



Today's Sermons
 Morning: There Are TWO...
 Evening: Song Service

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FOR THE RECORD

Sunday Bible Study	33
Sunday AM Worship	42
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Offering	\$1795



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Times of Services:
Sunday
 Bible Study:... 10:00am
 AM Worship:...11:00am
 PM Worship:...6:00pm
 2nd Sunday:.....1:30pm

Wednesday
 Bible Study:.....7:00pm

Radio Program
 Sunday:.....7:30am
 "Back to the Bible"
 AM 580 WSKS
 93.5 FM

**We Extend A
 Warm & Cordial
 Welcome
 To All Our
 Visitors!**

Abraham: The Friend of God
 by Gene Taylor

“Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.’ And he was called the friend of God” (James 2:23).

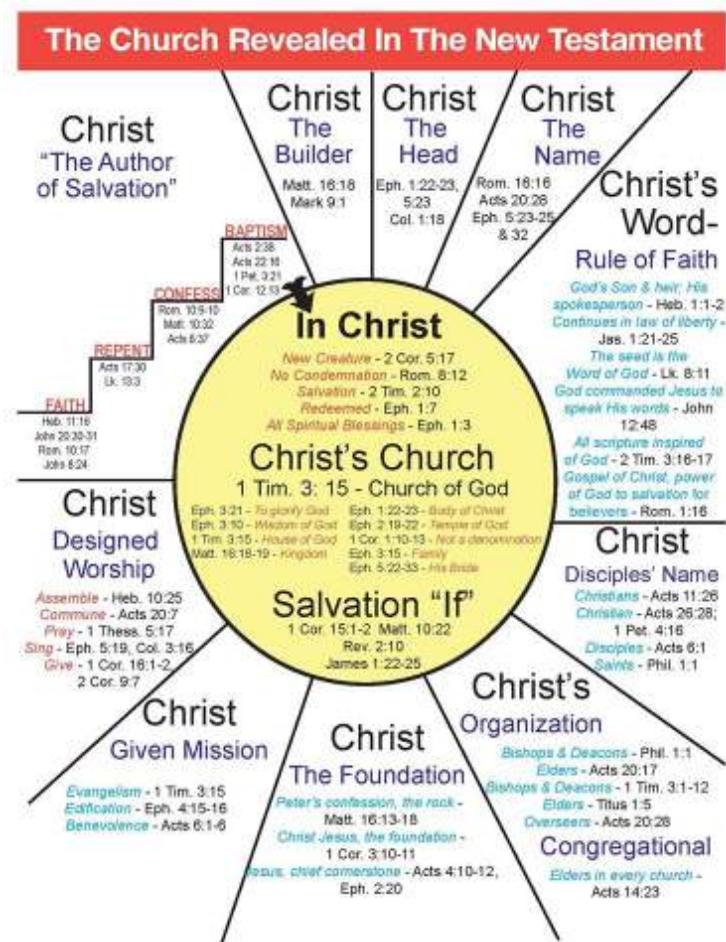
Abraham is called the father of the faithful (Gal. 3:16-29; Rom. 4:11) and "the friend of God" (Jas. 2:23). He is an example to us in many ways, therefore, it is always good to study him and learn from that which the Bible reveals to us about him.

In commenting on the statement that Abraham was "the friend of God," Guy N. Woods said, "God regarded Abraham as his friend because he was ever faithful to God and always submitted his will to God's." (A Commentary on the Epistle of James, p. 146) In his faithfulness and obedience, Abraham demonstrated several characteristics that we would do well to emulate so that we too might become friends of God.

Faithful

Nearly every action in Abraham's life shows his great faith in God. He left his country and countrymen never to return (Heb. 11:8-16). He believed the promise of a son though such a birth was naturally impossible (Rom. 4:18-21). He cast out a son, Ishmael when Sarah and God commanded it (Gen. 21:9-14). He was even willing to offer Isaac, the son of promise,

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when God demanded it (Heb. 11:17-19). Because of his great faith, he enjoyed the victory of faith (Gen. 22:12).

Obedient

As seen in the illustrations above, whatever God wanted Abraham to do, he did. Whether it was leaving his homeland, casting out one son or sacrificing another, he obeyed God without question or qualm.

Devoted

In Genesis 18:19 God states one of the reasons He was able to bless Abraham so abundantly and regard him as His friend. He said, "For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the Lord, to do righteousness and justice, that the Lord may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him." Abraham's devotion to God not only caused him to walk obediently but also allowed him to influence others, especially those in his own house, to do the same.

Peaceable

In situations where strife could have occurred and then escalated, Abraham seemed able to defuse them (cf. Gen. 13:1-13). There was one key trait in his character that caused him to be able to be such a peacemaker -- he regarded others better than self. This is a quality that the Christian is to possess today. Philippians 2:3-4 states, "Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own in-terests, but also for the interests of others."

His unselfish nature is not only seen in giving his nephew Lot first choice of land in which to pasture his flocks and herds (Gen. 13:9) but also in his willingness to intercede for the people of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 18:22-23). Even though they were wicked, Abraham was concerned for them and did what he could to spare them from the judgment which came upon them.

The hospitality he gives to three men, who are angels of God, in Genesis 18:1-8 also shows his regard for others. Though he does not know these men, he generously provides for their needs. Since Christians are to be "given to hospitality" (Rom. 12:13), the writer of the book of Hebrews uses this incident in the life of Abraham to emphasize this responsibility: "Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels" (13:2).

A Pilgrim and Sojourner

Christians are to be pilgrims and sojourners in this life, living in the world but not being of the world (John 15:19; I John 2:15-17). Again, Abraham is their example. "By faith he (Abraham -- GT) dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11:9-10). As he looked "for a city," we must ever be looking to heaven and the things that are above (Col. 3:1-3) realizing that, even now, our real citizenship is in heaven (Phil. 3:20).

Conclusion

Because Abraham lived as a friend of God while on earth, he now lives in Paradise (Luke 16:23-31). Since God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34-35), we can have that same hope if we will live the same life. Let us all follow the example of Abraham and do what is necessary to be those who can be called friends of God.

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*“According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*  
(II Peter 1:3-8).

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- July 31 – Song Service
- Aug 7 – Men’s Meeting & Ladies’ Bible Class
- Aug 14 – Preach & Eat – 1:30 Service
- Please give support money for Chinese orphans to Minnie Kennell