

08.16.26

Genesis

Chapter 25 - God's Preservation through Polarization God's Choice Reasserted (vs. 1-11)

Genesis 25:1-11: Now Abraham took another wife, whose name was Keturah. She bore to him Zimran and Jokshan and Medan and Midian and Ishbak and Shuah. Jokshan became the father of Sheba and Dedan. And the sons of Dedan were Asshurim and Letushim and Leummim. The sons of Midian were Ephah and Epher and Hanoch and Abida and Eldaah. All these were the sons of Keturah. Now Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac; but to the sons of his concubines, Abraham gave gifts while he was still living, and sent them away from his son Isaac eastward, to the land of the east. These are all the years of Abraham's life that he lived, one hundred and seventy-five years. Abraham breathed his last and died in a ripe old age, an old man and satisfied with life; and he was gathered to his people. Then his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of

Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite, facing Mamre, the field which Abraham purchased from the sons of Heth; there Abraham was buried with Sarah his wife. It came about after the death of Abraham, that God blessed his son Isaac; and Isaac lived by Beer-lahai-roi.

Well, through great sagacity and my uncanny way of being astute, I have found that with age you become old. In Psalm 71, if you look with me, the psalmist is dealing with the whole concept of aging. And he is reflecting upon the fact that God has kept him all these years. God keeps us all these years. I think sometimes the thought is, "If I have to get right with God, I'll wait till the very end and then I'll get right with God." But in many respects, Revelation 22 conveys that you basically continue to do the things that you've always done. So, as the Book of Revelation ends, it says, in spite of all these things that are unveiled in the end times, the wicked will still continue to do wicked, and the righteous will still continue to do what's righteous. My uncle used to say,

"you are what you have been becoming." And so, it is the way that we live our lives that really forms our patterns and forms who we are.

Psalms 71 reads this way as the psalmist cries out in verse 5,

(Psalm 71:5) "For You are my hope; O Lord GOD, You are my confidence from my youth."

(Psalm 71:6) By You I have been sustained from my birth..."

(Psalm 71:9) "Do not cast me off in the time of old age; Do not forsake me when my strength fails."

If you drop on down to verse 14,

(Psalm 71:14) "But as for me, I will hope continually, And will praise You yet more and more."

Who thinks about that as they're getting older? "Things are getting better." I mean, you don't think that way.

There's more time for R&R. They need to relax more. But he seems to want to grow more.

He goes on and says in verse 15,

(Psalm 71:15) "My mouth shall tell of Your righteousness
And of Your salvation all day long; For I do not know the
sum of them.

(Psalm 71:16) I will come with the mighty deeds of the
Lord GOD; I will make mention of Your righteousness,
Yours alone.

(Psalm 71:17) O God, You have taught me from my youth,
And I still declare Your wondrous deeds.

(Psalm 71:18) And even when I am old and gray, O God,
do not forsake me, Until I declare Your strength to this
generation, Your power to all who are to come."

There seems to be a desire to continue in ministry
throughout his days.

In fact, in verse 21,

(Psalm 71:21) "May You increase my greatness..."

Interesting passage as we think of getting older.

Abraham was getting older. He's now 175. The passage
will open up 38 years before and he will have 38 more
years to live. Man in dealing with his problems, is coping
with his issues, his disappointments, his losses, his failures

in many respects of his life. His hope oftentimes is, "Maybe I can start over again or maybe I can have a restart or maybe I can do it this time with the years that I have left, maybe a little bit more comfortable than the beginning years." And so, he looks for years of, I think we call them years of retirement. Is that what we call them? In which we begin to get a little bit more comfortable and we begin to try to deal with issues in a more gentle way. Abraham in a way gets a new lease on life. He has 38 more years with a new wife. Sarah had just passed away, if you look in Genesis 23, and we realize that at that particular juncture, she's 127, which would make Abraham 137. If he dies at 175, he has 38 more years. So, 38 more years, what do you do with 38 more years? If you remember Hezekiah, the king, God comes before him, and He says, "You're mortally ill, you're going to die, pack your bags, get ready to go to heaven." And Hezekiah goes, "I'm too young to die." So, he falls on his face on the ground against the wall of the temple and he begins to cry out to God. And he says, "You have to let me live. I mean, If You take me, how can I praise You in this earth? So, You need to give me longer life." So, God does. He says, "I'll

give you 15 more years." 15 more years. Hezekiah does not do what he says. And in fact, things actually grow worse with the 15 years that God gives him. But there are many of us who seek just a little bit longer. "If I could just have a little bit longer; if I could just have a little bit more time." And so, we cry out to the Lord.

The question is, what do you do with the time that God gives you? And in this particular passage, what's interesting is it seems as if these 38 years are almost Biblically silent as far as the things that were accomplished by Abraham. I mean, the first 10 chapters in which Abraham is introduced actually cover 25 years. He's 75 years old when he's called and when Isaac is born, he will be 100. So, those first 25 years are really very crucial. And we have them written out in 10 chapters. In one paragraph, we have 38 years. And in that paragraph, it's just the list of kids that he has. Not necessarily things that are done, things that are accomplished, but just children that he has. And these children ultimately within the passage, he's going to send them away. And the focus is

going to be on the one child that is Isaac that he had with Sarah.

The point of the matter is that though we might try to begin again and though we might try to find perhaps a more friendly path to go in our life, because if you think about those first 25 years, that was a pretty rough road for Abraham. I mean, not only ups and downs, but a lot of bumps in which he had to go through a lot of different and hard things. Nevertheless, God sees them as significant. In this particular time, it seems as if we're kind of coasting. Some might even say, "slip sliding away".

So, as you come to this passage in 25, we have Abraham. And at the very beginning of the text, Abraham takes.

It's interesting how it starts off,

(Genesis 25:1) "Now Abraham took..."

Now, as the passage will go on, God will reveal that there were some good things that Abraham did in the sense of preserving what God had declared to him as the promise. Nevertheless, these 38 years seem to be almost in obscurity to us.

The reason why I bring out the whole concept of 38 years is, if you were to go to Deuteronomy 2:14, it actually makes reference to, you remember the children of Israel and how they were kind of waiting to go into the promised land because the first group kind of grumbled and complained? And so, it actually took 38 years for them to die off. It uses that number, 38 years. And there's another place where that number is actually mentioned, and it's in John 5:5. You remember the man that was sick, and he had been sick for 38 years in his sickness?

Remember the passage there? Well, the parallel is clear within the passages because what you're dealing with is a time of complacency in life. Why is it the children of Israel couldn't go into the promised land? Because there had been a complacency and a rejection of God. They're just on hold. Everything's on hold for 38 years until the new generation can go into the promised land. And you have this man by the pool waiting for somebody to put him in the pool to be healed. And he's been living a life of complacency. He's been living a life of dormancy and indolence for 38 years. Think about that. What did you accomplish during these 38 years? Nothing. Just been

sitting around 38 years. So, in many respects, what this passage is going to be teaching us is that this is not the path that we want to take.

Now, I was talking to somebody right before the service, the Old Testament is not there to necessarily give you great paragons to follow. The Old Testament is there to show you that you need a Savior. So, the Old Testament is what was called the Law. That is to say, it points out your sin and it points out man's weaknesses. And no matter who you look at, no matter how great they may appear to begin with, they have a very difficult time to finish well. Noah, as great a man as he was, found grace in the eyes of the Lord, at the very end becomes drunk. So, you follow through, whether it's Moses who can't go into the promised land because of what he does, or whether it's individuals like David who at the end of his life really is almost disappointing at the end of his life, you realize that they just can't seem to finish well. And so, the point of the Old Testament is that you're going to need a superior spirit. You're going to need the Spirit of God within you. And the wonderful truth that we ultimately come to, as

Paul will write in 2 Timothy 4, he'll actually say, "I've finished the course." Christ will finish the course to the cross and will be faithful even to death, the death of the cross, as Philippians 2 will say.

We come to this passage, and we see, well, perhaps complacency settling in and perhaps the hope that maybe life can be a little bit more comfortable.

It starts off in Chapter 25, if you look with me in verse 1, (Genesis 25:1) "Now Abraham took another wife..."

The way that it reads fundamentally in the Hebrew is, "yāsap̄" at the very beginning, the word that is used basically will read this way, "Again, Abraham took another wife." We say, "another" not just mentioning Sarah, but we know according to Scripture that he had taken Hagar to be a wife, obviously, as you read in Genesis 16:3. So, I think what's interesting too at this particular juncture, because the Law has not been incorporated yet; that won't be till Moses and Exodus. So, Scripture is not condemning in the sense of saying, "Well, he shouldn't have done that." You go all the way back to Cain. He kills his brother. Quote me a Scripture that says he shouldn't

have done that. It doesn't say it, does it? What it does say is that this is what he did. And God told him, "Look, you don't want to hold on to this because if you continue to hold on to this, then it's not going to go well. And it didn't go well. Even in the sin of the garden, He turns to Adam and Eve, and He goes, "Did you eat of the fruit?" Just a simple question. And it was then that it hit them because it is the work of conscience that is working within the passage.

As we come to Chapter 25, we see Abraham just doing what he perceived that he wanted to do. And so, he takes another wife. Her name is Keturah, which seems to convey that for lack of a better way of putting it, she probably smelled really good. She was the kind of person that would be alluring in her incense. And so, in many respects, what you kind of see is that maybe he was looking for some kind of relief, some kind of pleasure. Scripture actually calls her part of the concubine, even though in this particular passage it makes reference to her being his wife. 1 Chronicles 1:32 will say she's the

concubine. But another way of putting concubine is just inferring softness; some extra pleasure.

So, Abraham took another wife whose name was "smell good". And it goes on and says that she bore him children. Now, she bears him 6 children. Now, it took him 25 years to get 1. And he was 75 years when he started that. And it was quite a miracle in that doing. But now, he takes this wife and he has 6 more children. Now, there's nothing in the passage that says that God said, "You know what, Abraham, it's a good idea that you go get another wife." Nothing of the direction of God in any of this. Of course, we've seen this with Abraham a number of times where he tries to pawn off his wife as his sister when he goes before the Pharaoh; when he goes before King Ambimelech, he does the same thing. And nobody told him to do that. It was just his own idea. So, here he is going about his own idea and he's having 6 children, which it seems as if with great ease. I mean, here you are at this ripe old age of 137 and still having kids, it's amazing. So, she bore him these kids.

Now, on the onset with the names, the names actually define things. And I'm not going to go into all the names. And the reason why I'm not going to do that is because, one, we don't have time, and two, my main desire is to give you the panoramic view of this particular passage so you might see that which God has for us. But when you begin to dissect the names, they all have meanings. In other words, today somebody names a child a particular name; they named that child that name because they think it's a pretty name or it sounds good or something like that. But when they were naming children at this particular time, they named them according to the way that they either reacted or the things that would define their character or their nature. A little bit further in this particular chapter, you have the two children that are born with Isaac, right? Jacob and Esau. Why are they named Jacob and Esau? Well, it actually says it's in the passage. Jacob was a supplanter. “*Ya ‘ăqōb*” actually means to supplant. And “Esau” just means the kid was ruddy and red. So, you have kids that are defined based on either their appearance or their character or their nature or the things that they do.

When you see this list, immediately defining the names will begin to reveal what happens in the realm of, I would say, times of ease and comfort. And quite frankly, if you're seeking what is the most comfortable position, if you're seeking that which is the easiest route, if you're seeking that which brings you the most pleasure, these are the things that are going to come out of that. Now, unfortunately, most people don't give a lot of thought to their end of life and their thought is, "I just want to make my life comfortable." And I would say you want to rethink this. Because what you should be doing is pursuing the will of God until the Lord takes you home. But you start resting on your laurels, that complacency begins to stir up and, we'll put it this way, give birth to a lot of trouble.

If you look at the names with me, you'll see in verse 2, (Genesis 25:2) "She bore to him Zimran..."

And so, by itself, it doesn't seem like a negative thing. But as you put all the boys together, you begin to get a picture. So, she bore him Zimran and his name was to pluck out.

"...and Jokshan..."

Which means to snatch. It almost seems like we have a bunch of grabbers. Then you have Medan. Now, "Medan" then gets pretty defined in the sense that what we're dealing with is somebody that is contentious. He contends. He's a fighter. So, you have a plucker, a snatcher, a fighter. "Midian" is making reference to within the realm of strife. The question is, what happens when I just go on cruise control and I don't do anything? Problems. Things don't get better. You start going backwards. If you're not climbing, you're sliding. And this passage begins to reveal as you go into "Ishbak," which means to forsake, and "Shuah," which means to sink down. And these are six kids that you're really proud of, right? I mean, why would you name a kid "sink down"? Why would you name somebody "strife"? Why would you name somebody "contentious"? Well, there's only one reason. That's the way they were.

And so, these are the ones that Keturah bore him, and then it goes on to,

(Genesis 25:3) "Jokshan became the father of Sheba and Dedan. And the sons of Dedan were Asshurim..."

Which is actually amalgamating into Ashur, which is Assyria.

"... and Letushim and Leummim."

All of these are basically making references to these great nations that begin to form. And as they begin to form, a lot of them are Arabic.

(Genesis 25:4) "The sons of Midian were Ephah..."

Making reference to darkness.

"... and Hanoah and Abida and Eldaah..."

Knowledge, and one even calls himself the "god of knowledge". These are the sons and the grandsons that come from Keturah. What you see is a lot of contention, a lot of strife, you see pride, you see desire to grab for what they want, and all of this is in the realm of, "And Abraham took..." What the whole chapter is going to be revealing to us as we go through is there's going to have to be a separation from these family members. And thus, as I give you the title of the chapter in Chapter 25, "God's Preservation Through Polarization," it's hard to think in terms of polarization, especially when you think of your

family, because the job is to keep everybody together, right? Not necessarily. And that's one of the things that the passage is saying. One of the reasons why you have to get into Scripture because you want to do what God says, not what you think is right. There is a way which seems right to man, but the end thereof is death, right? So, what is it you should be doing as the years go by? What should you start doing and how should you end? That's the question, isn't it? And strangely enough, preservation is going to come when there's a separation because of the fact that you look at this family, there are multiple opinions and beliefs and interests that just begin to go in all sorts of different directions. You wish that you could keep everybody on the same page. You wish that you could keep everybody thinking the same way. But unfortunately, just by virtue of everybody seeking his own way, go into to the Book of judges, and every man did what was right in his own eyes. Just by virtue of somebody doing that, there's polarization in the things that happened. And before long, it's noticeable to see that we're looking different. I mean, we're almost opposite in the way that we think and within the same

family. How can that be? How could there be a Cain and an Abel in the same family? How could that be possible? And how could you have somebody like Absalom in the family of David? How is that possible? Well, the fact of the matter is, there is a polarization that's going on and where there is an ideology of sorts of shared beliefs, of values and ideas and pursuits that different ones have, oftentimes these are worlds apart within a family.

We come to this passage and Abraham's going to do some things that you're going to say, "Whoa, Abraham, really? Is this what God wants you to do?" And then we're going to say, "Yes, that's what God wanted Abraham to do." At first, Abraham did what Abraham wanted to do and Abraham took. But then the next paragraph will go into, "And Abraham gave..." And in that particular passage, what we're going to see is he started aligning with what God wanted.

Now the passage will read this way in verse 5,

(Genesis 25:5) "Now Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac."

Okay, favoritism? Well, it certainly seems like it. In fact, the way that it continues to go is,

(Genesis 25:6) "but to the sons of his concubines, Abraham gave gifts while he was still living, and sent them away from his son Isaac eastward, to the land of the east."

Some of the rabbinical writings actually have some of the sons of Keturah going as far as China and India; many of them once again amalgamating into Syria; some going over even to Pakistan, all those areas, and they just seem to blend in. It's pretty interesting. So that you could really say that Abraham was the father of many nations.

Certainly, he was. Nevertheless, what's interesting about the passage is that Abraham is going to give all that he has to Isaac.

You see this, if you back up into Genesis 15. Remember when Abraham was wondering, "Am I going to have a child, or am I not going to have a child? Maybe it's the servant that You gave me that is going to have the children for me?"

So, he has his vision and Abraham says to the Lord in Genesis 15:2,

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

Once again, "heir" makes the reference to "*meseq*," which is another word for possessor. In other words, "Since I'm going to give everything that I have to Eliezer, he must be the one You're talking about."

And then God goes on and says this,

(Genesis 15:4) "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.""

That's what he's talking about within the passage.

And you see this in Chapter 24 as well, with the servant actually telling Rebekah's family about all of these things.

And it says in verse 34,

(Genesis 24:34) "So he said, "I am Abraham's servant.

(Genesis 24:35) The LORD has greatly blessed my master, so that he has become rich; and He has given him flocks and herds, and silver and gold, and servants and maids, and camels and donkeys.

(Genesis 24:36) Now Sarah my master's wife bore a son to my master in her old age, and he has given him all that he has."

Why is that true? Why would he do such a thing? Isaac was really representative of the promise of God. I mean, he was born supernaturally. I mean, what woman 90 years old has a kid? She couldn't even have children before that. And so, God caused this miracle to happen. He is clearly a picture of God's miraculous work in their lives. It was a test of faith and God was saying, "You must walk by faith and not by sight." We think in terms of, "I finally got the kid," and God goes, "It wasn't the kid, it was the faith. It was a relationship with Me as you trusted in Me, but the kid was used because it was that which you longed for so much." And of course, we know according to Genesis 22, God finally says, "Okay, take this one kid that you have, the one, the only son, and put him on an

altar and raise your knife and kill him." And of course, as Abraham goes to do that, the Angel of the Lord stopped him, and He says, "I'll provide the sacrifice." The point of the matter is that Isaac was a picture of not only faith, but of surrendering. And in this picture, God was going to preserve this faith. And He's going to say, "You don't want to go the way of the world." And so, these other sons are going their own ways. All we like sheep have gone astray, right?

What does he do in the passage, if you go back to 25?

(Genesis 25:5) "Now Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac;

(Genesis 25:6) but to the sons of his concubines, Abraham gave gifts while he was still living, and sent them away from his son Isaac..."

So, there is clearly a distinction and clearly a polarization between the two. There will be a polarization between Jacob and Esau as well, that they will be separated from birth and there will be a different walk from each. The blessing will go to Jacob. Esau will despise the blessing as

the text will actually end. In each case, you'll see the separation and the division within the passage.

It goes on and says in this particular passage, as it goes and deals not only with the age of Abraham, as it says in verse 7,

(Genesis 25:7) "These are all the years of Abraham's life that he lived, one hundred and seventy-five years."

Let me just once again reiterate and interject this. What years of your life do you remember the most? What have been the most profitable in your life? With Abraham, it seemed to cease with the death of Sarah, and yet he has 38 more years. I mean, he had 25 years of God working in his life, and we have all those things written in the pages, but here you have 38 years almost silent.

(Genesis 25:8) "Abraham breathed his last and died in a ripe old age, an old man and satisfied with life; and he was gathered to his people.

(Genesis 25:9) Then his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah..."

That's the same cave in which Sarah was buried. And once again, what does Machpelah make reference to? A double portion, or more specifically, is an interesting picture of "again". When you think of death, you think, oftentimes, man thinks, the world thinks, "This is it, it's all over." And God says, "Nope, we're going to do something again." And He's going to raise us up. So, Machpelah is an interesting picture.

"... in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite..."

"Hittite" makes reference to terror.

"... facing Mamre."

It is actually where Abraham lived, and it was certainly at the place in which Sarah had received the promise that she was going to have a son in spite of her old age. The place of Mamre. "Mamre," once again, is strength rising. And so, she wanted to be buried there. Abraham will be buried with her. Of course, the patriarchs will be buried in this particular place. And to this day, it's recognized as their burial place. Why is it defined in such a way? And I would say because it shows a picture of hope and confidence that God is going to raise them from the dead.

This is why the Israelites, even though when they were in Egypt, wanted to have their bones taken back to Israel and buried there; because they knew there was going to be a resurrection, there was going to be another day.

So, it goes on and says that with the burial,

(Genesis 25:10) "the field which Abraham purchased from the sons of Heth; there Abraham was buried with Sarah his wife."

(Genesis 25:11) It came about after the death of Abraham, that God blessed his son Isaac; and Isaac lived by Beer-lahai-roi."

Now, at the very end is a word that makes reference to "God sees". Actually, the whole thing is by the well in which God sees you, more specifically. So, what is that about? Well, the "roi" is making reference to almost a sense in which a prophet sees a vision. And more specifically, it is a picture of somebody looking into something and considering what's happening with great perception. And if you remember, it actually was named this by Hagar when she was there and she was running from Sarah, and God says, "No, go back. I'm going to bless

you." And she goes, "So, God sees, He cares, and He's interested in what I'm going through." And God says, "Yes." So, this will be the place, interestingly enough, that Isaac will call home. He will live and abide in a place in which literally this is the place in which "God sees, He cares for me, and He is interested in all of my ways."

Now, within this particular passage, what we see is really a contrast, and I would say once again a kind of polarization of the world as compared to God's way. Isaac is a picture of the promise. The world is a picture of contention, strife, division, heartache, and pain. The tendency of the world is to fundamentally say, "Relax, take it easy, especially at the end of life. You've earned it. This is the way that you should go out." And God says just the opposite. God says, "No, this is the time when you really start working. This is the time when you really get busy." Until the Lord takes you home, right?

So, let's just look at some of the antithetical points within the passage. One is, the world will probably say something like this, "Don't put all your eggs in one basket. Kind of spread them out, make sure that everybody..."

But that doesn't seem to be according to the passage, though. He gave everything to Isaac. Why would he give everything to Isaac? Because Isaac was following God. How do we know that? Well, even the place that he decides to reside is telling us that he was seeking the face of God. So, Isaac was going to maintain the promise. He was going to maintain the faith.

There's an interesting passage in 3 John, you don't need to turn there, but John is writing to the church, and he says, "Look, there are guys that are going out for the sake of the gospel and they're not accepting anything from the world." And then he uses this phrase, "Support such men as these." "But why shouldn't I support everybody? I mean, I'll just kind of spread it out, making sure everybody gets some." Support the ones that are doing the right thing. Be very discriminate about who you support, how you support them. Sometimes, you give something to somebody and you go, "They hold this office or they do this thing." And I go, "Okay, that's fine. But are they wife beaters?" You don't know. All you know is they have that job or they do this thing. But you don't know

their life. But a believer, you know they're walking according to the will of God, and they're doing the things of the Lord. Support those things. Now, if you find out they're not, don't support them anymore.

I know this is probably going to rub you the wrong way, but in your household, you may have some young people that are following the Lord, some not. Guess where I put my eggs? "Oh, I want to be fair about this." We're not talking about being fair about it. We're talking about supporting the person that is doing the right thing. This is the fundamental principle of Scripture. We don't support those that are doing wrong. In fact, you see that with Jehoshaphat, in which he was trying to help his father-in-law, and God says, "You sure you want to help this guy? Because once you begin to help this guy, you become an enemy of Me." This is why David says in Psalm 119, "I am a companion of all who fear God and keep His commandments." Who are your friends? Those who follow God. Who are you going to help? Those who follow God. It doesn't mean that you're not going to help somebody that's dying on the street, but what it's talking

about is supporting. And of course, as we come into the passage, this passage is making reference to family members. Who are you going to support? The world will say, "These are the people you support."

The way that Christ puts it in Matthew 6:19 is, "Put your treasures in heaven. Invest in the kingdom of God." And we're not just talking about money. We're talking about your time, your effort. Paul will put it this way to Timothy, "Teach faithful men who will be able to teach others also." "I'm going to try to teach them all." No, find the one that's going to be faithful and then train them, because the unfaithful is going to continue to be unfaithful. You can call them to faithfulness, and when they decide to be faithful, teach them. But don't invest in those that are doing the wrong thing. And that's a fundamental principle that we see within the passage.

He goes on within the passage, and we begin to see that the world would probably come from the perspective or the angle of saying, "You know what you really need to do, you need to keep family together at all costs." In fact, I've actually heard the phrase, "family first," which is an

erroneous phrase. It should be "God first." And sometimes when you put God first, there are going to be times that family is way last because they're not following. Put God first. "Family, we've got to keep them together." I see this oftentimes with people coming to the end of their life and they go, "We've got to pull everyone together." I don't know if they have this picture of mom and dad at Thanksgiving table and everybody just singing *Kumbaya*. I don't know what their thoughts are, but they have this mental picture of, "I'm a successful parent if I keep everybody together." Well, then Abraham was not successful because he turns to his kids, other than Isaac, and he said, "Okay, leave." Now, he gave them gifts as long as they were alive, and that doesn't mean that you can't help them while they're alive in some way. You don't want to help them to the negative. But you don't want to leave things to them. If you've ever read the Book of Ecclesiastes, you begin to realize that the writer of Ecclesiastes, which is Solomon, he's very frustrated. He goes, "What? I've worked hard and I've been wise and I've accumulated all this stuff and I've got to leave it to idiots?" I mean, that's one of the fundamental principles

that you see in the Book of Ecclesiastes. He's just very upset over the fact that these people aren't going to handle it well. So, Scripture is very clear. Your job isn't necessary to keep family together. We actually in many respects are called to separate. And once again, there's that polarization because we have different beliefs and ideas. And it's not that you're trying to be hateful, but quite frankly, if you just do the right thing, your family will leave you; you don't have to tell them to leave.

2 Corinthians 6:14 through the end of the chapter will make reference to this, which we've oftentimes quoted, "What fellowship does light have with darkness?" No matter how many times you bring the family around the table, there's not going to be that loving spirit because their desire is not to follow Christ, but to follow their own desires. People wonder, "Why is it so adversarial at the table?" And I would say, because there are different desires, there are selfish pursuits that different ones have, and they come with all those selfish pursuits. There's not going to be any kind of unity at the table.

Ephesians 5 will make reference to this as well in verses 1 through 14 where he says, "Look, don't have anything to do with these kinds of things." And you know, the world will invite you to their table, and then they'll get upset at you because you don't do what they want to do. And then they'll come to your table, and then you'll say, "Well, we pray at our table," and they say, "Well, we don't like you doing that." So, what's the point? The point is that there's going to be division if in fact there's different lords that they're following. And so, the passage is very clear. Your job isn't to try to keep the family together at all costs. Your job is to do what is right before the Lord. You're to exalt Him. You're to point to Him. You're to give Him the glory. And that's what you should be doing. So many people are so worried, "I've got to pull the family together at the very end." It's not necessarily going to happen. And the reason why it's not necessarily going to happen is because of the fact that different ones are loving other things.

The other thing within the passage is that man tends to hope in the things of the world. And of course, if you

recall in 1 Timothy, Paul says, "Don't put your trust in the uncertainty of riches." And so, man begins to accumulate stuff, and he begins to hope in it. And the passage says that, as we were looking at Luke, the rich man tears down his barns, and he builds bigger barns to store more stuff. And the thought is, "If I have enough stuff, at the end of life, then I'm going to be secure." But this passage is very clear that even within the burial, it's given that wonderful picture of our hope is the resurrection; it's not in the things that I possess. And that's a very different way of looking at it.

In fact, according to 1 Peter 1:21, we believe in God that raised Christ from the dead that your faith and hope might be in God. And strangely enough, though the world might say you need to look out for yourself, we actually have somebody looking out for us. That's that wonderful picture of the well in which we have a God that looks to the needs. And if we please Him, won't He take care of us? I mean, so much Scripture is written in regard to being anxious about the things of life. And how many times have we read that wonderful text in Matthew 6? I mean,

why are you worried about so many things? Why are you worried about what you put on? Why are you worried about the roof over your head? Why are you worried about the food that you eat? Why are you worried about money? "Be anxious for nothing," Scripture would actually say, "And why are you worried about these things?" These things can certainly overbear us, but our hope is in the Lord. We're not looking after our own interests. God is looking after us, and He is our hope. He is our interest.

Let me just show you something at the end of life for two individuals in particular. One is in 2 Timothy 4. I already made mention, but I just want you to see this as we know that this book, 2 Timothy, was written at a time in which Paul had come to the end of his life, and he is literally passing over the baton to Timothy, and he's going, "I'm dead. I'm going to go before Caesar. He's going to chop off my head." He knew that this was going to happen. Nero was in power, and Nero had him under lock and key. The time of his departure had come. He makes reference to that within the passage. And you don't see him kicking

back with a martini in prison. What you see him doing is you see him charging Timothy, "Timothy, you've got to stay the course."

The way the passage reads is,

(2 Timothy 4:1) "I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom:

(2 Timothy 4:2) preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction."

Let me just say this. "Reprove, rebuke, exhort" is going to separate you from people.

(2 Timothy 4:3) "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires."

In other words, people are wanting to hear you tell them what they want to hear. Why don't we do that? Because their soul is at stake. They're worried about whether or not they're going to have a soft pillow tonight, and we're

concerned about them burning in hell. So, we're definitely on a different level of conversation.

(2 Timothy 4:4) "And will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.

(2 Timothy 4:5) But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry."

Which seems to convey that the end years are not going to be easier. In fact, he already stated in 2 Timothy 3, things will proceed from bad to worse. The world's not going to be a better place, especially for you Christians, because they hate you.

So, it goes on and says,

(2 Timothy 4:6) "For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come.

(2 Timothy 4:7) I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith."

That's good to know, isn't it? That's somebody that has aligned themselves with truth. That's somebody that has maintained and didn't sloth off at the end.

(2 Timothy 4:8) "In the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing."

Stay the course. Now, this is Paul at an old age. He's in prison. You would think that he would just go, "Forget about it." He's writing a letter. Whatever he can do. God limits the things that we can do the older we get. It is like a prison, isn't it? It doesn't mean that you still can't encourage people. It doesn't mean you still can't point. Use these times, whatever your life is, whatever God has given you.

There's a passage in Matthew. I want you to see the end of Matthew 26. Well, you know what Matthew 26 is about. It's about our Savior, and He's going to the cross. Wow. And then He's betrayed by Judas. He comes together with His disciples, and He has a meal with them. They sing a hymn, but yet Peter denies Him. There is a verse that sometimes we skip over and it's just a very simple verse, but very poignant one, as Jesus goes to the cross.

It reads this way,

(Matthew 26:56) "But all this has taken place to fulfill the Scriptures of the prophets." Then all the disciples left Him and fled."

You're not always going to have everybody together. There are going to be times when you're going to do the right thing and everybody's going to run. They're not going to want to associate with you. But the goal of Christ, though He brought them together at the table, was not to keep them together. The goal of Christ was to do His Father's will. And when He went to the cross and when He rose from the dead, then He brought those together. But it was His Father's will that He was always seeking to do. There's going to be a temptation to try to run to comfort, run to ease, rest, and relaxation. It's going to be a temptation to try to pull family together. There's going to be a temptation to try to make that your goal, to make the hope that you have, the possessions that you have. But all of these things are not what we pursue. We pursue pleasing God with all of our heart.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we come before You today. We ask You to change our hearts. Father, there are things that we pursue that seem normal. It just seems the way that they ought to go. We get older, we ought to rest a little bit more, work a little bit less, and even if we do work, we just work smarter, not harder. But You tell us to occupy until You come; You tell us to be faithful until You come. In fact, there's nothing that we really read that says that You tell us to slow down until You come. Father, it's our desire to please You in all things. And though we might think that by doing things of pleasure and pursuing things of ease and comfort that it would bring great harmony, it seems to do just the opposite. Father, it seems to just bring discord and strife. So, Lord, let us please You at all costs, realizing that You're the only One that can bring people together. And in faith knowing that though it may not happen in our lifetime, You can still do it. For we believe in the hope of resurrection. And we believe that You work and bless even when we're gone.

With your heads bowed and your eyes closed, what we're really asking you to do is to think differently. What we're

asking you to do is think according to Scripture. What we're asking you to do is think according to Christ. We're asking you, we're pleading with you, be reconciled to God. Make God your focus. Make God your pursuit; pleasing Him above all else. Try to learn what is pleasing to Him. Don't abide by the things that the world would say you need to do.