

# How to Mend a Broken Faith

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**Main Scripture Text: Genesis 12:1**

*“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.”*

GENESIS 12:1

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## Introduction

Be finding Genesis chapter 12, and really, what we're doing tonight is almost an addendum to the message this morning, but we're going to be in the school of faith tonight, and that's a wonderful school, but sometimes we don't make very good grades. And I want to talk to you about "How to Mend a Broken Faith." Sometimes we don't do all that good in the school of faith. Now life is the classroom in the school of faith. Obviously, the Bible is the textbook in the school of faith. The faculty: the prophets and the apostles. But the dean of the school of faith would have to be Abraham, wouldn't he? Abraham is called in the Bible—you might want to put in your margin Romans chapter 4, verse 11—Abraham is called "*the father of all them that believe.*" (Romans 4:11) When we think of Abraham, we think of faith, and we can learn some incredible lessons about faith. And, by the way, when I'm talking to you about faith, I'm not talking to you about how many angels can dance on the head of a pin. I'm talking to you about something that is so important that I can hardly think of an adjective to describe the importance of faith. It is of monumental, inestimable importance.

Let me give you seven reasons why faith is so important, and all of this is just by way of introduction, but just to put this in your heart.

### A. Faith Is the Distinguishing Mark of the Christian

Listen, folks. Faith is the distinguishing mark of the Christian. Did you know that the Christians were called believers before they were ever called Christians? Believers. That is the distinguishing mark of a Christian, that he's a believer.

### B. Faith Is the Christian's Chief Duty

Number two: To exercise faith is our chief duty. Who said so? Jesus. Put in your margin John 6:29: "*Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.*" (John 6:29) "This is the work of God, that you believe." It's the chief duty.

### C. Faith Is the Christian's Shield from Unbelief

Therefore, unbelief is the supreme evil. There is no greater evil than unbelief, to aim the gun of unbelief at Almighty God and to pull the trigger. You see, how did man get into sin to begin with? Eve did not believe God. She fell into sin because of unbelief. And *men don't go to hell today because they steal, or because they lie, or because they commit adultery, for those sins have been paid for* with the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible says, to the contrary, in John chapter 3, verse 18, "*He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed.*" (John 3:18) Think about it. *The reason that men and women go to hell today is they have not believed on the Lord Jesus Christ.*

#### **D. The Christian Life Is Lived by Faith**

And once you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, how are you going to live the Christian life? By trying? No. By trusting. The Christian life is lived by faith. Four times in the Bible, the Bible says, *“The just shall live by faith.”* (Habakkuk 2:4; Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11; Hebrews 10:38) You find that in Habakkuk 2:4; Romans 1:17; Galatians 3, verse 11; and Hebrews 10, verse 38. All of these say, *“The just shall live by faith.”* One, two, three, four times, God says it. Do you think He’s trying to tell us something? I’m telling you, the way to live the Christian life is by faith.

#### **E. Success in the Christian Life Is Measured by Faith**

Number five: Your success in the Christian life is going to be measured by your faith. Matthew chapter 9, verse 29: *“According to your faith be it unto you.”* (Matthew 9:29) Not according to your feeling, your fame, your fortune, your friends, your fate, but *“according to your faith be it unto you.”*

#### **F. Faith Pleases God**

Number six: Faith, above all things, pleases God. And if you please God, it doesn’t matter whom you displease. And if you displease God, it doesn’t matter whom you please, amen? And how are you going to please God? Well, the Bible says, in Hebrews 11 and verse 6, *“But without faith it is impossible to please him:”—*it doesn’t say, “hardly possible,” but *“impossible to please him”—“for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”* (Hebrews 11:6)

#### **G. Faith Is the Only Way to Overcome the World**

Number seven: The only way that you’re going to overcome this world is by faith. First John chapter 5, verse 4: *“And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.”* (1 John 5:4) When we greet one another here in church, rather than saying, “How you feeling?” we ought to say, “How you *faithing*?” Amen? I, we, live by faith.

### **I. The Root of Biblical Faith**

Now there are several things I want you to learn from Abraham in the school of faith, and the very first thing I want us to learn is what I’m going to call the root of biblical faith. Genesis chapter 12, verse 1—look at it: *“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.”* (Genesis 12:1) Now this is the preamble to his faith. This is the basis to his faith. God had spoken to him. The root of biblical faith is divine revelation; it is to hear from God. Notice how this says, *“And the LORD had said.”* (Genesis 12:1) Just underscore that.

#### **A. Faith Is Not Rooted in Human Will**

Friend, there are a lot of people who misunderstand faith and the source of faith. Faith

is not rooted in human will—faith is not rooted in human will. Let me show you something interesting. Go back to Genesis chapter 11. Now you're in 12, just turn left. Go one page. Look in Genesis chapter 11. You see there the building of the Tower of Babel, this colossal high-rise to hell. And notice how it describes what happened: *“And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech. And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there.”* Now, watch this and count with me: *“And they said one to another, Go to, let us”*—underscore the word *us*; that's one—*“make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. And they said, Go to, let us”*—underscore the word *us* again—*“build us”*—underscore the word again—*“a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name.”* (Genesis 12:1–4) *“Us,” “us,” “us,” “us”*: This is man's will. This is man's attempt to establish his own kingdom through his own will. As a matter of fact, in that one verse, in verse 4, you have four *us*'s right there. You have four *“let us,” “let us,” “let us,” “let us.”*

Now, go back over to where we were in Genesis chapter 12, and notice the difference. Look in these verses here. In chapter 12, verse 1, God says unto Abraham, *“Unto a land that I will shew thee.”* Underscore *“I will.”* Look in verse 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: and I will bless them that bless thee.”* (Genesis 12:1–3) Man says, *“I will,” “I will,” “I will.”* God says, *“I will,” “I will,” “I will.”* Man says, *“Let us.”* God says, *“I will.”* Now faith is not rooted in man's *I will*'s, but in God's *I will*'s. Not in man's *“let us,”* but in God's sovereign will.

Now, what were the people in Babel trying to do? Well, they were trying to make themselves a name. Look, if you will, in verse 4: *“Let us make us a name.”* (Genesis 11:4) They're trying to make themselves a name. They failed miserably. Can anybody here tell me the name of any of those people who built that tower? We know the name of one, whose name was Nimrod, who's a type of the Antichrist. The name is despised. They wanted to make a name. They failed miserably. God said to Abram, *“I will give you a name,”* (Genesis 12:2) and the name *Abraham* is revered throughout the entire world.

Now what I'm trying to say is this, that faith is not rooted in human will. Say, *“Human will.”* That's very important that you understand this, because we have so many people today, who have sort of a Tower-of-Babel mentality, trying to make for themselves a name, and they call it *“name it and claim it.”* You don't do that. You have to hear from God. Faith is not rooted in human will.

## **B. Faith Is Not Rooted in Human Worth**

Secondly, faith is not rooted in human worth—in human worth. Look again, if you will, in verse 1: *“Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country.”* (Genesis 12:1) Now we're going to learn something right there. He was a pagan living in pagan

idolatry in an idolatrous land. And go back to Genesis chapter 11, and look, if you will, in verse 31 again, in this same chapter: “*And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son’s son, and Sarai his daughter in law, his son Abram’s wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan.*” (Genesis 11:31) Now they’re coming out of Ur, which was the center of idolatry.

Now on top of all of that—listen to me now—this pagan was seventy-five years old. When Abram first heard God, he was seventy-five years old. What does that tell us? Nobody’s too bad; nobody’s too old, amen? God chooses a man who is a raw pagan, and he became a believer. Faith is not rooted in human will; it is not rooted in human worth. Say, “Human worth.” It’s not rooted in your worth.

### **C. Faith Is Not Rooted in Human Wisdom**

Now, thirdly, it’s not rooted in human wisdom. Look again in chapter 12, verse 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.*” (Genesis 12:1) There wasn’t something that Abram figured out. He went under sealed orders. What is faith? Faith is not positive thinking. It’s not following a hunch. It’s not hoping for the best. It’s not figuring out and then trying to make it work. It’s not a feeling of optimism. It’s not believing what you know isn’t so. Abraham, when he went out, did not know why, and he did not know where; he only knew whom.

### **D. True Faith Comes from the Word of God**

Faith is not rooted in human worth. Faith is not rooted in human will. Faith is not rooted in human wisdom. True faith comes from the Word of God. Abraham had a word from God. That’s very important because the Bible tells us clearly and plainly that “faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” (Romans 10:17) Faith, therefore, does not rest in a road map but in a relationship with Almighty God. You think of Abraham now. He’s seventy-five years of age, he’s well established, he’s rich, he has a beautiful wife, he’s living in comfort, and God says, “Get up and let’s go!” And he did not know where he was going; he did not know why he was going at this time. All he knew was that God had spoken. Now that must have been very exciting. If your life is dull and insipid, perhaps you ought to do what Abraham did and live by faith, and that will turn the monotonous to the momentous.

Listen to me now. What is faith? *Faith is believing the Word of God and acting on it.* That’s it. Faith is believing the Word of God and acting on it. Now if you believe the Word of God, that’s not faith yet. That’s the preamble to faith. That is the root of faith, but acting on it is faith. Believing the Word of God is mental. Faith is actual. Do you know the difference between belief and faith? *Faith is belief with legs on it.* The difference between belief and faith is the difference between knowing the Word of God

and knowing the God of that Word.

Dr. Warren Wiersbe, one of the finest Bible expositors alive today—and I hope God gives him many more years—and here's what he said: "Faith is not believing in spite of evidence; that's superstition. Faith is obeying God's Word in spite of circumstances or consequences." Now that's worth saying again. And it will be on the test, so listen to it now. All right, "Faith is not believing in spite of evidence; that is superstition. Faith is obeying God's Word in spite of circumstances or consequences." We do not live by explanations; we live by promises.

Now, what is the root of faith? "God said." Abram heard from God. Are you hearing from God? Do you have a quiet time? Are you connected to God? Is God speaking to you? If God is not speaking to you, you're not living by faith; it's impossible. You're going here and there, doing whatever you think you ought to do. Faith is hearing the Word of God and acting on it.

## II. The Requirement of Faith

Number two: We've talked about the root of faith; let's talk a little bit about the requirement of faith. Look again in Genesis chapter 12, verse 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.*" (Genesis 12:1) Now what He said, in shorthand, is: "Get thee out unto. Come out of where you are, and go to where you need to be." As I told you this morning, real faith not only brings us out; real faith brings us in.

Now you cannot really have faith as you continue to live in the land of idolatry. You have to forsake. I'm talking about spiritually, a spiritual application now. You cannot live in your old way of life and think at the same time you can live by faith. It cannot be done. Remember the scripture that I gave you this morning from Deuteronomy chapter 6, verse 23? "*And he brought us out from thence, that he might bring us in, to give us the land.*" (Deuteronomy 6:23) God said to Abraham similarly, "Come out of Ur, that I might bring you in."

Now, do you want to have a life of faith? Have you forsaken idolatry? "Well," you say, "I'm not an idolater." Well, you may be. You say, "You mean I have idols in my life?" I don't know. I hope you don't, but you may. Anything you love more, serve more, fear more, trust more than God is an idol. And some love money more than God. Some fear man more than God. Some trust ability more than God. You see, you can't have faith unless you are willing to come out. And you have to turn from that idolatry, which is sin. Do you know the reason that many people don't have faith? They're not willing to leave Ur of the Chaldees. They try to have faith right where they are in their same old lifestyle, and they wonder why it doesn't work. There's nothing more damning, more



stultifying to faith than sin in the heart.

Let me give you some scriptures. I pray God that He will rivet these upon your soul. Hebrews chapter 3, verse 12: “[Beware], lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief.” (Hebrews 3:12) Unbelief never comes out of the head; it comes out of the heart. “[Beware], lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief.” You say, “I have intellectual problems.” No, you don’t; you have dirty, rotten sin. “[Beware], lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief.”

Notice Hebrews chapter 12, verses 1 and 2: “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.” (Hebrews 12:1–2) How do you look to Jesus? By laying aside every weight and the sin that doth so easily beset us. There’s no way that you can pray with unconfessed, unrepented-of sin in your heart and pray in faith.

Let me give you an illustration. You and your wife are at home, and you’re having one of those tremendous arguments; you’re at one another’s throats; you’re saying all sorts of mean and vicious things. And then you hear a cry from your upstairs bedroom, and you go up there, and your little baby’s up there burning up with fever, terribly sick, and you know that you need to pray, and there’s all this hate and animosity in your heart. You get down on your knees and try to pray. Don’t you feel like a couple of fools? You know you can’t pray in faith with that sin in your heart. I mean, there’s nothing more debilitating to faith than sin in the heart.

The Bible says, in 1 John 3, verse 21, “Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.” (1 John 3:21)

Now, listen. The root of faith is the Word of God, but the requirement of faith is that you come out of that land of idolatry; you leave it. God brought us out, that he might bring us in. I mean, many people say, “Well, I just doubt my salvation. I’m not sure I’m saved. I have doubt about my salvation. I have doubt. I have doubt.” And you talk to them about their theology and so forth, and they’ll nod their head, but they still have their doubts. If you stay there long enough, you’ll find out that that person that has that doubt has sin in his or her life: idols that they’ve not forsaken, things that they’re doing. What right would you have to have absolute assurance if you’re living with sin in your heart and in your life? And if you’re having trouble with faith, try repentance—if you’re having trouble with faith.

You ever notice how God puts certain things in order in the Bible? For example, He says, “Grace and peace be multiplied unto you.” (2 Peter 1:2) He doesn’t say, “Peace and grace,” but “Grace and peace.” Why? Grace comes before peace. He says, “Believe and be baptized.” (Mark 16:16) He never says, “Be baptized and then believe”;

that's never the order. Real baptism follows real belief. I was so grateful tonight to see a young lady who came for believer's baptism, because she'd gotten it settled, and she'd given her heart to the Lord Jesus Christ, and she wanted believer's baptism. To be baptized before you believe would be like having your funeral before you die.

Now, listen. Just as grace comes before peace, just as belief comes before baptism, repentance comes before faith. The Bible speaks of repentance and faith, not faith and repentance—repentance and faith. Are you listening? Say yes. If you're having trouble with faith, try repentance. The requirement of faith: When God says, "Get thee out; I'm going to bring you into the land of Canaan," you have to leave that idolatrous relationship and come to the Lord Jesus Christ. If you're having doubts, it just may be unconfessed sin in your heart and in your life.

### III. The Reward of Faith

The third thing I want you to see: Not only the root and the requirement of faith, I want you to see the reward of faith. Look now, beginning in verses 2 and 3—we're still in Genesis 12. God says, "*And I will make of thee a great nation,*"—now watch this—"*and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:*"—I love it. "I'll bless you; you'll be a blessing"—"*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.*" (Genesis 12:2–3)

Now by faith Abraham received a blessing. God is a rewarder of those that diligently seek Him. Remember the verse I gave you in Hebrews 11, verse 6: "*But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*" (Hebrews 11:6) You see, by faith man gives God pleasure, and by faith God gives man treasure. We please God when we believe God. And God said, "Abraham, I'm going to bless you; I'm going to give you a land." And God gave him the land. God said, "I'm going to make your name great."

But every blessing of God—every blessing, not some—every blessing of God—is appropriated by faith. I said earlier I'm going to invite some of you tonight to receive Jesus Christ as your personal Savior. How are you going to get saved? Acts 16, verse 31: "*And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.*" (Acts 16:31) You're saved by faith, and you live the Christian life by faith.

We're blessed by faith, but now notice. Abraham was blessed that he might be a blessing. Look again in verse 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.*" (Genesis 12:2) Now faith gives us the power not only to be blessed but to be a blessing. The problem with many people, they want faith sort of as a Midas touch so they can get what they want, and it's self-centered. God wants you to be a river of revival, not a reservoir of blessings. Now if



you begin to pray like this, “God, bless me, and make me a blessing,” then faith begins to flow through your life.

I’ve been to Israel many, many times. The two great bodies of water in Israel are the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea. Those of you who have been with us to Israel have been up to the headwaters of the Sea of Galilee that come from Mount Hermon, snowcapped, over nine thousand feet tall. And the springs of Banias pour that crystal-clear water down into the Sea of Galilee. And the Sea of Galilee is a living, thriving sea full of fish and life. But then Galilee gives up its water, and it trickles down the Jordan to the Dead Sea. The Dead Sea is the lowest spot on Planet Earth, 1,300 feet below sea level, and 1,300 feet deep at its deepest spot. It’s just a pocket, a chasm, on the face of the earth. And it is so deep that all it does is receive, but it never gives up except by evaporation, that which evaporates. And the water in the Dead Sea is poisonous and leaden, and no life can be there. What’s the difference between those two seas? Well, they both receive the same water, but one receives and gives; the other just receives.

Do you want to be blessed? Did you know it is amazing how much God will let pass through your hands if you will receive and give? It’s amazing. And a lot of it will stick to you if you just let it come through. God says to Abraham, “Look. Trust me. Come out of this pagan idolatry. I’m giving you my word, and I will bless you, Abraham, and I will make you a blessing.”

Do you want to be a blessing? You think of how God used Abraham to be a blessing. Have you ever really thought about how God has blessed us with Abraham? Out of Abraham, we have the Jewish nation. Out of Abraham, we have the descendants of Abraham who gave us the Bible. We have the prophets, we have Moses, and in the flesh the Lord Jesus Christ, who according to the flesh is a descendant of Abraham, a man who believed God. There is no greater blessing than to be a blessing. I want to be a blessing. I’m blessed when I am a blessing, when I’m blessing other people.

#### **IV. The Relapse of Faith**

Now there’s no greater greatness than to make somebody else great, to bless somebody else. That’s the reward of faith. Now I wish I could stop there. In some ways I know maybe you say, “That would be a good idea, Preacher; go ahead and stop.” But I want to talk to you about the relapse of faith. I wish I could just tell you that Abraham never had a relapse in his faith, but he did have a relapse in his faith. His faith failed; his faith faltered.

You’re in chapter 12—go to verse 10: “*And there was a famine in the land...*”—now God had said to Abraham, “Come out of the Ur of the Chaldees and go into Canaan.” But now, notice this—“*And there was a famine in the land: and Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there; for the famine was grievous in the land.*” (Genesis 12:10) That

is, in the land of plenty, in the land of Canaan, in the land that represents the fullness of the Spirit—corn and oil, wine, figs, grapes, pomegranates—there was a famine there in Canaan.

Now, why was that? Well, Abraham's faith was being tested. God tested Abraham several times. God did not test him in order to make him fall, but God tested him to reveal to him some weaknesses and some flaws, and Abraham was given a test. Sometimes I'll say, "Abram," and sometimes, "Abraham," because they are the same person. Later his name was filled out to Abraham. But Abraham was given a test. That test was a famine, and he failed the test.

Now, why did God test him? Well, a faith that can't be tested can't be trusted. First Peter 1, verse 7, speaks of the trial or the testing of our faith. (1 Peter 1:7) That word *trial* is the word that's used as an assayer, a metalsmith, would test metal, gold, to see how pure it is. And the miner brings his gold to be tested; God brings our faith to be tested.

Now there was a famine in the land of Canaan, the Promised Land. There was a famine on the man of God, and he was exactly where God had sent him, where God had told him to go. What's the lesson for us? Well, sometimes we have the idea that when we serve God, when we obey God, when we live by God, then we're going to be free from all testings and all trials; it's going to be all honey and no bees. But that is not true. There can be trials and heartaches in the land of milk and honey. You know that to be true, don't you? Trials and heartaches in the land of milk and honey.

You know, sometimes in our prayer life we like for God to say *yes* or for God to say *no* so we get it settled. Sometimes God doesn't say anything. You know, people get married sometime, and they think they are on the Love Boat, and it's all going to be sweet and wonderful and all romance. And then, in their marriage, they have testings and trials, and they wonder what has gone wrong. Maybe nothing has gone wrong. Sometimes you join a church like Bellevue. You say, "Oh, Bellevue's such a wonderful church! I'm going to be a member of Bellevue!" And then you find out that all the sinners are not out there, amen? Might be one sitting next to you right now—probably one in your seat—and you know, sometimes we get these romanticized ideas about what it's going to be like.

A wise man once said about Noah's ark, "Have you ever thought about what Noah's ark must have smelled like on the inside?" He said, "You couldn't stand the stench on the inside if it weren't for the storm on the outside."

I'd still rather be in with all the problems that we have—to know the Lord Jesus Christ.

So here's a relapse of his faith. There's a famine, and Abram does something that he's not supposed to do. He goes down to Egypt. Now, how did his faith falter? I want to

give you some steps, because the same thing may happen to you.

### A. A Sinful Compromise

First of all, there was compromise. Look again in Genesis chapter 12, verse 1. God said to Abraham, *“Get thee out of thy country,”*—now watch this—*“and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will shew thee.”* (Genesis 12:1) But now go down to verses 4 and 5: *“So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him:”—*now, wait a minute. He said, “Get out of there, get away from your kinfolk,” but his nephew Lot went with him—*“and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran. And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother’s son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.”* (Genesis 12:4–5)

But he’s compromising now. He doesn’t go all the way to Canaan. He makes a short stop there at Haran. He’s like some of you. You’re going to give your heart to Jesus, but you kind of have some hangover sins, you have some unclaimed promises, and you compromise a little bit. You say, “Well, I’m going to keep this thing in my life, or that thing in my life.”

### B. A Misplaced Confidence

Now what it was is a sinful compromise and that led to a misplaced confidence. He got the idea that perhaps in Egypt there would be plenty, and he went down to Egypt. He said, “There’s food in Egypt. God gave me a brain; God gave me a mind. God doesn’t expect me to starve.” And so he went down to Egypt. Here’s a good verse for you to put in your margin—Isaiah 31, verse 1: *“Woe unto them that go down to Egypt for help;”—**“Woe unto them that go down to Egypt for help”—**“and stay”—*that is, trust—*“on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many.”* (Isaiah 31:1) Sometimes you’ll get to figuring, and you’ll get to conniving. You begin by compromising. And after you have this compromise, then you begin to put your confidence in places where you ought not to put your confidence. Things get bad, and you begin to scheme. A wise person said, “Never doubt in the dark what God has showed you in the light.”

You say, “Well, God expects me to use my head.” It’s an amazing thing. Abraham trusted God to take him all the way from Ur of the Chaldees and could not trust in God after he got there. “Well,” you say, “how miserable!” Well, have you ever trusted God to save you, and then you don’t trust God to keep you? Have you ever trusted God for spiritual things and can’t trust Him for material things? Have you trusted God for all eternity, and yet you can’t trust Him for next week?

### C. A Shameful Conduct

And now notice how his conduct begins to change. Chapter 12 and verse 11—this is

Abraham now, the father of the faithful: *“And it came to pass, when he was come near to enter into Egypt, that he said unto Sarai his wife, Behold now, I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon: therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, This is his wife: and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive. Say, I pray thee, that thou art my sister: that it may be well with me for thy sake; and my soul shall live because of thee.”* (Genesis 12:11–13) That rascal! He was willing to let his wife Sarah become a part of Pharaoh’s harem in order to save his own hide.

Now there was a technical sense in which he could say, “You’re my sister,” but it was a half-truth, which was a whole lie. And you see his life now beginning to unravel. He takes his father with him; he takes Lot with him. He doesn’t go all the way. He gets there and everything’s not like it ought to be, he thinks. And so he goes down to Egypt for help, and now he begins to do some terrible things.

I’m ashamed of Abraham. Did you know that a Christian, a true Christian, can do some terrible, horrible things? That’s true. Why is that? Because that which is flesh is flesh. (John 3:6) Come up real close, and I’m going to tell you something. I don’t care how long you’ve been saved; your flesh is not improved one scintilla of an iota. That which is flesh is flesh, and don’t you think that the flesh can be cultured and the flesh can be changed. You take your eyes off the Lord Jesus Christ, you stop living by faith, and you are going to find out that that old flesh nature is still there. And many Christians who start out on a life of faith, then begin to compromise, then begin to scheme, and then begin to do things that they would never have dreamed that they might have done.

#### **D. The Cost of a Lapse in Faith**

Now I want you to see how this lapse of faith cost him. It’s a costly thing. Unbelief is a thief. There were blessings that were stolen from Abram.

##### **1. Wasted Time**

First of all, there was wasted time. All the time that he spent in Egypt was wasted time. A young lady was baptized tonight. Beautiful! I watched it. Her testimony was, “I had given my heart to Christ, but I got away from God, and now I’m coming home. I want to go back and begin to serve the Lord again.” Fine! Wonderful! But think of all that wasted time. At the Judgment Seat of the Lord Jesus Christ, that time will be wasted. College students, many of you are still just getting ready to go away to college; this may be your last Sunday night at Bellevue. My heart breaks as I hear time after time after time—and I believe the same thing is true about you, Mark—they go off to college and get away from God. I think that’s something of your testimony. How sad that is—how sad that is—that you go down to Egypt, and you say, “Well, everybody’s got to do it. You know, college is supposed to be to live it up; you’re supposed to do this or that. No! Serve Jesus. Don’t compromise. That’s all just simply wasted time.

## 2. A Weakened Testimony

And not only wasted time, but a weakened testimony. Here was a man of God. What kind of a testimony did he have toward Pharaoh? Pharaoh found out that Sarah was married; he was scared to death. He said to Abram, “Why didn’t you tell me she was your wife? Did you want me to get killed? You want me to get in trouble?” When he stopped living a life of faith, not only was there wasted time; there was a weakened testimony.

What kind of a testimony was he to Lot? We talk about, “Oh, what a wonderful testimony he was to Lot!” Did you know where Lot got his love for sin and the things of this world? Down in Egypt! That’s the reason why he chose to go to Sodom. The Bible tells us that. He had seen and he had tasted of a life in Egypt. Some of you parents have compromised your faith, you’ve gone down to Egypt, you’ve not come all the way out, you’ve not let go of all of those idols, and you may come out and you may do all right, but that boy or that girl may not do all right. There may be things, tastes, and desires in their lives because you’ve been camping out in Egypt. Lot—listen to this—Genesis chapter 13, verse 10: *“And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt.”* (Genesis 13:10) Lot said, “Look! This is like Egypt! That’s the way I want to go.”

## 3. Inherited Trouble

He wasted his time, he wrecked his testimony, and he inherited all kinds of trouble. Do you know what Abram got when he went down to Egypt and took this side trip? I’ll tell you one thing he got; he gained wealth. Look in chapter 12, and look in verses 15 and 16: *“The princes also of Pharaoh saw her, and commended her before Pharaoh: and the woman was taken into Pharaoh’s house. And he entreated Abram well for her sake: and he had sheep, and oxen, and he asses, and menservants, and maidservants, and she asses, and camels.”* (Genesis 12:15–16) Abraham now is getting wealthy down in the land of Egypt.

Was that good? No, it wasn’t good. One of the things he got down in Egypt was cattle. What’s wrong with cattle? Well, God didn’t call him to be a rancher. God called him to be a shepherd. There’s a difference between cattle and sheep. Sheep browse and cattle graze. Sheep have two sets of teeth; they can clip low grass. Cows just have one set; they have to take their tongue, wrap their tongue around the grass, and break it off like that. You’ve seen cows do that out in the field with their one set of teeth. A cow can’t clip the grass like that. This range war started because he was down there and he got some things that were supposed to bring him a blessing but only brought him trouble and grief. Anything you get out of Egypt is going to cause you trouble and grief.

I’ll tell you something else he got: Not only did he get wealth; he got a woman. When

he was down there, he got an Egyptian maid. What was her name? Hagar. Where did he get her? He got her down there in Egypt. She became Sarah's maid. Later on, Abram, the father of the faithful, went into Hagar, his wife's maid, had a son Ishmael, the progenitor of the Arab race. And right now the world is a tinderbox because of Abram, the man of faith, who could not trust God, went down into Egypt, got himself into all kinds of trouble—the relapse of faith.

## V. The Restoration of Faith

One last thing: Let's think about the restoration of his faith. Thank God he didn't stay there. Go back to Genesis chapter 13 now and look in verses 1 through 4: *“And Abram went up out of Egypt,”*—amen—*“he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south. And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold. And he went on his journeys from the south even to Bethel, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Hai; unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first: and there Abram called on the name of the LORD.”* (Genesis 13:1–4)

I'm so grateful that God was patient with Abram. Abram was an old man at this time, but he was young in the faith. And God was tender with him, and God was patient with him. God remembered his frailty. God knows our frame, that we're dust. And Abraham failed in the school of faith, but God just re-enrolled him, put him through again. You know, God doesn't grade on the curve, but He keeps on re-enrolling us, doesn't He? Keeps on giving us the lesson so we can pass.

How did he repair his broken faith? Three things:

### A. Repentance

First of all, there was repentance. Look in verse 1—chapter 13, verse 1: *“And Abram went up out of Egypt.”* (Genesis 13:1) He forsook Egypt. Are you willing to forsake Egypt? Listen. He already had forsaken the Ur of the Chaldees, and now he forsakes Egypt. You cannot get right with God and remain in Egypt. Is there some sin in your life that's stultifying your faith? Are you willing to repent of it? Repent of it. Why don't you repent? You say, “Well, I love my sin.” The most miserable man on earth is not an unsaved man. The most miserable man on earth is a saved man out of fellowship with God. What a terrible cost to remain in Egypt! Oh, the misery of believing in God and living in Egypt!

### Remembrance

First of all, repentance; and then, number two, remembrance. Notice verse 3: *“And he went on his journeys from the south even to Bethel, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning.”* (Genesis 13:3) Did you once walk with God, but now you wonder why you're even in church on Sunday night tonight, because you're so far away



from God? Do you remember how it was when God was real to you? When you had your Bethel? That's where Abram had met God at the first place. Let me ask you a question: Was there ever a time where God was nearer, dearer, sweeter to you than He is right now? If so, you're backslidden. Just remember. Remember what it was like, how sweet it was, when you walked with the Lord. Let God bring you back to His house. You say, "Pastor, how can I get right with God? Where can I find God?" You'll find him right where you left Him—right where you left Him.

I was teaching the Bible on a Caribbean cruise—you know, somebody's got to do it—and when I got to Orlando, we got on a bus and went over to Cape Canaveral to get on the cruise ship, and I didn't have my bag, my suit bag. I said, "Well, it's just a cruise. All I need, really, are a couple pair of trousers, couple of shirts; I can step offshore and buy those. I'll get my bag—evidently, it didn't get on the bus—in Orlando." But I got to Orlando after the cruise was over; my bag wasn't there. I went to Delta and said, "I want..." They said, "We don't have your bag." I said, "Well, it just didn't get on the plane coming to Orlando. I'll get it when I get to Memphis." I went to Memphis and went to the lost baggage place; they didn't have my bag. By then I was really steamed. But I went on home, opened the bedroom door, and looked on the bed—and there was my bag. You know where I found it? Right where I left it.

Listen, folks. You know where you're going to find God? Right where you left Him. You don't have to guess at it. You get on your knees, your face; God will show you—God will show you. Go back to your first love.

## **B. Restoration**

Repentance, remembrance, and restoration. The Bible says, in verse 4, he went to *"the place of the altar, which he had [made] there at the first: and there Abram called on the name of the LORD."* (Genesis 13:4) He went back to the altar; he gave it all back to Jesus. And you know what the Lord did? The Lord cleansed him.

I'm going to tell you something. It's going to be sweet; it's going to be a blessing to you, and I don't want you to miss it. You say, "The thing that's sweet to me is when you start walking down there, because I know you're about to quit." Here's the sweet thing. When you read the New Testament, you don't read anything about Abram's failure—nothing. The only way you can find that is to read it in the Old Testament. Isn't God good? God did not remember his sin. God remembered his faith. Our iniquities He remembers against us no more. So if you've gotten away from God and your faith needs a little first aid, do what old Abram did: Come on out of Egypt. It's not worth it to stay there. Remember how God used to be so real and so fresh to you, those sweet times, those wonderful times? Those are the best times. Go back to the altar, give it all back to the Lord, and walk by faith. 'Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus.

## **Conclusion**

Father God, I thank you for the life of faith. And, Lord, I pray in my own heart and in my own life, Lord, you'll help me not to compromise but to come all the way out of the land of idolatry, and Lord, not to compromise by taking a sojourn down into Egypt, but to live day after day just trusting you, relying on your Word.