

A Friend of God; James 2:21-23

I. Friends Day

- A. We do this twice a year normally the Sunday after we knock doors
- B. Friendship is important to us — we are social creations
- C. Friendship is also important to God
- D. What does it take to be a friend of God?

II. Obedience

- A. To be a friend of God we must be obedient
- B. Genesis 12:1–4 (ESV); ¹ Now the Lord said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. ² And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” ⁴ So Abram went, as the Lord had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.
- C. What does it take for you to move?
 - 1. First of all you have to know where you are moving
 - 2. God told Abraham, “go... I will show you”
 - 3. “Pack up your belongings, Sarai, we’re moving.” “Where?” “Don’t know”
 - 4. And when they arrived, the land was not theirs; they were guests, travelers, transients, homeless
 - 5. Genesis 12:5–7 (ESV); ⁵ And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother’s son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people that they had acquired in Haran, and they set out to go to the land of Canaan. When they came to the land of Canaan, ⁶ Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. ⁷ Then the Lord appeared to Abram and said, “To your offspring I will give this land.” So he built there an altar to the Lord, who had appeared to him.
 - 6. It is important to note that Abraham never received the land while he was living
 - 7. Isaac did not receive the land even though God repeated the promise to him (Genesis 26:3-4)
 - 8. Jacob did not receive the land even though God repeated the promise to him (Genesis 28:12-14)
 - 9. Hebrews 11:8–10 (ESV); ⁸ By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. ⁹ By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. ¹⁰ For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God.
- D. Obedience comes by Faith — Abraham heard God, believed that He would keep His promises, and obeyed His voice

III. Impossible

- A. To be a friend of God we must believe the impossible
- B. Genesis 18:9–14 (ESV); ⁹ They said to him, “Where is Sarah your wife?” And he said, “She is in the tent.” ¹⁰ The Lord said, “I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife shall have a son.” And Sarah was listening at the tent door behind him. ¹¹ Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in years. The way of women had ceased to be with Sarah. ¹² So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, “After I am worn out,

and my lord is old, shall I have pleasure?" ¹³ The Lord said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?' ¹⁴ Is anything too hard for the Lord? At the appointed time I will return to you, about this time next year, and Sarah shall have a son."

- C. The average age when women stop having children is 51 years old according to the Mayo Clinic
- D. It is worth noting that Abraham was 75 when they left Haran according to Genesis 12:4
 - 1. Sarah was 10 years younger than Abraham (Genesis 17:17)
 - 2. That would mean when God gave Abraham the promise Sarah was already around 65 years old, 15 past child bearing
 - 3. Most women stop bearing children (without the aid of medicine) around their early 40s
 - 4. Genesis 15:1–6 (ESV); ¹ After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: "Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great." ² But Abram said, "O Lord God, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" ³ And Abram said, "Behold, you have given me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir." ⁴ And behold, the word of the Lord came to him: "This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir." ⁵ And he brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." ⁶ And he believed the Lord, and he counted it to him as righteousness.
 - 5. Abraham believed the impossible
- E. Hebrews 11:11–12 (ESV); ¹¹ By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised. ¹² Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as many as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore.
- F. Believing the impossible comes by faith — Abraham and Sarah heard God and believed that God could give them an heir

IV. Sacrifice

- A. To be a friend of God we must sacrifice ourselves
- B. Genesis 22:1–3 (ESV); ¹ After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." ² He said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you." ³ So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac. And he cut the wood for the burnt offering and arose and went to the place of which God had told him.
- C. Remember, Isaac is the child of the promise — the one who will give Abraham descendants and numerous as the stars (Genesis 15:5)
 - 1. Abraham did not question God
 - 2. George C. Scott as Abraham in "The Bible: In the Beginning"
 - 3. Hebrews 11:17–19 (ESV); ¹⁷ By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son, ¹⁸ of whom it was said, "Through Isaac shall your offspring be named." ¹⁹ He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back.
 - 4. Abraham understood that God keeps his promises even when he didn't understand how it would work.

5. Do we trust God even when we don't understand, or don't see how things will work out?
 6. We may not have been asked to sacrifice our only son — but God didn't ask Abraham (or us) to do anything He wasn't willing to do
 7. God completed the sacrifice of his only unique son, Jesus
- D. God asks us to sacrifice not our children, but ourselves
- E. Romans 12:1 (ESV); I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.
1. The writer of Hebrews says that doing good things and sharing what we have are sacrifices that are pleasing to God
 2. Jesus tells us to “take up your cross” which means to die to yourself — to no longer count what you want as anything, but to live for God through His son Jesus the Christ
 3. Galatians 2:20 (ESV); I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.
- V. A Friend of God
- A. If you want to be a friend of God then you must obey His word
 - B. If you want to be a friend of God then you must believe His promises
 - C. If you want to be a friend of God then you must sacrifice yourself