

THE FRIEND OF GOD

JAMES 2; JOHN 15:14

Text: James 2:23 & John 15:14

James 2:23

²³ And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.

John 15:14

¹⁴ Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.

Introduction:

Today is a special day, its "Friend Day." Some of you are here today because a friend invited you to be here.

What do we mean when we use the word friend?

I suppose if you were to ask 100 people this question you would probably get 100 different answers.

Some think a friend is someone that they can share anything with, while others may think it is someone who you can depend on in a difficult time; still others think a friend is someone who has something to give them.

Our theme this year is standing on the promises of God.

We find in John 15:14 a promise regarding being a friend of the Lord.

It is relatively simple; “Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you.”

In our text in James 2 we read that Abraham was a friend of God.

There is a tremendous principle and challenge in this passage of God's Holy Word.

This tells us of the greatest characteristic of Abraham.

Abraham is the patriarch of the Jews.

Abraham was a great military man. He took on the five armies of the north and defeated them. (Gen. 14)

However here in our passage we see the greatest title that can be given to anyone – he was a friend of God.

When we examine Abraham's life then we can discover why he was called the friend of God.

Let's examine why Abraham carried this title:

1. HE SUBMITTED TO THE DIRECTION OF GOD

Genesis 12:1-4

¹ Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: ² And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: ³ And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. ⁴ So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.

Abram pulled up his stakes and left his home.

Abraham didn't even know where he was going.

Notice:

A. This Didn't Make Sense to the Natural Mind

- He was to forsake every security he has enjoyed.
- He did not know his destination.
- He didn't know how far he was going.

Note the reason why Abraham obeyed:

1. Because of his confidence in God's will.

He had faith.

He wasn't suspicious of God.

He didn't accuse God of trying to misuse him.

2. Because of his commitment to God's will.

That's obedience.

Note that Abraham didn't demand an explanation.

Faith does not need an explanation. He obeyed. He submitted to God's direction.

God wants those who will follow Him without reservation.

We note He Submitted to the Direction of God but also:

2. HE SEPARATED FROM THE DEGRADATION OF THE GODLESS

Genesis 14:21-23

²¹ And the king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself. ²² And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the LORD, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth, ²³ That I will not take from a thread even to a shoelatchet, and that I will not take any thing that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich:

Here is the thought that you must get.

Abraham had defeated these five kings of the north, and the king of Sodom, out of appreciation, wanted to give him a reward. Abraham would take nothing from him.

Think about this, Abraham is on a long journey. He doesn't know how far he will be going because he is obeying God. Now he is faced with a circumstance that if he will allow the king of Sodom to reward him for his victory Abraham can profit financially if he will just be a little flexible.

Who is going to call this wrong?

Who will dare condemn Abraham for this action?

He had done what he felt led to do of God, and a man of the world wants to show his appreciation to Abraham for it.

What is wrong with that?

Abraham will not accept it.

Remember Abraham was the friend of God, thus, he did not want it to appear that he was endorsing their ungodliness.

Abraham was called the "Friend of God" because he was willing to be separated from the degradation of the ungodly city of Sodom.

He did not want to be identified with the sin of that city by accepting a reward from the king.

If you and I expect to be the "Friend of God", we must follow the same action.

You cannot be the friend of God and the friend of the world consecutively.

The friend of God will commit to the separation of the immoral philosophies and the immoral practices of this world.

We note He Submitted to the Direction of God and Separated from the Degradation of the godless.

Note thirdly:

3. HE WAS WILLING TO STAND ON THE DEPENDABILITY OF GOD

Genesis 15:1-6

¹After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. ²And Abram said, Lord GOD, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus? ³And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir. ⁴And, behold, the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. ⁵And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. ⁶And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

In Vs. 1 we see this phrase, "I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward."

Here we can see why Abraham refused the reward of the king of Sodom.

He didn't need it, he had the great reward of God.

God's promise to Abraham was to bless all the nations of the earth.

Abraham did not have an heir.

The circumstances were against him.

Yet, Abraham stood on the dependability of God.

He placed his full trust in what God said.

The true friend of God is the Christian that is willing to stand on the Word of God when all that you have to stand on is Word of God.

You and I can stand on the dependability of God this very day.

There is no need for you to harbor doubts or fears in the matter of the future things.

We have considered He Submitted to the Direction of God; Separated from the Degradation of the godless Stood on the Dependability of God.

Note lastly:

4. HE WAS WILLING TO SACRIFICE HIS DEAREST TO GOD

Genesis 22:1-6

¹ And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am. ² And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of. ³ And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him. ⁴ Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off. ⁵ And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you. ⁶ And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together.

"Tempt" means to test.

Faith that has not been tested is faith that cannot be trusted.

Can God trust your faith today?

Twenty-five years had passed between the promise of God and the actual delivering of that promise.

Now God says, "Sacrifice him."

Abraham was the friend of God because he allowed nothing to contest his love for God.

Abraham was willing to sacrifice that which was dearest to him.

He was going to literally kill Isaac, his promised son.

His very dearest earthly possession.

Hebrews 11:17-19

¹⁷ By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, ¹⁸ Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: ¹⁹ Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.

What that means is that Abraham was going to slay Isaac and then stand back and watch God resurrect him from the dead.

He had that kind of faith in God.

That's why he could sacrifice that which was most dear to him.

Look closer again at Gen 22:2.

Genesis 22:2

² And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.

God had commanded him to offer Isaac for a burnt offering. Abraham's intention was to plunge the knife into the heart of his dearest son, prepare him for the burnt offering, and then burn him on the altar of God.

Then Abraham was going to stand back and witness the resurrection of his son.

That's why so many are not the friend of God.

They are not willing to give up that which is dearest to them.

They are not willing to totally place total trust in God.

Close:

How many of you are willing to sacrifice your dearest love to God?

God called on Abraham to do this, and Abraham did it.

Begin by giving Him your heart in salvation. Trust Christ as your Saviour.

Others of you have not made that break away from depending on the world for your support.

You still look back to Egypt and the things of the world for pleasure, for entertainment, for sustenance.

Make the break, and turn to God totally.

A friend places no boundaries on his heart, but places everything upon the altar of sacrifice for God.

Abraham was the friend of God. How about you and I today?

I wonder how close we can come to being classified as the "Friend of God."