

11.09.25

Genesis

Chapter 16 - God's Grace thru Restless Vexation God's Gracious Reparation (vs. 7-16)

Genesis 16:7-16: Now the angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, by the spring on the way to Shur. He said, “Hagar, Sarai’s maid, where have you come from and where are you going?” And she said, “I am fleeing from the presence of my mistress Sarai.” Then the angel of the LORD said to her, “Return to your mistress, and submit yourself to her authority.” Moreover, the angel of the LORD said to her, “I will greatly multiply your descendants so that they will be too many to count.” The angel of the LORD said to her further,
“Behold, you are with child,
And you will bear a son;
And you shall call his name Ishmael,
Because the LORD has given heed to your affliction. He
will be a wild donkey of a man,
His hand will be against everyone,

And everyone's hand will be against him;
And he will live to the east of all his brothers." Then she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, "You are a God who sees"; for she said, "Have I even remained alive here after seeing Him?" Therefore the well was called Beer-lahai-roi; behold, it is between Kadesh and Bered. So Hagar bore Abram a son; and Abram called the name of his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael. Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to him.

Well, we read about Abraham. What are we reading about? About faith. The whole basis of what we believe is about faith. The whole thing sounds redundant, doesn't it? But it is faith that is paramount in why we come together. Scripture tells us, without faith, it's impossible to please God. You must first believe that He is and that He rewards those who diligently seek Him. The passage is telling us that God is looking for a relationship, i.e. you seeking Him, not necessarily your perfection. I oftentimes

tell people if God was looking for perfection, He would have made Lucifer that which was the paragon. Because Scripture tells us he was the perfection of beauty, and we see all of the wonderful traits that are given in that perfection. Nevertheless, God was not looking for perfection. He was looking for that relationship. And Abraham really personifies this.

In fact, if you take a moment and turn with me to Romans 4, Romans 4 just gives us kind of that summary of Abraham within the passage.

It reads this way,

(Romans 4:1) “What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found?”

(Romans 4:2) For if Abraham was justified by works...”

And we would even add in there, “if Abraham was perfect”.

“... he has something to boast about, but not before God.

(Romans 4:3) For what does the Scripture say?

“ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.”

Actually, quoted out of Genesis 15.

(Romans 4:4) “Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due.

(Romans 4:5) But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness.”

In other words, the whole reckoning of righteousness was a gift by God because he believed, not because of anything that he did.

It goes on and reads in verse 6,

(Romans 4:6) “Just as David also speaks of the blessing on the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:

(Romans 4:7) “BLESSED ARE THOSE WHOSE LAWLESS DEEDS HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN,
AND WHOSE SINS HAVE BEEN COVERED.

(Romans 4:8) “BLESSED IS THE MAN WHOSE SIN THE LORD WILL NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT.””

God reckons us to righteousness because of our faith, not because of our perfection.

And ultimately, as he says in verse 16,

(Romans 4:16) “For this reason it is by faith, in order that it may be in accordance with grace, so that the promise will be guaranteed to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all.”

Scripture is telling us that what God is looking for are those that will put their trust in Him.

The simplicity of a verse like Proverbs 3:5-6,

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart
And do not lean on your own understanding.

(Proverbs 3:6) In all your ways acknowledge Him,
And He will make your paths straight.”

It's a clear verse. And yet, I think probably one of the hardest things that we have to do is to put our trust not just simply in God, but in everything that we do.

As we read through this narrative of Abram, we begin to see that it's very clear in Genesis 15 that he trusts God. I mean, up to this point, clearly, God has been nothing but gracious and benevolent and generous to Abram. All the

while, Abram has made his, well, we would say, grave errors. Right off the bat, what Abram does is, in spite of God's graciousness, he begins wandering down to Egypt because he's concerned about sustenance. Because of the famine in the land, he goes astray. But God is gracious in spite of that, and benevolent and generous. as He supplies even more than his needs while he leaves Egypt. Abram will go on and he'll deal with things like deceptively demonstrating, or I would say hiding behind his wife, at a time in which he should be trusting in the Lord. Nevertheless, God will still continue to be gracious and generous. He will compromise by taking Lot along with him, and actually even giving Lot some of the land that God had given to Abraham for himself. Abraham will do things such as listening to his wife. Now, listening to your wife, gentlemen, is not a bad thing in and of itself. So, I want to be made clear about that because of the fact that as you read a little bit further in Genesis 21, God will actually turn to Abram and say, "You need to listen to your wife." So, we know that even God says, "Listen to your wife." However, you don't listen to your wife, and wives, you don't listen to your husband when they give

you counsel against what God says. And God has already established His promises, and she begins to thwart those promises by giving him advice that will both undermine their faith for God as well as cause great division among themselves and cause hurt to innocent parties.

Nevertheless, God will be gracious. And faith is about the graciousness of God and realizing the graciousness of God and coming back to Him and getting right with Him in view of His graciousness.

It is interesting to me in this particular narrative that we're looking at in Chapter 16, well, we know that it's been 10 years since God has called him out of the Chaldeans, at least 10 years. And in that time, you would think that there would be some sort of true relationship in which Abraham would feel like, "Well, I can talk to God anytime. I can call upon Him anytime." I mean, we know that he knows how to call upon God. I mean, we actually have text that says that he went to a particular place in Genesis 13, that he goes back to that place of Bethel, and he calls upon the name of the Lord. So, we know he knows how to call upon the name of the Lord. But what's

so bizarre to me in Chapter 16 is he doesn't do it in this passage. At a time in which his wife is urging him, "Well, we need to start going. We need to start moving on this. Everybody's getting older and nothing's happening. God has promised to make you a great nation. We don't even have one kid. So, how is that going to happen?" And once again, as we were talking about the fact that there's a thrust that perhaps she feels guilty in some way, maybe to blame for all of this, she begins to thrust him to have a relationship with Hagar. We know that's an immoral act. Abram knows it's an immoral act. Nevertheless, the pressure of one in his household and one that he loves so much takes him beyond the realm of faith in God and causes him to not turn to God, to not trust in God, to not call upon the name of the Lord, to not simply ask God, "What do You want me to do?" The will of God is not really terribly confusing. I mean, if in fact you feel pushed to do something that you know is immoral, unjust, or not righteous, you don't have to try to ask God, "Should I do this?" Because you know that you shouldn't do that. There are times in which you need great clarity because it's not an issue of right or wrong, but in this particular

case, it was a pretty clear thing. Nevertheless, he should have gone before the Lord and called upon His name.

The Bible tells us that God will hear those that do something. In fact, let me give you the verse for it. It's found in Psalm 66:18.

It reads this way,

(Psalm 66:18) "If I regard wickedness in my heart,
The Lord will not hear."

Now, that statement is actually laying a foundation. The word "regard" there actually has the picture of your vision on and your desire for. So, if your focus is on and you have a desire for, he uses the word "wickedness". See the word? In the King James, I think it's "iniquity". But the emphasis is that it's something that you long for. Now, the word that is used in the Hebrew is "'āven," and "'āven" is oftentimes translated "idol". That's interesting, isn't it? The point is, if you have your sights on something else other than God, if your desire is for other things and you've elevated them before God, don't come praying to God. He's not going to hear when your focus is on other things. Come to Him. Don't lean to your own

understanding. In all your ways, acknowledge Him. He'll direct your paths. Now, Scripture tells us that God is looking for those that will desire Him, will seek the Lord with all their heart. He hears their prayer.

It then goes on, and there's a psalm in Psalm 119:145, and sometimes we know the Lord hears, but when does He answer? And this is an interesting passage because it really lies within the context of what we're going to be talking about today.

(Psalm 119:145) “I cried with all my heart; answer me, O LORD! ...”

And then he adds this in the text, which really defines when God answers,

“... I will observe Your statutes.”

Now, we kind of think of that as a little tag on. But it really is that which activates God answering, when I observe Thy statutes. Now, once again, we're not talking about perfection. What we're talking about is observing the boundaries. The word that he's using in the text is dealing specifically with boundaries and limitations that God

places in our lives. Boundaries and limitations. That's like God not doing something at the time that we think He should be doing it. So, the limitations of time and the boundaries of time. Why aren't things happening now? And God says, "Because I established that boundary. Scripture tells us that we need to accept that because in the accepting of that, God then begins to work and answer through that. But we have to come to a place in which we actually focus on loving Him and believing that the limitations, the restraints, the boundaries that He has given us are important to His answering us. That's part of faith, isn't it? We have to actually believe that. And so, that's us staying out of the mix. That's us not trying to make something happen.

There is another part of the formula, and that's this, that Scripture will tell us in Psalm 69:33, the Lord hears the needy. So, there are certainly times in our life where we just cried, and about the only thing we can say is "Help." You know, a broken and contrite heart He will not despise.

Another passage in Psalm 34:6 will read this way,

“This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him...”

Why? Because this poor man cried. It is a picture of humility. And as you and I come to God in humility, God hears our cry. But the blessings of God will be released as we begin to recognize not only that He's God and He's in control, but we humble ourselves and submit to that. Now, when you're in dire straits, it's easy to admit that. You can't do anything. That's why you're crying out for help. But as Scripture is telling us, we need to walk by faith. That is to say, we need to walk in this mindset of, “I need to trust the Lord with all my heart in everything and not lean in my own understanding in anything.” So that walking by faith is believing that God knows better than me, even though I may see a particular path that seems to make logical sense to me. I mean, quite frankly, it's faster to do it this way. It cuts right to the bottom line, which I always like doing. And so, we know that if in fact we go this way, it's going to happen sooner. The only problem with that is that it robs us of blessings and it brings sorrow. Remember the Proverb, it is the blessings of the Lord that make rich, and He adds no sorrow to it.

Well, we can force particular issues, which in this particular passage actually happens. He takes Hagar to be his wife, and she then bears a child, and this child will become Ishmael. And in and of itself, not a bad thing, because children clearly are a gift of God. But problems ensue, and pain actually comes about, and Abram and Sarah find themselves divided, and there's a relationship that begins to be strained with Sarah and Hagar.

Everything turns upside down, and it was all because somebody decided to force the issue rather than to listen to God and to wait on Him. A lot of problems come. So, what does it mean to walk by faith? Well, the wonderful thing about these pictures that God gives us, and really the Old Testament is full of pictures; the wonderful thing about the pictures is God is actually revealing to us what it looks like. And to me, what's very important in my life is why I need to do it. I know that much of trust is, well, you do it even when you don't understand. I get that. But God is often gracious and still shows us why we need to do this, and takes us through particular scenarios to let us see, in particular in the Old Testament, why you want to put your trust in God for everything you do.

So, as we come to this passage, certainly we have some of the fallout from the bad decision-making all the way up to Genesis 6:16. And as a result, what we understand is Sarah began to be abusive towards Hagar because Hagar perceived herself to be a little bit better than Sarah. Well, Sarah put her in this position. Abram almost washes his hands of it and goes, "Well, she's your maid. You do whatever you want to with her." And now the hurt and the pain is all on Hagar. Does God care for Hagar? Well, that's one of the great things about this particular passage, because it emphasizes God's care for this slave that was pawned off on them. I say, "pawned off," as Abraham goes down to Egypt, which was clearly not something that God wanted him to do, but she is a gift that's given by the Pharaoh by saying, "You take these servants and these animals and all these things and please leave." I often wonder, how does a pharaoh choose the gifts that he wants to give? I mean, does he give all the best animals? Does he give all the best servants? Pretty interesting when you consider the name "Hagar," which means a wanderer, which, I don't know, I kind of get the feeling that whoever had her as a servant

or a slave had a hard time keeping her. She'd always wander off, so she might be a good one to pack in. Nevertheless, as you come to verse 7, we find Hagar, and she's the brunt of Sarah's hostility. And what does she do? Well, her name would seem to emphasize that she would run, and that's exactly what she does. Pick up with me in verse 7, and we have the angel of the LORD. What a bizarre thought that the angel of the LORD is actually looking for Hagar. This is not Abraham. This is Hagar, the Egyptian slave.

(Genesis 16:7) “Now the angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the wilderness...”

This is not the only time God will find a woman by the well.

“... by the spring on the way to Shur.”

Shur is actually on the border of Palestine and Egypt. So, she's already made it quite a few miles away from Abram. She's almost back in her own country, which seems to be the place that she wants. It is to be noted that Shur actually means “wall,” but it can be translated “fence”. And I oftentimes think of it as, she's on the fence.

(Genesis 16:8) “He said, “Hagar, Sarai’s maid, where have you come from and where are you going?” And she said, “I am fleeing...”

Well, that's what Hagar does. She runs. A problem comes; she runs. That's probably one of the reasons why she's in the predicament that she's in. But she finds herself in a bad place, she flees. And what's interesting is, it's not as if she is going someplace. Some people have purpose, and they actually go someplace. She's running from something.

The way the passage reads is,

“... And she said, “I am fleeing from the presence of my mistress Sarai.””

In other words, “I'm running.” “Where are you running from?” “The presence, the face of, the hostility.” You know, it's bad enough that she would be in life and have a life of servitude. It's bad enough that she would be a slave to somebody. But for that master to be harsh and hate you; I don't know if you want to live that way. Besides the fact that she's expecting. And I don't know, I'm just trying

to think like a mother here. Give me a moment, “I don't want my son growing up that way.”

(Genesis 16:9) “Then the angel of the LORD said to her...”

“Let's do things the right way. Stop running, but submit yourself to authority.” Now, once again, none of that makes sense humanly. Why would you thrust yourself back in a very difficult situation? It kind of reminds me of 1 Peter 2, where Peter says, “Look, if you have an unreasonable boss, don't worry about it. You submit to him, this finds favor in the eyes of God.” His fundamental premise is, if in fact you will do this as unto God, He'll take care of you, you don't have to worry about the unreasonable boss. And this is what our faith is about. Our faith is about doing the right thing first and trusting that God will then take care of us as we do the right thing. Remember, that literally sets us up in place to have the blessings of God.

If you go back to Genesis 13; if you remember, of course, this is where Abraham is actually leaving Egypt at the beginning of Chapter 13. If you look at the end of Chapter 12, he had gone to Egypt, trying to run away from his

concern of famine and the things that might ensue because of this, hunger, pains, whatever. I mean, you're responsible for people, so you don't want them to suffer. But instead of turning to God and saying, "Help," he does his own thing. And finally, God reveals to him through the Pharaoh, "I'm going to take care of you. I'm going to be your protector, and I'm going to be your provider. Trust Me."

So, if you look at the beginning of Chapter 13,
(Genesis 13:1) "So Abram went up from Egypt..."

Now, the passage then goes on to say that he then called upon the Lord back at the altar where he originally had talked with God. That's in verse 4. So, what is he doing? He's going back where he belongs. He's starting to do the things that God tells him. Now, there's one other thing that really needs to be done in order for God to then communicate with him. The Bible tells us, look, to him that knows to do right and does it not, to him it is sin. "What's the right thing to do?" "Well, I need to obey God, whatever He says." "Okay, do that first. Then we'll talk about God talking with you and directing you." We

oftentimes come before God and we go, "Direct my path, direct my path." He goes, "Well, do you know that you need to be doing something right now?" "Yeah, but go ahead and direct me anyway. I'll get that done later on." He goes, "No, let's get that done and then I'll direct your path." See?

So, if you look in verse 14, it isn't until verse 14 that the Lord then talks to Abraham. And what happens in verse 14?

(Genesis 13:14) "The LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him..."

Oh yeah, there's one more thing. He not only has to leave Egypt, but also, "Lot has to separate from you. Now, we can have conversation, because now you're doing the right thing." Well, God always starts off that way. And the same thing is true as you look at Hagar. He turns and He says, "You need to do the right thing." What's the right thing? "You need to submit to authority. All authority is ordained by God." Romans 13. I know they didn't have Romans 13 at that time, but it was clear that God had

already established this principle. So, He turns to Hagar and He says, “Go back.”

(Genesis 16:9) “... “Return to your mistress, and submit yourself to her authority.””

“Let's set things straight. Let's get things right.”

I oftentimes think of 1 Corinthians 7 that says, look, remain in the condition in which God called you. If you were called a slave, okay, don't worry about it. I mean, if you can become free, okay. But don't try to manipulate your life. Do the right thing today. Work hard with your hands. Try not to be in any need. God sees your humility. God sees your submissiveness to authority. God will reward. “Do you believe Me?” See, that's walking by faith. Walking by faith actually comes really into practice, especially when you're not seeing how that can possibly work on your favor. But God says, “I'll take care of you. Let's do the right thing.”

(Genesis 16:10) “Moreover, the angel of the LORD said to her...”

“I'll take care of you.” Now, the way that He says, “I'll take care of you,” and the way that He says, “I'll bless you” is very interesting because what we see Him doing is not only demonstrating His care for Hagar, but also fulfilling His promise to Abram. Remember His promise to Abram, “I'm going to make you a great nation, and all the earth through you will be blessed.” Well, in spite of their bad choices, He's still going to fulfill the promise to Abram. And so, Abram's son, Ishmael, will become a great nation. He will actually have twelve princes. It's sort of like the twelve tribes of Israel, right? And they will become largely, especially when you look at one of his sons, Kedar, they will become the Arabians. And so, the description of the Arabs within this text is actually given. And at first, when you read the description, you go, “I don't know, that doesn't sound like much of a blessing.” But maybe as we read it, I'll describe to you what the blessing is.

(Gen 16:10) “Moreover, the angel of the LORD said to her, “I will greatly multiply your descendants so that they will be too many to count.””

Well, that sounds like the promise that God made to Abram. Of course, this is Abram's son as well.

(Genesis 16:11) “The angel of the LORD said to her further...”

It's like, “There's more?” Yeah, there's more. I mean, it just shows the care that God has for Hagar. Isn't that amazing?

“... “Behold, you are with child,
And you will bear a son;
And you shall call his name Ishmael...”

Which fundamentally is “God is attentive to you. He hears you.” It has more the picture of God leaning in and concerned, but also the sense that He perceives and understands what is valuable to us. That's a very interesting point. I think it's one of the reasons why you always want to make sure that your heart's right. God perceives that heart and knows what you're looking for. And though you and I may desire a good thing, it may not always be the best thing.

With Solomon, basically God goes, “What do you want, Solomon?” Solomon goes, “I'd like understanding and perception.” And God goes, “That's a good thing. And I'm going to give you an abundance of other things beside that because you didn't ask for something selfish.”

However, it wasn't the best thing. And all those things that come as a result, and once again, God gives good gifts. But be careful what you ask for. Be careful of the desires of your heart.

When you consider in the sense of the mother of James and John, she comes up to Jesus and she goes, “Give me what I want.” Surprisingly enough, as I read that text, Jesus just turns to her and He says, “What would you like for Me to do?” I mean, He just simply asks that question. Remember the two blind men, and they're crying out, “Son of David, Son of David, have mercy.” He says, “What would you like me to do? What do you wish?” “We wish to see.” Well, that's a wonderful thing, blind men to see. That's it? That's all? There are a lot of people that see and still live a horrible life. Is seeing a bad thing? No, it's not a bad thing. It's a wonderful thing. Is it the best thing? Did

they settle for second best? All the way through Scripture, you see God's willingness to demonstrate His grace. Even when the disciples first come to see Jesus, some of the disciples in John 1, His first question is, "What do you seek?" God is telling us, "I know what you're thinking." There's nothing hidden from His sight. He knows your heart.

In this passage, the angel of the LORD is saying, "I know what you're thinking, I know what you've been thinking, and I know what your concerns are. Your concerns are that you're going to have a son; he's going to be a slave, especially when you submit yourself to the authority of Sarah, and he's going to be abused like you were. And people are going to take advantage of him. Don't think for one moment that's going to be true. He's going to be a great nation." And not only that, well, let's look at the description. "Behold this Ishmael that I could see within your womb, saw your desires. I'm heeding to the affliction and the concerns that you have." (Genesis 16:11)

(Genesis 16:12) "He will be a wild donkey of a man..."

Now, once again, that doesn't seem to be the greatest of compliments. However, it is to her. This particular animal that is described is extremely swift, reaching speeds of over 40 miles an hour in the desert and sure-footed; very adapt to living in the desert; can easily go three days without water. If you were to see this particular donkey, you would look at its legs, and you would swear that you were looking at the legs of a zebra. But it is an animal that is very free. It's not the kind of animal that you can easily harness. This animal lives in the desert free of concerns and any worries that anybody will take control of it. Well, that's comforting to Hagar, because she wants probably beyond anything else and her desires of her son to be free. Even to this day, from what I understand, if you go into this particular region in which these wanderers, these vagabonds live, even to this day, nobody messes with them. Because they know when you mess with them, they're going to hold out, and they're tougher than you are. So, nations, though they surround these particular regions, will avoid and even understand that if they come and take stuff from you, that's part of their culture. They

just perceive it as, well, that's part of going through the desert and going in that particular region.

The way it reads is this,

“He will be a wild donkey of a man,
His hand will be against everyone...”

Nobody's going to saddle him; nobody's going to manipulate him. He'll be a force to reckon with.

“... And everyone's hand will be against him;
And he will live to the east of all his brothers.”

That's in the Arabian desert that he will live.

As the passage goes on to say,

(Genesis 16:13) “Then she called the name of the LORD
who spoke to her, “You are a God who sees” ...”

“*Rō'î*” - Sees; perceives what's in my heart; perceives what's in my mind.

That's why, if you look in verse 14,

(Genesis 16:14) “Therefore the well was called Beer-lahai-
roi...”

“Roi” is, clearly within the passage, “The Lord sees what's going on. He understands my thoughts.”

(Genesis 16:13) “... “You are a God who sees”; for she said, “Have I even remained alive here after seeing Him?”

(Genesis 16:14) Therefore the well was called Beer-lahai-roi; behold, it is between Kadesh and Bered.”

“Kadesh” is making reference to God has made them holy, and God has literally scattered them throughout unto the Lord.

(Genesis 16:15) “So Hagar bore Abram a son; and Abram called the name of his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael.

(Genesis 16:16) Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to him.”

Now, why is Scripture telling us this? Because it's preparing you for Genesis 17:1,

“Now when Abram was ninety-nine years old...”

That's quite a leap if you think about it. Now, the question is, why does God tell us this and what's the lesson? And the lesson is pretty clear. Here's the fundamental lesson, that whatever we apply in our lives, and as we were

talking about, the just will live by faith. That is to say that everything you do, you're putting your trust in God. You're not seeking your own understanding, but you're relying on Him. You're saying, "You direct my paths. I'm not going to wing this. I want to do the right thing." And you start off by doing the right thing. I mean, that's how you get the ball rolling. You do what you know is right. And then you seek His face, and you say, "Now, you direct my paths. I'm not going to force any doors. I'm just going to listen to You and I'm going to do what You say." When you do that, God then begins to release the blessings. Once again, it's the blessings of the Lord that make rich; He adds no sorrow to it. Now, that's the benefit, clearly, because look, if you think about forcing things, you can get stuff that you want. But there is this thing called buyer's remorse that you begin to feel miserable over the fact that you actually got what you wanted. But when God gives it to you, there are blessings, and when you force it, inevitably you're going to hurt somebody. You're going to hurt yourself, you're going to hurt relationships, and you oftentimes will hurt the innocent in order to push

your way into getting something. But if you will rely upon God, then no sorrow.

But let me add one more thing, if in fact you do things your way and force the issue. There is one more thing. You will delay the blessings that God has for you. Delay. 86 to 99. Why is God delaying? Because God will not do hurt to Hagar nor Ishmael because Abraham and Sarah decided to force something. So, He's going to let that boy grow up. Now, at the beginning of Chapter 17, he'll be about 14 years of age, right? And within a short time, Isaac will come into the family. And we're just kind of grabbing here, but probably at the time that Ishmael is maybe 16 to 18, Sarah will say, "You need to get this boy out of the house because he's causing problems to my son, Isaac." He's got to be old enough to take care of himself. So, God will not allow Isaac to be born until Ishmael can be the age to take care of himself.

There are issues within our lives. We begin to try to force them. We think that we're actually taking a shortcut. We think that it'll actually make things better, and the problem is that we haven't seen things clearly. Things are

going to get more difficult. There's going to be separation, division, hurt, pain, suffering, and regret. But above all, there will be a delay in the blessings that God has for you. I'd rather walk by faith. I'm not really fond of delays.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we come before You today, and we ask You to see our hearts. We know that You search us and try us and will reveal evil ways, destructive ways in us. You know that it's not our nature to be patient. It's not our nature to wait. And yet, we say we trust You. Today, Lord, above all else, we're not going to lean on our own understanding anymore. We're going to acknowledge You. We're going to do the right thing, the thing that we know that You want us to do today. And we're going to watch You open the doors. You've already promised us the blessings, but the repair that has to go on, oftentimes from the bad decisions that I make, well, it is gracious of You not to punish the innocent.

Your heads bowed and your eyes closed, I'm asking you to turn to the Lord and trust Him. Wait on Him. Walking by

faith, that's trusting Him for everything in your life. If you're having to force something, this is not God.