

# The Faithful God

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[ 0 : 0 0 ]     Good morning. My name is Matthew Capone and I'm one of the pastors here at Cheyenne Mountain Presbyterian Church and it's my joy to bring God's word to you today.

! Special welcome if you're new or visiting with us. We're glad that you're here. And we're glad that you're here not because we're trying to fill seats, but because we're following Jesus together as one community.

And as we follow Jesus together, we become convinced that there's no one so good they don't need God's grace and no one so bad that they can't have it, which is why we come back week after week to hear what God has to say to us in his word.

This week and next week, we are finishing our series in the story of Abraham, which you find in the book of Genesis. The book of Genesis tells the story first of the origin of the world in chapters 1-11 and then in chapters 12-25, it tells the origin story of God's people, his people Israel, which begins with Abraham.

And so that's been our focus as we've been going from the end of chapter 11 to the beginning of chapter 25. And we're doing that for two reasons. First, to prepare us to go back into our sermon series in the book of Romans.

[ 1 : 1 2 ]     There we're going to pick up in chapter 4 in just a couple weeks, which tells, again, the story of Abraham. So we've been looking at Abraham to prepare us to look at Abraham.

We're doing it for a second reason, which is that it allows us to ask this question, what does it look like to follow God in faith? Last week, we were in chapter 23, the death of Sarah.

And we saw once again that God did what he said he would do in the burial plot. He was continuing the process of giving the land that he had promised.

This week, we turn to chapter 24, the story of Isaac and Rebecca. And I have both good news and bad news for you. Bad news, this passage is really long.

Good news, this story is really fun. And so I'm just going to invite you to really get lost in it as we read it. It's a long passage. It's a rich story.

[ 2 : 1 2 ]     I am simply not going to be able to say the many number of things that could be said. So I want you to enjoy the narrative. We're going to skim the surface. I'm not going to retell the story very much.

We're just going to draw out a couple truths from this chapter. We're going to see God's faithfulness. We're going to see his faithfulness through generations. We're going to see his faithfulness to Abraham.

We're going to see God's faithfulness through generations. We're going to see God's faithfulness to Abraham. It's with that that I invite you to turn with me to Genesis chapter 24.

You'll find it in your worship guide. You can find it on your phone. You can find it in your Bible. No matter where you find it, remember that this is God's word. Proverbs chapter 30 verse 5 tells us every word of God proves true.

He's a shield to those who take refuge in him. So that's why we read now Genesis chapter 24 starting at verse 1. Now Abraham was old, well advanced in years.

[ 3 : 20 ] And the Lord had blessed Abraham in all things. And Abraham said to his servant, the oldest of his household, who had charge of all that he had, put your hand under my thigh, that I may make you swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and God of earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell, but will go to my country and to my kindred and take a wife for my son Isaac.

The servant said to him, perhaps the woman may not be willing to follow me to this land. Must I then take your son back to the land from which you came?

Abraham said to him, see to it that you do not take my son back there. The Lord, the God of heaven, who took me from my father's house and from the land of my kindred and who spoke to me and swore to me to your offspring I will give this land, he will send his angel before you and you shall take a wife for my son from there.

But if the woman is not willing to follow you, then you will be free from this oath of mine. Only you must not take my son back there.

So the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham, his master, and swore to him concerning this matter. Verse 10. Then the servant took ten of his master's camels and departed, taking all sorts of choice gifts from his master.

[ 4 : 56 ] And he arose and went to Mesopotamia to the city of Nahor. And he made the camels kneel down outside the city by the well of water at the time of evening, the time when women go out to draw water.

And he said, O Lord, God of my master Abraham, please grant me success today and show steadfast love to my master Abraham. Behold, I am standing by the spring of water and the daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water.

Let the young woman to whom I shall say, please let down your jar that I may drink. And who shall say, drink, and I will water your camels. Let her be the one whom you have appointed for your servant Isaac.

By this I shall know that you have shown your steadfast love to my master. Verse 15. Before he had finished speaking, behold, Rebekah, who was born to Bethuel, the son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, came out with her water jar on her shoulder.

The young woman was very attractive in appearance, a maiden whom no man had known. She went down to the spring and filled her jar and came up. Then the servant ran to meet her and said, please give me a little water to drink from your jar.

[ 6 : 16 ] She said, drink, my lord. And she quickly let down her jar upon her hand and gave him a drink. When she had finished giving him a drink, she said, I will draw water for your camels also until they have finished drinking.

So she quickly emptied her jar into the trough and ran again to the well to draw water. And she drew for all his camels. The man gazed at her in silence to learn whether the Lord had prospered his journey or not.

Verse 22. When the camels had finished drinking, the man took a gold ring weighing a half shekel and two bracelets for her arms weighing 10 gold shekels and said, please tell me whose daughter you are.

Is there room in your father's house for us to spend the night? She said to him, I am the daughter of Bethuel, the son of Milcah, whom she bore to Nahor.

She added, we have plenty of both straw and fodder and room to spend the night. The man bowed his head and worshiped the Lord and said, blessed be the Lord, the God of my master Abraham, who has not forsaken his steadfast love and his faithfulness toward my master.

[ 7 : 35 ] As for me, the Lord has led me in the way to the house of my master's kinsmen. Then the young woman ran and told her mother's household about these things.

Verse 29. Rebecca had a brother whose name was Laban. Laban ran out toward the man to the spring. As soon as he saw the ring and the bracelets on his sister's arms and heard the words of Rebecca, his sister, thus the man spoke to me, he went to the man.

And behold, he was standing by the camels at the spring. He said, come in, O blessed of the Lord. Why do you stand outside? For I have prepared the house and a place for the camels.

So the man came to the house and unharnessed the camels and gave straw and fodder to the camels. And there was water to wash his feet and the feet of the men who were with him.

Then food was set before him to eat. But he said, I will not eat until I have said what I have to say. He said, speak on. Verse 34.

[ 8 : 41 ] So he said, I am Abraham's servant. The Lord has greatly blessed my master and he has become great. He has given him flocks and herds, silver and gold, male servants and female servants.

These, excuse me, camels and donkeys. And Sarah, my master's wife, bore a son to my master when she was old and to him he has given all that he has.

My master made me swear, saying, you shall not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites in whose land I dwell. But you shall go to my father's house and to my clan and take a wife for my son.

I said to my master, perhaps the woman will not follow me. But he said to me, the Lord before whom I have walked will send his angel with you and prosper your way.

You shall take a wife for my son from my clan and from my father's house. Then you will be free from my oath and when you come to my clan and if they will not give her to you, you will be free from my oath.

[ 9 : 48 ] Verse 42. I came today to the spring and said, O Lord, the God of my master Abraham, if now you are prospering the way that I go, behold, I am standing by the spring of water.

Let the virgin who comes out to draw water to whom I shall say, please give me a little water from your jar to drink and who will say to me, drink and I will draw for your camels also.

Let her be the woman whom the Lord has appointed for my master's son. Verse 45. Before I had finished, speaking in my heart, behold, Rebecca came out with her water on her shoulder and she went down to the spring and drew water.

I said to her, please let me drink. She quickly let down her jar from her shoulder and said, drink and I will give your camels drink also. So I drank and she gave the camels drink also.

Then I asked her, whose daughter are you? She said, the daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son, who milk aboard to him. So I put the ring on her nose and the bracelets on her arms.

[ 10 : 56 ] Then I bowed my head and worshiped the Lord and blessed the Lord, the God of my master Abraham, who had led me by the right way to take the daughter of my master's kinsman for his son.

Now then, if you are going to show steadfast love and faithfulness to my master, tell me. And if not, tell me, that I may turn to the right hand or to the left.

Verse 50, Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said, The thing has come from the Lord. We cannot speak to you bad or good. Behold, Rebecca is before you.

Take her and go and let her be the wife of your master's son as the Lord has spoken. When Abraham's servant heard their words, he bowed himself to the earth before the Lord.

And the servant brought out jewelry of silver and of gold and garments and gave them to Rebecca. He also gave to her brother and to her mother costly ornaments. And he and the men who were with him ate and drank and they spent the night there.

[ 12 : 00 ] When they arose in the morning, he said, Send me away to my master. Her brother and her mother said, Let the young woman remain with us a while, at least ten days.

After that, she may go. But he said to them, Do not delay me since the Lord has prospered my way. Send me away that I may go to my master.

They said, Let us call the young woman and ask her. And they called Rebecca and said to her, Will you go with this man? She said, I will go.

So they sent away Rebecca their sister and her nurse and Abraham's servant and his men. And they blessed Rebecca and said to her, Our sister, may you become thousands of ten thousands and may your offspring possess the gate of those who hate him.

Then Rebecca and her young women arose and rode on the camels and followed the man. Thus the servant took Rebecca and went on his way. Now Isaac had returned from Bir Lahai Roy and was dwelling in the Negev.

[ 13 : 05 ] And Isaac went out to meditate in the field toward evening. And he lifted up his eyes and saw and behold, there were camels coming. And Rebecca lifted up her eyes and when she saw Isaac, she dismounted from the camel and said to the servant, Who is that man walking in the field to meet us?

The servant said, It is my master. So she took her veil and covered herself. And the servant told Isaac all the things that he had done. Then Isaac brought her into the tent of Sarah his mother and took Rebecca and she became his wife and he loved her.

So Isaac was comforted after his mother's death. I invite you to pray as we come to this portion of God's word.

Our Father in heaven, we do praise you and thank you for your providence and work in this world that you arrange all things for our good and for your glory.

We ask that you would do that with this passage this morning, that you would open our eyes once again to see your great mercy and work in our lives and in the world that we would grow in our wonder and our love for you.

[ 14 : 23 ] We ask these things in the mighty name of Jesus Christ. Amen. Amen. If you ever go to the theater and you watch a movie, you know that it can be, well, maybe you know, a little bit dangerous to walk out right as the credits are starting.

Although that's what some people do. And it's dangerous to walk out when the credits are starting because you never know if there's going to be another scene. Right?

Sometimes in the middle of the credits a scene appears, sometimes after the credits. You know, a teaser for the next movie appears. This is called a stinger or a credit cookie.

Happens all the time. You can find a list of every single one documented on Wikipedia. Last year, this happened in Captain America, Brave New World, which I know all of you watched.

Captain America defeats the Red Hulk. The credits roll. And after the credits, this villain, Sam Stern, shows up to talk to Captain America and he tells him, by the way, there are other worlds.

[ 15 : 34 ] There's a whole multiverse. You thought you defeated the Red Hulk and it was all good? No, there's probably going to be other threats from other universes.

So you've won that battle. The war isn't over. And even more importantly, not only is the war not over, there will be another movie.

Right? That's the point. Here, as we're coming near the end of the Abraham story, we are in the middle of the credits. Okay? It started last week with the death of Sarah.

Chapter 22 is kind of the end of the Abraham story, right? Chapter 21, Isaac is born. Wow, the tension that's driven the entire plot is finally resolved. Chapter 22, we have this final test.

You know, is Abraham going to remain faithful when God asks him for such a sacrifice? Then last week, chapter 23, the death of Sarah. Next week, chapter 25, the death of Abraham.

[ 16 : 39 ] It's all over. Except. Right? Except. The battle for Abraham is over.

over. The war is not. Remember, God made this promise in Genesis chapter 12, which was then repeated. You're going to be the father of many nations.

And the question was, how is this going to happen when I'm so old and Sarah's so old and she's not going to be able to have children? And so all of that drives us to the birth of Isaac and Isaac is finally born.

Great. Abraham is still not a great nation. And that will only happen if Isaac himself marries and has children.

And so we are not even close to the end of the story. The death of Sarah, though, signals this transition, this passing of the baton off to the next generation.

[ 17 : 42 ] Unless the Lord returns, every single one of us will exit stage left. There is a sense in which my job is to prepare this church for its next pastor.

And there is a sense in which it is our job to prepare this church for the next congregation. This church was founded in 1996.

And there are only two people in the room right now who were there. Abraham's story is over.

Look what it tells us in verse 1. Abraham was old, advanced in years. Abraham's story is over. There is still work to be done.

Abraham's story is over. The mission is not complete. This particular challenge has ended. There is still so much more to do. Point is this.

[ 19 : 00 ] The challenge of faith continues generation to generation. The challenge of faith continues generation to generation.

It continues your entire life. Yes, verse 1 is true. Abraham is old. But Abraham's work is not done.

Abraham is old. His work is not done. You know this in your own life if you've lived long enough. It never stops.

Okay, you reach retirement. Great. time to raise up the next generation. You raised your kids.

Great. And then what happens next? Your kids have kids. The work does not end.

[ 20 : 02 ] Maybe your kids love the Lord, right, and you have a sigh of relief. It's not over. Well, their kids rise up to know the Lord.

And maybe they do. Maybe you're like my grandmother. You have multiple great grandchildren, right? And so the question begins all over again. One generation stands for truth and wins the battle.

And it can be all lost by the next. The basketball player J.J. Reddick says, you never arrive, you are always becoming.

And I'll change that quote to this. You never arrive, you're always following God in faith. Never arrive, you're always following God in faith.

And that's discouraging news in a sense, right, to say, well, it's never over. You might think, no, I was hoping it would end at some point, right? I was hoping at some point I could put my feet up.

[ 21 : 13 ] It's discouraging news unless until we remember a greater truth. Yes, it's true that you've never arrived.

It is also true that God is faithful again and again. God is faithful generation to generation. Your challenges in this life do not end. Neither does God's faithfulness.

And that's what we see in this story. In every step, God is at work guiding Abraham's servant. One of the key words that appears over and over here is this idea of success or prospering.

So track with me here for a second. You have verse 12. He said, O Lord, God of my master Abraham, please grant me success. The servant realizes God's going to have to show up for this to work.

[ 22 : 18 ] If his promises will be fulfilled and generation to generation will continue until Abraham becomes the father of many nations, God must act. So that's his prayer in verse 12.

Then we get to verse 21. The man gazed at her in silence to learn whether the Lord had prospered his journey or not. So it's the same question, right? We could talk all day about the servant and his faithfulness and that would be true.

But what is more true and more important is God's work and God's faithfulness. It keeps going through all that we read. Verse 40. He said to me, the Lord before whom I have walked will send his angel with you and prosper your way.

Verse 42. And if now you are prospering the way that I go. Go with me to verse 36. 56.

He said to them, do not delay me since the Lord has prospered my way. And why is God prospering his way? Well, there's another word that appears over and over.

[ 23 : 28 ] The servant keeps returning to God's steadfast love. Remember, we've talked about this before. It's the Hebrew word *hesed*, which the children's storybook Bible tells us means God's never ending, never stopping, never giving up, always and forever love.

So go back again to verse 12. We looked at this just a second ago. Please grant me success today and show steadfast love.

Verse 14, he gives this prayer. The end of verse 14, by this I shall know that you have shown steadfast love. Verse 27, blessed be the Lord, the God of my master Abraham, who has not forsaken his steadfast love.

God is faithful. God is more faithful still. There's tons of faith here.

It only works because of God's faithfulness. God's faithfulness to honor his promise, to continue the line that he's begun.

[ 24 : 50 ] Of course, it happens, right, because the servant actually finds a wife. It actually works. He goes out, gets what he needs. If you've been with us, I don't need to tell you at this point that one of the major themes of Abraham's story is God's faithfulness to his promises.

What we've been saying over and over, that God will do what he said he's going to do. And you might be thinking at this point, well, you know, why are we still just saying the same thing over and over?

You know, you get to this point sometimes when you're in a narrative and you think the preacher doesn't have a new point, right? He's just repeating the same thing over and over. Here we are talking about God's faithfulness again, but there's a specific angle and detail that we're zoned in on, and it's this.

Not God's faithfulness in general, but his faithfulness throughout the ages. God's faithfulness generation after generation.

And so we're not just talking about God's faithfulness to his promises to you in particular as a Christian, which we've covered before. We are talking about his faithfulness to his church until the end of the age.

[ 26 : 04 ] I don't know if Cheyenne Mountain Presbyterian Church will exist until the end of the world. I hope it does. I don't have any reason to believe it won't, but I do know this.

God's church, his capital C church, will not fail. And I know that because of the character of God and the promises that he's made.

Eight years ago, in the summer of 2017, I told you guys a story, almost none of you were here back then, about how when I was a sophomore in college, I went on this study abroad trip, a trip to the classics department at my college, and so part of it was focused on ancient archaeology, and we had to take this final exam after we'd seen all of these sites across the Mediterranean.

The last question on the exam was this, if you're an ancient building, and you would like to survive until the modern day, what do you need to do to make sure that you make it, and you don't fall down and topple?

the answer is this, if you're an ancient building and you want to survive, you need to be used continuously as a place of Christian worship. That's how you make it.

[ 27 : 22 ] God's people, his church, his mission, transcends and outlasts every earthly kingdom.

It is his faithfulness, generation generation after generation. As you work in this world to make it on earth as it is in heaven, know this, God cares about that more than you do.

God cares about it more than you do. God cares about this church more than any of us does.

God cares about people worshiping in him and following him in every generation more than any parent in this room can. God cares more than you do and he will finish what he started.

He'll finish what he started. Isaac matters ultimately because of the promise, right? Because of the promise, Isaac must have a wife and the promise matters because it is through Isaac that Jesus ultimately is going to come.

[ 29 : 08 ] Matthew chapter 1 when we go to the New Testament we have Jesus' genealogy which starts with Abraham. It shows us how God's promise is fulfilled from Abraham all the way to Christ.

Luke chapter 1 which we read this morning, page 3 of your worship guide. You might be wondering why did we read Mary's song when we're talking about Abraham? Well, look with me what she says in verse 50.

His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. Verse 54 and 55.

He has helped his servant Israel in remembrance of his mercy as he spoke to our fathers to Abraham and his offspring forever.

brothers and sisters, it is not just or simply that God will do what he said he would do. It is that in doing it God will finish what he started.

[ 30 : 17 ] He will finish it for you. He will finish it in his church. It's what we sang earlier this morning. We will stand as children of the what?

the promise. We will fix our eyes on him, our soul's reward. Till the race is finished and the work is done, we'll walk by faith and not by sight.

And by the way, unless you're dead, the work is not done. Some of you all remember, we had congregants before who have been in their 90s and I tell people, you know they're serving the church and the way that they serve the church when they're in their 90s or even in the triple digits is they pray faithfully to God.

There is always a task before us when we're on this earth. It's not just that God is faithful though, generation to generation, we also see his faithfulness in growing and refining Abraham.

I mentioned this before in our confession of faith, Andy said last week, you know, Abraham is kind of a dummy. Abraham is kind of a dummy. Abraham has many failures.

[ 31 : 45 ] Genesis chapter 12, right after God made this promise to him, he lies to Pharaoh about Sarai, right? And then God has to come rescue them. Genesis chapter 16, Abraham and Sarah don't trust God's promise and so they have to create their own alternative by having a child through Hagar.

Genesis chapter 20, Abraham lies again, this time to Abimelech. God rescues him again. But, at the very end, Abraham is not a dummy anymore.

When he is almost finished, Abraham has this unshakable faith. Here he is only trusting and obedient.

There are two different mistakes Abraham could make in this situation, right? He knows his son needs a wife, right? So we see this at the very beginning.

The first mistake would be for his son to marry a Canaanite. Look with me at verses 3 and 4. He makes him swear with his hand under his thigh. Don't ask about that.

[ 33 : 03 ] you will not take a wife or my son from the daughters of the Canaanites among whom I dwell. No matter what happens, we will not compromise.

And who's saying this? It's Abraham who we've seen time and time again compromise. But now that is not an option. So that's mistake one.

You could marry a Canaanite. Abraham has no time for that. Mistake number two, you could leave the promised land. That's verses 5 and 6. The servant said to him, perhaps the woman may not be willing to follow me to this land.

Must I then take your son back to the land from which you came? And Abraham is crystal clear. Verse 6, see to it that you do not take my son back there.

Abraham refuses the compromise that he has found so tempting before. In verse 7 we find out why.

[ 34 : 12 ] Because Abraham has what I've called this unshakable faith. Look with me at verse 7. The Lord, the God of heaven who took me from my father's house and from the land of my kindred and who spoke to me and swore to me to your offspring I will give this land.

Abraham believes what he doubted before.

Abraham finally believes that God really will keep his promise. What's changed him? Remember Abraham's failures before were driven by fear.

Driven by fear that God wouldn't provide, that he wouldn't protect him and Sarah. Fear that God needed their help to provide a child through Hagar. Now finally, as he's at the end of his life, Abraham has seen God's faithfulness again and again.

He's seen God's faithfulness that Sarah gave birth in her old age. He's seen God's faithfulness chapter 22. Remember, the ram was provided instead of Isaac and what does Abraham say at this point?

[ 35 : 30 ] On the mountain of the Lord, he will provide. Abraham has seen God provide over and over. Abraham has struggled and stumbled for many years.

And at the end, God has used all of those things to produce a sweet fruit. At the end, God has shown Abraham his faithfulness in the midst of Abraham's failure and that has grown a man who trusts God more than anything else.

Christian, your life is filled with stumblings and failures.

God's faithfulness still shines through. Your life is full of mistakes and compromise.

God is still at work. God is growing you year after year after year. God is making you more like Jesus.

[ 37 : 00 ] You can look with me on page nine of your worship guide. You'll find this quote. God is working throughout your life on a scale of days, years, and decades to remake you into the likeness of Jesus.

You are being progressively sanctified. You are being saved. Christian, God is doing a beautiful work in your life.

In the midst of your failure and compromise sin. He is shaping and forming you to look more like Jesus Christ at the end of your life than you did at the beginning.

He is doing that through the sufferings that you encounter as he grows your faithfulness in him because he shows up over and over again.

And I tell you that not because it's a happy sentimental thought but because God has made a promise to you. Philippians chapter 1 verse 6, he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

[ 38 : 24 ] where is God growing your confidence in him?

What does it look like to follow God in faith? It means trusting that little by little day by day.

He is making you more like Jesus Christ. At the end, the very last verse of this chapter, then Isaac brought her into the tent of Sarah, his mother.

The baton has been passed. One generation has handed off to the next. God is faithful generation to generation.

God is faithful to you, growing your confidence in him. So that's why we're able to sing, take my life and let it be, consecrated Lord to thee.

[ 39 : 48 ] God to God you. Let's pray. Our Father in heaven, we do praise you and thank you that your mercy and your grace mean that you don't leave us or abandon us in the midst of our sin and stupidity and foolishness, but instead you work through them to grow us and to change us.

That's our hope and our only hope, that we belong to you. We ask that you would remind us of that this morning, that you would grow and create in us an unshakable confidence and trust in you that gives us peace and joy and boldness and courage and confidence and humility.

We ask these things in the mighty name of Jesus Christ. Amen.