

From Generation to Generation

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Preacher: Chris Trousdale

[0 : 00] I want to invite you all to open up in your Bibles to Genesis chapter 25.

! Really through the life of Abraham since last May.

And so we have made our way now all the way to the end of Abraham's life in Genesis chapter 25 where we are told not only of his funeral but we're also given some additional information about Abraham that we didn't know previously.

We're given additional information about him here at the end of his life. But as we've been walking through and looking at the life of Abraham, we have seen that his life has been a life of ups and downs.

Both in his circumstances but also in his own response to God's presence and promises in his life. At times Abraham has displayed an incredible amount of faith in the promises of God and the power of God and the faithfulness of God to bring about those promises.

[1 : 17] At other times though he has shown an incredible lack of faith. He has been shown at times to make foolish decisions. And so Abraham's life in a lot of ways is much like our own.

But throughout his life what remains constant, what never leaves is the faithfulness of God. The promises of God given to Abraham all the way back in chapter 12, they never go away and they never leave the forefront of our minds as we're reading about Abraham.

They're always there. Chapter after chapter the promises are restated. We are reminded of these great promises. And so we are challenged and we are drawn into a greater and stronger faith in the promises of God.

Not only the promises given to Abraham but the ultimate fulfillment of all those promises in Christ. So here we are this morning in chapter 25. And we're going to see some puzzling bits of information about Abraham.

And then we'll read a short account of his death. So we're going to read the first 11 verses of Genesis chapter 25. If you're using the Bible scattered around in the chairs, turn to page 19.

[2 : 26] You'll find Genesis 25 there. But I want to invite you all to stand again to your feet in honor of God's word. As we read together. Moses writes, Abraham gave all he had to Isaac.

But to the sons of his concubines, Abraham gave gifts. And while he was still living, he sent them away from his son Isaac eastward to the east country.

These are the days of the years of Abraham's life. One hundred seventy five years. Abraham breathed his last and died in a good old age, an old man and full of years, and was gathered to his people.

Isaac and Ishmael, his sons, buried him in the cave of Machpelah in the field of Ephron, the son of Zohar, the Hittite, east of Mamre, the field which Abraham purchased from the Hittites.

There Abraham was buried with Sarah, his wife. After the death of Abraham, God blessed Isaac, his son. And Isaac settled at Ber-Lahai-Roi.

[3 : 52] Father, thank you for this brief account of the end of Abraham's life. And thank you even for these puzzling details that teach us of your faithfulness to your promises and your goodness and kindness toward us in Christ.

Teach us now, we ask in Jesus' name. Amen. You guys can take a seat. Well, I mentioned a second ago sort of the ups and downs of Abraham's life.

Times of great and strong faith. Times of foolishness and it seems almost faithlessness at times.

But there has been an upward trend toward the end of Abraham's life.

These last few chapters that we've covered in Genesis have by and large presented a very positive picture of the faith of Abraham. So much so that in chapter 22 you sort of come to the zenith or the high point of Abraham's faith where he's even willing to obey God in offering up his son Isaac upon

the altar when God calls him to.

And the writer of the book of Hebrews tells us that Abraham's faith was so great in that moment that he even believed that God was able to raise Isaac from the dead if necessary in order for the promises to continue through Isaac.

[5 : 05] So Abraham had a great and powerful faith in Genesis chapter 22. And there's nothing in the next couple of chapters to indicate to us that there was wavering in that.

In fact, when he sends his servant off to find a bride for his son Isaac, we saw that that as well is a sign of Abraham's faith in God and in God's providence over his life and the life of his son and in fact over all things as God himself will provide and make all provisions necessary for the fulfillment of his promises through Isaac, Abraham's son.

So we get no signals that Abraham's faith is wavering toward the end of his life. We get no signs that Abraham is weak in faith or that he's as tempted to sin as he seems to have been previously with lying about the identity of Sarah, his wife, or at least misleading those around him, with taking Hagar as his concubine, as a kind of underclass type wife for him.

We get no signs of that toward the end of his life. But then just before we're given this account of his death, we find these strange words at the beginning of chapter 25.

Abraham took another wife whose name was Keturah. And then we are told later on in verse 6, but to the sons of his concubines Abraham gave gifts, indicating that this Keturah was another concubine for Abraham.

[6 : 31] Concubine, of course, being that sort of lower class stage of wife. Wife in some senses, but not wife in every sense, not with all the privileges of the first wife of Sarah.

And we've seen how that worked out for Hagar, not well at all. And we thought that Abraham was past that sort of thing, and then we're given this note. And we might be tempted to think, well, this is just Abraham's wife after Sarah died.

And that's possible, but there are indications in the text that that's not actually the case. Because these events are not recorded in this chapter in chronological sequence one after another.

We know that because the second half of chapter 25 records for us the birth of Isaac's sons Jacob and Esau. That's recorded just after the record of Abraham's death that we read a moment ago.

But there is a note toward the end of this chapter that those children were born to Isaac when Isaac was 60 years old. Now, I know that we don't like to do math, especially on Sunday mornings, but if you do the math, Abraham was 100 when Isaac was born.

[7 : 42] If Isaac was 60 when his children were born, that means that Abraham was still alive at the second half of Genesis chapter 25. And in fact, that Abraham would have lived up until the time when those boys were about 15 years old.

So we know that the events in this chapter and the next are not necessarily told in precise chronological order. And the very fact that Keturah is named later in the text as a concubine indicates that it is entirely possible, even likely I would say, that Abraham took Keturah as his wife or concubine while Sarah was still alive.

There's no other reason for her to really have that particular status. So it seems as if Abraham has not overcome all of his sinful tendencies, even in his old age, even in his wisdom, we are given hints that Abraham has still not fully arrived, which should not surprise us because I don't know if you've really looked at your life and your heart lately, but you haven't arrived yet either, and I haven't arrived yet either.

And we read all the time of great and wise spiritual leaders that we respect, and we read of some sin that they have committed, and we would hope and think, well, maybe that was a long time ago, and we find out, no, it was a year ago, or two years ago, or within the last five or ten years when they had reached this platform where they were honored by so many people and thought to be this great spiritual leader.

It shouldn't surprise us. We see this in our own lives. We see this in contemporary leaders around us that there are patterns of sin that tend to continue at times and crop up even in what we might call the good parts of some people's lives.

[9 : 28] times. Which leads me, before we really address this text specifically, which I want to do this morning, which is our main purpose this morning though, I want to chase a rabbit before we do that because it is one that we have seen here and there, but we've not run off along the trail to follow it and really kind of ferret out what's going on here.

I want us to look at this issue of the certain sins in the lives of those that we would generally consider to be faithful, godly people who follow the Lord and love the Lord, and yet there are these sins, and not minor sins.

We see in their lives things that we would at least classify today as major issues. So that we look at, for instance, the life of Abraham, and we see this as a major issue that he had multiple wives and that he didn't always treat those wives well.

He sent Hagar off into the wilderness. He approved of Sarah's treatment of her when she was mistreating her. He let that pass. So we look at Abraham and we think, why would you do that? For us, the issue of polygamy is almost unthinkable. And yet we read through the Scriptures, particularly through the Old Testament, and we see that most of the great heroes of the faith were, in fact, polygamists.

[10:46] Not just Abraham, but it flows through his family. Even the great kings, David and Solomon, are well known to have been polygamists. Solomon so much so that he had hundreds of wives and concubines.

And we sort of look at that and we think, how are we supposed to feel about that? What are we supposed to do with that? What are we supposed to make of that?

And there are a number of issues that we could point to within the Scriptures and say, from our perspective, what they were doing was a terrible thing. Not just a minor little sin, but was a terrible thing.

And we find ourselves almost surprised that God continued to use them despite that. We may be caused to wonder sometimes, is our moral barometer, is it off? Are we gauging things to be wrong that we should not gauge as wrong?

And yet we find ourselves almost unable to shift our moral barometer. Mainly because we look at later places in Scripture and we see that some of the things that men like Abraham, David, and Solomon, some of the things that they did we see later in Scripture are roundly condemned.

[11:54] In fact, some of the things that Abraham does in his lifetime that are passed over as if they are no issue at all are later on in the law, in the book of Leviticus, they are straightforward, prohibited, condemned even.

For instance, we all know, and we all kind of give that yuck factor that we know that Sarah actually was Abraham's half-sister. And once you kind of get past what we just kind of shudder at, once you get past that, you start to think about that reality and you realize that in Leviticus, it's specifically forbidden for anyone to marry their sister.

In Leviticus chapter 18, there's law after law that forbids marriages within a family and there are two separate commands pertaining to the marrying of one's sister. Whether she be the daughter of your father, the daughter of your mother, you cannot marry them.

And yet, Abraham marries his half-sister. Not a word is said about it as we move through Genesis. And to think that the same writer of Leviticus is the writer of Genesis. Moses is writing all this, yet he makes no comment whatsoever.

What do we say about that reality? Something that is not only looked upon from a New Testament perspective as a sin and forbidden, but something that is looked upon from the perspective of the Israelites themselves as sinful and forbidden is passed over in the life of Abraham as if it's nothing.

[13:14] There are a number of these things that we could count as belonging to that category. But not only in the Bible, we can look back through church history and we can see some of those that we think of as great heroes of the faith.

Maybe we really admire their writings and we find ourselves moved and drawn closer to the Lord through their writings. But then as we begin to learn more about their lives, we think, well, that doesn't seem to measure up.

How could I admire someone like this? I think probably one of the easiest examples is to think back to so many of the Puritans. And when you read their writings, they are so full of the Scriptures and they are so challenging and their grasp of the Word of God, their grasp of theology is so much better than most of ours.

And then we pause and go, but many of them own slaves. Or many of them treated the Native Americans around them in terrible, terrible ways or were at least a part of terrible treatment of them. And we're caused to wonder, should I admire this person at all now? Well, Jonathan Edwards, one of the greatest, if not the greatest American theologian of all time, he owned slaves.

[14 : 30] What do we think of that? What do we do with that? It's very similar to the issue that we're looking at here in Abraham's life and the rabbit that we're trying to chase down. And I want to just answer the very simple question, how are we supposed to think about things that we know are clearly sinful when we see them in the lives of God's people in the past and yet they are not addressed directly by God.

We don't seem to see any direct judgment fall upon them. In fact, God seems to continue to bless them and the things that they are doing. How do we think about that?

Well, probably one of the best places to turn to understand that is to the teachings of Jesus Himself. So I want you to hold your place in Genesis 25. I promise we're coming back to handle the text. But I want you to hold your place there and turn all the way to the New Testament to the Gospel of Matthew in chapter 19 where Jesus is once again being tested and questioned by some of the Jewish religious leaders of His day.

And the question that they want to ask Him, the issue that they would like Him to weigh in on, because they feel as if they can force Him to take a side in the debate and at least alienate some group, some percentage of people from Himself, they want to talk to Him about the issue of divorce, which is hotly debated today in some churches and was even during the time of Jesus.

[15 : 52] The question really was, when is divorce permitted? Because Deuteronomy chapter 19 actually contains rules for divorce. And the basic rule is that a man has to write a certificate of divorce for his wife if she has done some, and it's called an indecent thing.

It's not spelled out for us. What does that mean? What qualifies? And so the Pharisees and the Sadducees and the scribes in the first century, they had these different schools of thought and different interpretations where they were arguing over what qualifies as an indecent thing.

Would it only be something terrible like adultery? Or is it something as simple as she's not a good cook? And believe me, there were sides that took all those and everything in between on this particular debate.

So they want to draw Jesus into it and get Him to take a side. Matthew 19, just let's jump in in verse 3. It says, The Pharisees came up to Him, tested Him by asking, Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?

That word, any, is significant. They're asking, Is there any reason? Is it specific? What is it? And He answers. Not, by the way, by going back to Deuteronomy chapter 24 where the commandment pertaining to divorce is found.

[17 : 06] He goes to Genesis. He says, Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning, made them male and female, and said, Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.

So Jesus takes them all the way back to Genesis chapter 2. He says, So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate.

So Jesus says, You can't get divorced. You can't do that. So they respond, Well then, Why did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?

Then why do we have that command, Jesus? If divorce is not permissible, and granted, Jesus will go on to sort of to add some modifications to that, but if divorce is not permissible in general, just as a rule, no divorce, then why is there a law that says that a man can write a certificate of divorce to his wife?

Why is that there, Jesus? It's a good question. I mean, it makes perfect sense. Sort of like asking, If polygamy is something that we view as wrong and bad, why was Abraham permitted with apparently no immediate judgment or discipline falling upon him for that particular act?

[18 : 19] Why was he permitted to do that? Why were David and Solomon permitted to do that? Why didn't God judge them? Good question to ask. Why this law, if God's original intention was for this not to happen?

I think Jesus' answer is instructive. Verse 8, He said to them, Because of your hardness of heart, Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.

So the answer of Jesus to the question, why would God, through Moses, send the law inspired by God, why would He have permit divorce, give rules pertaining to divorce, if that's not what He wanted originally?

If God's original plan was a man, a woman, married together for the rest of their lives, and that's exactly what Jesus claims, why in the world would you have a law that actually governs divorce,

and when you can get a divorce?

And the simple answer that Jesus gives is because you're so sinful. Because your hearts are so hard, they are so steeped in sin, that God makes some allowance and provision for the fact that they're going to go this way and they're going to do this, so He's going to put some sort of regulations in place so that it doesn't just reach ridiculous proportions like it did in the cultures that surrounded the Israelites.

[19 : 45] So He's going to manage their sins, in a sense. This is the mercy of God on display to the people of Israel.

And I think what we're seeing in the life of Abraham and these other great men of the faith, when God does not immediately judge them or even immediately expresses displeasure at them when they do things that we know from later revelation are wrong, what we are seeing is an act of God's mercy and kindness.

And so while there are some issues for which we might say, well, the answer is probably going to be they just didn't know that yet. So for instance, with Abraham marrying his sister, he's not condemned for that.

You get information about that later in the law and we would call that progressive revelation. That God progressively reveals more of His ways, His character, and indeed His will to us as we move through so that by the time we get to the New Testament, we have a much more complete picture of God's desires for us and the parameters that He wants set around us.

Abraham was lacking in a little bit, so that's okay. That's one answer, but it doesn't fit most of the cases. But the answer that fits all of the cases is to say, in fact, God is being kind and merciful because of the sinfulness and the hardness of the hearts, even of those who belong to His covenant people.

[21 : 09] This is the mercy of God on display. And we might be tempted to think, that must be an Old Testament thing. That must just be an Old Covenant thing and Abraham and David and Solomon were covered by the mercy of God.

And yet, we see that it even bleeds into God's treatment of people after the coming of Christ. In fact, if you look into Romans chapter 2, you will see an indication of this broadly considered as Paul speaks of God's mercy toward the Jews and previously to the Gentiles, but now he's speaking in the present tense.

And he says in Romans chapter 2 verse 4, after he has at the end of chapter 1 listed a number of sins, he says, Do you presume on the riches of God's kindness and forbearance and patience, knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?

In other words, the purpose of God's kindness and His patient endurance of our sin is so that that patience and kindness might lead us to repentance.

That's what God is doing. God is leading us by way of His kindness toward repentance. So we might look within our own lives and recognize, we may know if no one else knows, that there are some sins that are going on here.

[22 : 30] We've got some issues. We've got some behaviors that really, in all honesty, God ought to just judge us immediately. If not by striking us dead, then at least by disciplining us as His children, as the writer of Hebrews tells us, He does.

God ought to bring something hard and harsh into our lives because we have sins that we have not yet repented of. And sometimes He does. Indeed.

Sometimes, in both the Old and the New Testament, God brings immediate judgment upon those who violate His law. I think of Aaron's sons who offered a sacrifice and offering up to God that was not according to God's standards.

It was improper. And immediately, God opens up the earth and swallows them. Instant judgment. We think of the New Testament of Ananias and Sapphira in the book of Acts because they lied to the Holy Spirit about what they were giving to the church.

God immediately strikes them dead. God does do that at times. He always retains the sovereign right to judge us immediately or to discipline us immediately. But I think most of us, if we're honest and we recognize the sin that remains in our own lives or we look back over our lives to a period where we were still stuck in some sort of sin that we knew was wrong, if we were fully honest, we would say the only reason that I'm still breathing right now or the only reason that I still have my wife or the only reason that I still have a family or that I still have a church to belong to is because of God's patience and forbearance and ultimately His kindness and His mercy toward me.

[24 : 09] And I think that's what we're seeing throughout the life of Abraham. Yeah, he's improving as he goes and his faith is growing and strengthening, but there are still always some underlying issues there, some sin that's still present there.

And God doesn't just drop the hammer on Abraham because God's kind and merciful toward Abraham just like He is to you and to me.

Which means that God is not sanctioning these things. He's not saying that these things are okay merely because He holds back His judgment from Abraham or David or Solomon or us or anyone else.

He's not sanctioning those things. But because of the hardness of our hearts and His own kindness and patience and forbearance, He is, at least for the time, withholding His judgment and His discipline.

And we ought to, I think, apply that as we look through church history at the lives of some of those that we admire. We should be capable of admiring the work of God in and through them while recognizing and condemning the sin that was present in their own lives and in their own hearts.

[25 : 19] And even in that, magnifying the mercy of grace of God for continuing to allow them to remain and do ministry and write great books so that we would be influenced and helped by those things.

We don't have to approve of everything in someone's life to admire the work of God within them. In fact, their own sin highlights the grace of God even more so in their lives or even in our contemporary world.

How disappointing is it to have someone that you admire, a preacher or a well-known speaker that you've even seen at conferences or you've listened to their podcasts and downloaded their sermons and then to find that they've had some sort of fall into sin or that all along, maybe it wasn't some, maybe it wasn't the typical things that we think of as a fall into sin, but maybe all along they were mistreating people around them and they were behind the scenes at times a mean and nasty person.

Those things are real and they happen. Does that mean that we throw away all their books and we delete every sermon or podcast we've ever downloaded? I don't think it necessarily does.

But I think it does require us to say, that was wrong. And if God chooses to bring some discipline into their lives, we will rejoice over His discipline. But for the days of God's kindness and mercy toward them in which He threw them work to give beneficial things to His people, we will praise God.

[26 : 45] We will be grateful for those things. We do not immediately have to pretend as if that person is worthless and nothing that they did is of any value because we're aware of their sin.

We simply need to magnify the mercy and grace of God in and through them. I think we should do that with Abraham. And we have, though I haven't said it directly, we have in a sense been doing that as we've moved through his life.

We've pointed out the things that we would say, that was wrong, you shouldn't have done that. But in the midst of it, we recognize God's grace even through that. And I want us to continue to do that as we read here in this passage.

I don't want you distracted as we try to discern why this is included here. I don't want you distracted by what? You had a concubine, what? Another one? Don't be distracted by that.

Let's try to find the mercy and grace of God at work in this text. So back to Genesis chapter 25 where we learn of this other wife. For me, the main question as I was looking at this text this week was, why put it here?

[27 : 49] I mean, if it's out of chronological order and it clearly is, I think that's clearly the case, why include these details right here at the end of Abraham's life?

Well, I think the answer to that can be found in some of the names that are listed here as Abraham's descendants. Now, in all honesty, we don't know who most of these sons are. We don't really know precisely what happened to them.

I've read a lot of conjecture about who some of these names could, what people group they could be referencing and all those things. But there are a few of them that we know with a fair amount of accuracy either from later in the Old Testament or other ancient Near Eastern documents.

We know who these individuals are. So, for instance, in verse 2, we have these sons mentioned and right there in the middle we have one named Midian. And that, if you're familiar with your Old

Testament, should sound at least somewhat familiar because we hear of the Midianites later on and we hear of them a number of times in the Old Testament.

This Midian is in fact the father of the Midianites, the nation of Midia. That's who he is. Significant for us to recognize that.

[28 : 58] A couple more that are important. Sheba and Dadan. We know that those were somewhat large active clans or tribes. We might even stretch it and call them nations in Northwest Arabia.

And in fact, most of the names contained in this list, if we're going to guess at them, most of the connection that we can posit for them or that I've seen scholars posit for them, almost all of them are in that area of Northwest Arabia, which means that many of Abraham's descendants went to Northwest Arabia, settled there, and grew into great clans, great tribes, and great nations there in the land of Arabia.

They actually became great nations. We know that that is the case, of course, for Ishmael. Ishmael will grow into a great nation of people. It will be the case for Esau, the rejected son of Isaac who will grow into the Edomites who factor heavily in the story throughout the Old Testament.

What we are seeing here and the reason I believe that this is included here at this particular point in the story is to remind us at the end of Abraham's life that all of God's promises to Abraham God has been faithful toward.

We have seen with the account of the death of Sarah and Abraham purchasing that little piece of land for him to bury Sarah there at the cave of Machpelah where Abraham himself is buried. We have seen that in that Abraham is trusting in God to provide this land for his descendants.

[30 : 23] So the land part of the promise is clearly clung to by Abraham and we know by reading the rest of the story that God will give the land of Canaan to the people who are descended from Abraham. We've also seen the most important aspect of the fulfillment of God's promises as we track through the story of Abraham and all of it was looking ahead to when's the promised seed going to come?

When is the offspring going to come? And there's Isaac and now here we have him mentioned a few times here at the end of Abraham's life to remind us to remind us God has been faithful to his promises.

He has given to Abraham the child promise so that the promise of the seed can pass through him. God has been faithful at least in giving Abraham some sort of sign that he is going to give the land of Israel to the people because he gives a burial place.

Abraham owns a tiny portion of the promised land by the time he dies and he is able to be laid to rest there. But what of that portion of the promise that says that from Abraham there will be not just a promised people but there will be many nations?

His name actually means father of many nations. What of that aspect of the promise? Here at the very end of Abraham's life we are told of that small aspect of the promise we are reminded God was faithful to that promise.

[31 : 50] God has upheld throughout the life of Abraham all of his covenant promises to Abraham. And that explains for us why we are able to read the note that Abraham he lived to a good old age.

He was full full of years that Abraham had a good life. Not because he himself was good but because God had been good and faithful to all of God's promises.

That's what these final chapters in the life of Abraham are really teaching us. That God has been faithful to all of his promises.

And chief among all those promises of course is that promise that through Abraham will come an offspring and by means of that offspring all the nations of the earth will be blessed.

And we know at this point in the story that Isaac is the next stage in that plan. Isaac is the one through whom the greatest of all God's promises to Abraham it will get passed through him so that it might be fulfilled.

[32 : 59] And that is highlighted here at the end of Abraham's life. Look at verse 5. After the account of these other children that we're just now finding out about verse 5 though says Abraham gave all he had to Isaac but to the sons of his concubines Abraham gave gifts and while he was still living he sent them away from his son Isaac eastward to the east country.

The inheritance was given to Isaac. Another reminder that Isaac is not like these other children he's not even like Ishmael his older brother. He stands out.

He is different. He is marked out by God himself as the spiritual child of Abraham. All these are physical children of Abraham but now we have the spiritual child of Abraham in addition to that and through him the promises go so Abraham gives him all that he had.

More significantly we read on in the account of Abraham's burial verse 9 Isaac and Ishmael his sons buried him in the cave of Machpelah in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite east of Mamre the field that Abraham purchased from the Hittites there Abraham was buried with Sarah his wife everything seems to be what you would expect in this account and at the very end of this sort of account of the funeral of Abraham after the death of Abraham God blessed Isaac his son see how God is faithful to his promises now the account of that blessing will be found at the very beginning of chapter 26 we're going to see that blessing as I said everything is not recorded in exact chronological detail but here we're told that after the death of Abraham sometime after that God came he appeared to Isaac and he himself passed on the covenant promises to Isaac God is always always faithful to all of his covenant promises promises and he remains faithful as we move throughout the entire story of the Old Testament until we finally arrive at the very beginning of the New Testament where we are reminded that Jesus himself is the son of Abraham where Paul tells us in Galatians that Jesus is the ultimate true seed or offspring of Abraham that all of those promises were pointed toward Christ himself and in Jesus all of God's promises are yes they are all fulfilled in Christ himself he is the promised seed he is the true Israel he will usher in the new heavens and new earth so that not just this tiny little strip of land in the center of the world belongs to Abraham and his spiritual descendants but so that the entire world belongs to those who are in Christ all the promises all of them as people from every tribe and tongue and nation stream into the kingdom through faith in Jesus all the promises of God fulfilled through Jesus which circles us right back around to where we started as we chase that rabbit God in his kindness patience and forbearance letting slide Abraham's sins letting pass David's adultery David's possessing of multiple wives David's murder of others letting slide even Solomon marrying not just multiple wives but foreign wives who brought idols into the nation passes over it and yeah it is true as I said that's the kindness of God on display that's the mercy of God on display but there ought to be a part of us even if screaming silently in the back of our minds and hearts that's saying what about justice [37 : 03] I would guess that if we could hear Hagar's inner voice screaming Hagar would be thinking fine you were kind to Abraham when he mistreated me but what I need is justice because I was mistreated and I was cast out and my son didn't receive an inheritance even though he was the firstborn son I've got a grievance here and it's all fine and well to say that there's mercy and kindness and grace toward Abraham the sinner but where's my justice even in the contemporary world watching some of the testimony of so many of those young women who were abused by Larry Nassar the doctor at the Olympics committee for gymnastics and you just grieve and it breaks your heart and you think he needs justice it's all fine and well some of the victims have been willing and able to say that we forgive you but most of them as they stand and give their testimony most of them scream out for justice where is justice in

Abraham's life David or Solomon or even Paul or Peter or you or me justice must be had if the judge of all the earth is an unjust judge and he doesn't punish those who do wrong then we are all without hope there's no foundation upon which to stand when our neighbor comes and takes our things if God's not a just judge why would there be any just judges in the world we ought to be screaming out at least a part of us for justice even when that condemns us we ought to long for it and want it in the world and we ought to wonder how do I fit these together I'm grateful in my own lives for the mercy and kindness of God but I'm a little upset about it over here because that guy he needs the hammer to come down on him returning back to Romans after he has spoken of God's forbearance and patience and kindness toward those who have been in sin against God himself a chapter later Paul brings the solution Romans 3 23 which you may be familiar with says for all have sinned fall short of the glory of God in the context of the opening chapters of Romans fall short of the glory of God is to be worthy of condemnation wrath of God Paul tells us goes out against those who are unrighteous that is those who fail to you God the glory he deserves so here we are now finally truth clearly stated everybody deserves God's wrath and yet verse 24 we are also justified by his grace as a gift through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus so there it is set side by side we are all sinners we've already been told in this letter that Paul says that all sinners deserve God's wrath and yet here it is and yet they are declared righteous in

God's court the judge says they are good and righteous and pure they are justified by his grace and it's a gift they don't even do anything to earn it how can this be it is through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood to be received by faith and this was to show God's righteousness that he is a just judge this was to show God's righteousness because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins Paul doesn't hide from it he doesn't run from it yes in the past God passed over their sins yes David and Solomon and even Moses and Abraham they deserve God's judgment just as much as the sons of Aaron were swallowed up in the earth they all deserve God's judgment and God passed over their sins he admits that and even drags us into it it was to show his righteousness at the present time so that he might be just and the justifier of one who has faith in

Jesus even in the present time God has passed over our sins if you are in Christ and you belong to him and you've been declared righteous by God that means your sins have been passed over so if you want to condemn Abraham and beg that God would draw back his kindness from Abraham you must also to be consistent ask him to draw back his kindness from you because you and I we do not deserve it we do not our sins are of a different shade than Abraham's future generations will look back upon us and ask how could they tolerate that how could they do that we're blind to it now it assuredly will happen just as we look back on previous generations and ask how could they do that God is passing it over now passing over sins and he's able to do that because of this key word propitiation in verse 25 which means essentially a sacrifice that absorbs and removes the wrath of God how can God display kindness to Abraham and not judge him because all of

[42 : 42] Abraham's sins were judged on the cross in Christ when he bore the wrath of God against Abraham now can God pass over your sins and continue to show you kindness because if you trust in Christ all of your sins have indeed been punished in Christ and the wrath of God poured out on him for your sins when we say that the covenant promises of God all find their fulfillment in Christ what we need to see and recognize is that necessitates the death of Jesus and the pouring out of the full cup of God's wrath upon him so that God might be just and righteous and still pass over our sins and justify us this is the gospel message the life of Abraham is not just good history for us to read so that we know a little bit about what happened during the Old

Testament the life of Abraham is pointing us ahead to the gospel see in Abraham's failures the kindness and mercy of God mediated through the blood of Jesus himself and see and understand in your own life not only when God withholds his judgment from you but when he delays his discipline toward you at times see in that a display of God's kindness for you and don't be puzzled at Abraham's strange up and down life and the seedy details that are hinted at here and there don't be puzzled at that but marvel instead at the grace of God toward him and then turn and marvel at the grace of God toward you yourself if you are in Christ let's pray for you Thank you.