read this passage God?

Will you give me direction I ask? I promise you the Holy Spirit will work and move in your life as you trust him in his word.

The other question is this have you answered what he's already told you to do? God convicted you in an area of your life that you're just letting lay and ignoring?

[28 : 00] Have you responded to what he's already told you to do? I want you to hear it again. God gives you his word. God will always challenge us to believe and God will always keep his promises.

You can rest in it. As my friend says often that's what the book says and the book never lies.

every head bowed and every eye closed. I want to ask you this morning has there ever been a time in your life when you've asked the Lord Jesus to come into your life and save you?

Have you ever acknowledged the fact that you're a sinner and need the Lord Jesus and ask him to save you? If that's never happened to you I want you to know in a few minutes we're going to stand we're going to give the invitation.

You can come for various reasons but the most important one of any of that is that if you don't know the Lord Jesus you come I'd love to guide you in that process of what it means to give your heart and life to the Lord. If you've done that privately but you've never done that publicly you need to acknowledge him through baptism.

[29 : 19] It's the first step of obedience. Christ did it as an example for us to follow and it's the way to proclaim that faith. So maybe you're coming today and say listen I know I've given my heart and life to the Lord but I've never made that publicly acknowledged and I need to do that today.

Maybe God's drawing you into this fellowship. You know that this is where God would have you to serve. Sometimes we just put those things off. Listen if you're putting that off for no reason except for stubbornness don't do that anymore.

Just obey God and come. I don't ever want you to do anything that God's not leading you to do. Never want you to sit on anything God is telling you to do. Maybe you're here this morning and the reality is there's just stuff in your life that you need to believe God for and you need to lay those things at the altar and give them over to God.

Not pick them up and take them back to your seat with you. Leave them here at his feet trusting him with it. I don't know how God's speaking to you but I promise you that if you obey him he'll keep his promises.

You can rest in it. Heavenly Father I love you and I thank you dear God for your love for us and I ask today that you'll move and you'll work in our midst. Help us to respond in obedience as you speak to our hearts and lives.

[30 : 31] Oh God I pray in Jesus precious name. Amen.