



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Genesis 21:1-34

“The Promise Fulfilled and the Weaning of Abraham”

TRANSCRIPT

Let's turn, in our Bibles to Genesis chapter 21 and I want to read this entire chapter for our Scripture reading. Genesis chapter 21 and remember that we are now at the climax of the story of Abraham's life because in this chapter, the promised seed finally is born. Genesis Chapter 21 and verse 1.

“Then the Lord took note of Sarah as He had said, and the Lord did for Sarah as He had promised. So Sarah conceived and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the appointed time of which God had spoken to him. And Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him, whom Sarah bore to him, Isaac.” (Isaac means remember “he laughs” or “laughter.”) “Then Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. Now Abraham was one hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. And Sarah said, “God has made laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh with me.” And she said, “Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age.” And the child grew and was weaned, and Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned. Now Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, mocking.” (Some of the translations have “playing” but “mocking” is much to be preferred. I will say something about

that later on in the message.) “Therefore she said to Abraham, “Drive out this maid and her son, for the son of this maid shall not be an heir with my son Isaac.”

“The matter distressed Abraham greatly because of his son. But God said to Abraham, ‘Do not be distressed because of the lad and your maid; whatever Sarah tells you, listen to her, for through Isaac your descendants shall be named. And of the son of the maid I will make a nation also, because he is your descendant.’ So Abraham rose early in the morning and took bread and a skin of water and gave them to Hagar, putting them on her shoulder, and gave her the boy, and sent her away. And she departed and wandered about in the wilderness of Beersheba. When the water in the skin was used up, she left the boy under one of the bushes. Then she went and sat down opposite him, about a bowshot away, for she said, ‘Do not let me see the boy die.’ And she sat opposite him, and lifted up her voice and wept.

“God heard the lad crying; and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, ‘What is the matter with you, Hagar? Do not fear, for God has heard the voice of the lad where he is. Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him by the hand, for I will make a great nation of him.’ (Now you will notice when the angel of the Lord or the angel of God as it is written in verse 17 says, “I will make a great nation of him,” it becomes evident that this is the same angel of the Lord who appeared to Hagar in Chapter 16 as a divine theophany. So, here we have another theophany, another appearance of God to Hagar.) Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water; and she went and filled the skin with water and gave the lad a drink. (Evidently the well of water was there all along, but her eyes were unable to see it and so as a good illustration of the doctrine of illumination, God opened her eyes and she saw the well that had been there all along.)

“And God was with the lad, and he grew; and he lived in the wilderness and became an archer. He lived in the wilderness of Paran, and his mother took a wife for him from the land of Egypt. (Will you notice that the fact that Hagar took a wife for Ishmael from the land of Egypt is revealing in that it indicates the spiritual desires and motivations and condition of both Hagar and Ishmael. Egypt is still in them.)

“Now it came about at that time that Abimelech and Phicol, the commander of his army, spoke to Abraham, saying, ‘God is with you in all that you do; now therefore, swear to me here by God that you will not deal falsely with me or with my offspring or with my posterity, but according to the kindness that I have shown to you, you shall show to me and to the land in which you have sojourned.’ Abraham said, ‘I swear it.’ But Abraham complained to Abimelech because of the well of water which the servants of Abimelech had seized. And Abimelech said, ‘I do not know who has done this thing, neither did you tell me, nor did I hear of it until today.’ And Abraham took sheep and oxen and gave them to Abimelech, and the two of them made a covenant. Then Abraham set seven ewe lambs of the flock by themselves, and Abimelech said to Abraham, ‘What do these seven ewe lambs mean, which you have set by themselves?’ And he said, ‘You shall take these seven ewe lambs from my hand in order that it may be a witness to me, that I dug this well.’ Therefore he called that place Beersheba which means either the well of seven or the well of the oath. (Those two words, oath and seven, are very similar in Hebrew and this could mean either one of the other, both would be appropriate.) Because there the two of them took an oath. So they made a covenant at Beersheba; and Abimelech and Phicol, the commander of his army, arose and returned to the land of the Philistines. And Abraham planted a tamarisk tree at Beersheba, and there he called on the name of the Lord, the Everlasting God. And Abraham sojourned in the land of the Philistines for many days.”

May the Lord bless this reading of His word!

The subject for this morning is “The promise Fulfilled and the Weaning of Abraham.” I know that you might think that there is a mistake in the title, it should be the weaning of Isaac, but no it was done on purpose, the weaning of Abraham, because this is the chapter in which one of the last of the trusts and hopes of Abraham is weaned from him, and we want to look at it in the light of that.

This chapter is a rather important chapter so far as scriptural material is concerned. First of all, from a simple historical standpoint because we have been reading of the promise about the seed that is to come from Genesis chapter 12 up to this point and now in this chapter, the long deferred hope of the son of promise is realized in the birth of Isaac. It would be nice if we could turn to Romans chapter 4 and read verses 17 through 25 because there we have a further exposition of the faith of Abraham and it was a magnificent faith in spite of the many failures along the way.

The chapter is also important from the standpoint of theology. We know Paul’s magnificent theodicy in Romans 9, 10, and 11 in which after having set forth the plan of salvation, dealing with justification and sanctification and glorification, he launches into an explanation of how it should be that among this elect company of people who have risen through the preaching of the gospel, Israel should not be found and in the midst of chapters 9, 10 and 11, the Apostle explains why Israel is not among that company of the elect, except in remnant form, and you know that one of the key verses that the Apostle uses in the ninth chapter is the little statement from Genesis Chapter 21 and verse 12, “in Isaac shall thy seed be called.”

It was never intended by God that Israel, as a whole, should inherit the promises of God, all Israelites. It was his intention that there should be an election within the election, “in Isaac shall thy seed be called.” That text comes from this chapter. And then we also know from the New Testament that the apostle uses this chapter in order to illustrate the rejection of a legal method of salvation. He uses the incident of Sarah sending away Ishmael as an evidence of the fact that God rejects that which is the product of the works of the flesh, for Ishmael, remember, was the son of Sarah’s scheming and consequently, Ishmael was a son born after the flesh.

And the point Apostle makes of it is that that which is the product of the flesh does not inherit the promises of God. That which is of the promise, divine promise, the divine word -- that inherits the promise of God. And so he uses it to point out that salvation is not by the works of human flesh, but rather by the one work that the Lord Jesus Christ has accomplished. For by grace,

are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves. It is the gift of God, not of works, not of fleshly works lest any man should boast.

And finally, this is the finally of the introduction, not the conclusion, and finally this chapter is very important from an ethical standpoint. The weaning of Isaac is really the weaning of Abraham fitting him for the great crisis of Genesis chapter 22 which, the Lord willing, we shall deal with next Sunday. One almost feels the tension as he reads Genesis chapter 21 as the great divine sanctifier, by discipline prepares, Abraham for loftier expressions and experiences of trust in God.

Now if you have been following carefully the life of Abraham, you will have noted how God has been tearing idols away from him and in the preceding chapter, He tore one final idol or one of the last of the idols that was part of the life of Abraham and Sarah, for from the time that they were in Ur of the Chaldees, they had made this little agreement that whenever they got into difficulty going into a new place, Abraham would say she is my sister wife and Sarah would say he is my brother. So that that was not simply one incident in their life, but evidently something that they had harbored from the time of the leaving of the Ur of the Chaldees, and so that secret agreement was an agreement of the flesh designed to prevent them from having to suffer because of their connection with the Lord.

There is one last thing now that must be dealt with before Abraham is asked to offer up Isaac and that is the connection with Hagar, Ishmael must be dealt with. Abraham evidently is still clinging to her and still clinging to her son Ishmael for as a father he loved Ishmael. He desired that Ishmael be blessed and when Ishmael is finally sent out, the matter distresses Abraham greatly, but you can see this would have been a possible stumbling block for the test of Genesis chapter 22 because if Abraham is able to lean upon Ishmael, then the test in the offering up of Isaac would be that much easier. It's easier to give up Isaac if one still has Ishmael at home, and so consequently God must wean Abraham from Ishmael and Ishmael must be sent off in order that when the test comes in Genesis chapter 22, it's the kind of test which, if by the grace of God, Abraham manages to succeed in, then it is true.

Abraham is the friend of God. So what we are dealing with is a chapter in which God is tearing and ripping idols away from the heart of Abraham and Sarah to bring them both to a naked helpless trust in God reminding them, in a sense, that this world is not their home. That's a very important principle. This world is not our home either. So the pruning of our great husbandman goes on constantly and may I suggest to you in your own Christian life that part of your growth in grace is response to the pruning that God the husbandman does in your life.

Well, let's turn to the passage now and it's a long chapter and I am just going to comment on some of the more obvious things in the light of the time and in the light of the conditions. So first of all, we notice, in verses 1 through 7, the fulfillment of the promise of the promised seed and we read of the birth of Isaac in the first two verses. And let me read these two verses again because there is a point I want to be sure that we all get. “Then the Lord took note of Sarah as He had said, and the Lord did for Sarah as He had promised. So Sarah conceived and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the appointed time of which God had spoken to him.”

In a sense these words, particularly the first two verses, contain the whole autobiography of the godly ups and downs of the life of faith. God fulfills his promises without help from us. So often we seek to enable him to fulfill the promises that he has made to us. Three times Moses refers to God's faithfulness to his word. Notice. “Then the Lord took note of Sarah as He had said.” First time. “And the Lord did for Sarah as He had promised.” Second time. “So Sarah conceived and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the appointed time of which God had spoken to him.” Three times, in the two verses, it is stated that God is faithful to his word.

In a sense, this is what someone has called the quiet precision of God's control. God is always on time. He is never late. O we may pray if the Lord tarrys or we may say if the Lord tarrys, but the Lord Jesus does not tarry. He comes at the precise time that the Father desires that he come. All of God's promises are fulfilled in his time. He is always on time and the divine veracity, the faithfulness to the word of God, is the bedrock of the believer's life. In the New Testament, we are told, many times in essence but several times specifically, God is faithful. That means that He

performs His promises and so the time came, the appointed time, that God had spoken to Sarah and to Abraham and Isaac was born; twenty five years of waiting.

I am sure that Abraham must have thought God has been delayed, but it was not delay. And consequently, at the appointed time, Isaac is born. And he is given the name of Isaac. That name is a reminder of the good fortune that God has manifested to this elderly couple, a man 100 years of age, a woman 90 years of age. Incidentally I doubt that there was any child that was ever loved more deeply than Isaac. Now I know that that is partially true from the teaching of the word of God because God said that He chose Abraham in order that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice. That is what He said in chapter 18, and so Abraham was a man who was chosen specifically in the light of the fact that he would be the kind of father who would train his children up in nurture and admonition of the Lord.

And so Abraham took Isaac upon his lap and trained him in spiritual things. He was loved and loved deeply. No child could ever be more blessed than to have a father and a mother who love him in the Lord and treat them as children given by God, instructing them in the things of the word of God. So he was loved. What a tremendous good fortune to be born into a family of believing Christians who will have the courage to train their children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. I encourage you, particularly you younger couples who have little children, to remember your responsibility before the Lord, and particularly you men, do not think like the world. Do not even think like some evangelicals that it is the mother’s duty to raise children. It is not. It is the father’s duty to train up the child in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Abraham circumcised Isaac on the eighth day. He had a faith that worked and so he performed the rite in accordance with the word of God, as God had commanded him, we read. And he was 100 years old when Isaac was born to him. Well, you are not surprised then that Sarah gives us in verses 66 and 67 the first cradle hymn of a mother’s grateful joy. “God has made laughter for

me. Everyone who hears will laugh with me. Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children. Yet I have borne him a son in his old age.”

It's rather interesting to know this and some of you may not know it, but when the Virgin Mary sings the *Magnificat*, there are expressions from that *Magnificat* that are taken from the Greek translation of this chapter right here. Evidence of the fact that Mary herself had studied this chapter and had made some of these things subjects of her own meditation and Luke further uses expressions from this chapter in order to describe our Lord's growing. When we read the child grew and was weaned, the precise expression is used with reference to the Lord Jesus in the Gospel of Luke.

He grew. He grew in wisdom and stature before men and there is a likeness between the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and the seed, the Lord Jesus Christ. And so Sarah sings a kind of anthem that's the prelude of the *Magnificat* of Mary. And incidentally you will notice too that she did conceive and she actually did nurse. So it evidently is true that God had rejuvenated her physically to such an extent that she was one who could conceive and she did nurse her child. You can see too that her faith is of a more domestic kind. And so she sings about how God has made laughter for her when her laughter was the laugh of unbelief. Now she sees that it's really the laughter of the joy of the fulfillment of the promises of God; her bit is domestic and physical and that's natural because she is a woman and so she sings this hymn out of thankfulness for what God has done for her.

I sometimes think the Christian life is like climbing a mountain. Texans would not know that too well. Now I said this morning Texans would not know this, but a Texan came up and reminded me that there are fourteen peaks that are a mile or over in height in the State of Texas. That's what I was told. So I believe it. You know when you climb a mountain, one of the things that you notice is as you climb up often you stop, take a good look out over the land that you are now able to see in order to get a more beautiful impressive vista. And in the Christian life, it's very much like that. It's good at times to stop and take a look over the past and see how God has led you and

directed you. It's the occasion of praise and thanksgiving to realize some of the things that the Lord has done for us and to do it at various times in your life.

Now then the next section, verses 8 through 21, is the story of the expulsion of Ishmael for the birth of Isaac is both a happy event, and for Abraham, also a distressing event. In the east, incidentally, weaning lasted up to three to five years of age. It was the belief of many in the east that the longer a mother nursed a child, the stronger that child would be in maturity and so occasionally or often, children were nursed until they were as old as five years of age.

Now we will just assume that Isaac was about three years of age and so Ishmael would be about sixteen at this time, and we read in the 8th verse that the child grew and was weaned, and Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned. Now Sarah saw the son of Hagar, the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, mocking Isaac, whose name means laughter, is now the subject not of holy laughter, but he is the object of unholy laughter. And Ishmael incidentally reveals the condition of his heart for it is unbelieving heart so far as the promises of God are concerned, and so the unbelief has led to envy.

Many have wondered what was in Ishmael's mind when he mocked Isaac. Some have suggested he looked over that little infant or that small child and said “little helpless Isaac, a father of nations -- impossible.” And being envious of the fact that he was to be the heir and he was the firstborn, he mocked him. There have been different Jewish interpretations of this, too. Some have suggested he quarreled with Isaac about the inheritance, then because does it not say in verse 10 after the reference to mocking that Sarah said, “drive out this maid and her son for the son of this maid shall not be an heir with my son Isaac.” So they must have been discussing the heirship. And consequently that was the reason for the mocking.

There is Jewish tradition to the effect that this quarrel continued for a while and that Ishmael said to Isaac, “Come on out. Let's go out in the field. I want to practice some target shooting with my bow and arrow,” and while he was pretending to engage in target shooting, he shot arrows at Isaac. That, of course, is not stated in the word of God. Still others have said, well it was just the

case of an older person being unhappy that a younger person was going to take his place. Well we know that that is often the case.

I read sometime ago of the fire department at Shelter Island, New York some years ago. They had a group of old men who were the volunteer fire department, but the boys in the neighborhood also organized their own fire department. And so when the signal went out that there was a fire in the community, both of these fire departments rushed to the scene, but the boys always beat the men and usually had the fire put out by the time the men got there. And so the older men were very much chagrined over the fact that these younger boys beat them to the fire and put it out before they got there. It reminds me of some of the fire departments I have known in the little towns in the South. They always arrive in time to damp down the ashes, but at any rate, so the older men decided that there was a law that required voluntary firemen to have disability insurance and since the kids couldn't have insurance that put them out of business.

It is difficult for older people to see younger people come along and take their place. Perhaps, there was something of that in this, but at any rate it's evident that Ishmael did not have the right attitude toward the promises of God and so he mocked Isaac. Now Sarah recognized the situation a great deal of time before Abraham did. “Drive out this maid and her son for the son of this maid shall not be an heir with my son Isaac.”

Now someone has said this is an evidence of unbelief on Sarah's part because had not God said to her that Isaac was going to inherit and consequently why is it necessary for her to drive out Ishmael? Well it may have been a measure of unbelief, but it also was an evidence of some faith on her part because she did recognize that Isaac was to be the heir. Now the interesting thing about this, ladies, is that Abraham, the great man of faith, fails to grasp the essence of the situation. In other words, the human affection that he had for Ishmael blurs his spiritual instincts and even his spiritual knowledge, and consequently we read, “The matter distressed Abraham greatly because of his son.”

So when she told Abraham to drive out the child, the Lord speaks, “Don't be distressed because of the lad and your maid; whatever Sarah tells you, listen to her.” And I must confess that almost sticks in my throat when I emphasize it. I am not sure of the application of this, men. Notice what it says, “Whatever Sarah tells you, listen to her.” I know what some of you are saying, “How can we help but listen to them?” But this means listen in the sense of obey in this instance. And so here is one instance in the Bible when the man is to be in submission to the woman. Make whatever application you want to make about it, but it is clear that it is Sarah who has understood the essence of the situation.

Now this of course is something over which the Apostle Paul makes something in the fourth chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians and we have already talked about that. So I will pass that by. The act of expulsion that follows is an expression of prompt obedience in a very difficult task and so Abraham, we have to admire his faithfulness. It was a faith that worked. And so he rose up early in the morning, he took bread and a bottle of water. He gave them to Hagar, he put them on her shoulder, tenderly did this, gave her the youth who may have been a little sick or may have been something of a weakling because he had to live in the luxury of Abraham who at this time was a man of means and influence as we see in the latter part of the chapter. And gave the boy to the woman and drove them out. Remainder of that section is the story of how man's extremity becomes God's opportunity and God through the angel of the Lord delivers the mother and child from the thirst that might mean their death.

Luther contended that when God gives the promise to Ishmael, I will make a great nation of him and God was with the lad, that what was meant by this was that Ishmael was to be a clever and learned preacher and that he established a church among the pagans. Well, that's highly unlikely and furthermore, when we read in verse 21 that his mother took a wife for him from the land of Egypt, we are probably to understand by that a further manifestation of the different spirit that animated Hagar and Ishmael from the Spirit in spite of the failures that animated Sarah and Abraham. The

true nature of Ishmael is not revealed until after the birth of Isaac and that often is characteristic of the old nature. It's when the new nature comes that we really learn, what we truly are, of ourselves.

Well the final section of the chapter which I just will comment upon in only general terms has as its theme, someone has said, “Friendliness with the ungodly.” Perhaps it might illustrate the uncertainties of the life of a sojourner.

About 25 years ago, the Southern Baptists had their annual convention in Miami, Florida. By Miami convention standards, according to *Time* magazine, it was a rather quiet crowd. In fact, the taxi driver grumbled in the city that business was terrible. He said, “Them guys came to town with a ten-dollar bill and the Ten Commandments and they ain't busted one of them yet.” That may not be the precise way in which we are to live among the ungodly, but it is certainly true that Abraham was a man who had a tremendous testimony and as a result of that, Abimelech, the king of Gerar, desired to have a non-aggression pact with him, and the last of the chapter is the recording of that non-aggression pact when Abraham complains about a well and later on in the Book of Genesis, we will have something about that come before us in connection with Isaac particularly. The agreement is properly sealed with gifts and finally at the end of the Chapter, a commemoration is recognized and God is referred to as the Lord, the everlasting God, in token of His faithfulness and His greatness.

Let me conclude by saying this. There are some great lessons in this chapter and I wish it were possible to stress them in detail. Some lessons are, for example, the faithfulness of God to his word. We talked about that. The superiority of the promises of God to the flesh. The divine electing grace which marks out Isaac from Ishmael as the promised son and there is no reason for this other than the sovereign good pleasure of God. The Apostle Paul, in Romans chapter 9, makes that point very strongly. He says that before these, when he is speaking about the twins that were born in the same context, he said before they were born, before they even had done anything good or bad, that the promise of God according to election might stand. He said the elder shall serve the younger.

Now in the case of Isaac and Ishmael, it was the same principle. It was in Isaac shall the seed be called and it was by the sovereign determination of God in distinguishing grace. You see the apostles learn their doctrines of the grace of God from the study of the Scriptures. If you were to say to them they learn their doctrines by reasoning or by rationalistic approach to the Bible, as some like to say about people who believe in the sovereign grace of God, you would not be understanding the Scripture correctly. The apostle was a student of Scripture. He interpreted these passages from the Old Testament and elicited from them, drew from them the great doctrines that he proclaimed in chapters like Romans 9, 10 and 11, but amid all of these great doctrinal lessons, there stands out one lesson that I think is even more important and that is, in this case, the weaning of Abraham. One more weight must go from this man of God. The natural love must be subordinated to the love of God in order that he might be prepared for the great test of chapter 22. After Hagar and Ishmael are disowned, then success comes for Abraham. The pruning brings him finally to the kind of trust in God that enables God to say truly of him, “Abraham is a friend of God.”

What's the purpose of the disciplines of life? Well, they are designed to bring us to this trust in the sufficiency of the Lord God. They are also designed to stress the fact that this world is not really our home. That is something that we need to be reminded about constantly. In other words, Ishmael must be offered up before Isaac. This world is really not our home, my dear Christian friend. Texas is not our ultimate destination. There is a great story which was told me a number of years ago and I have mentioned it before in Believers Chapel. I hope you won't mind if I repeat it. About 15 years ago, I was in Pennsylvania for some meetings at a place called Greenwood Hills, and there I had several conversations with a man who had Scottish ancestors. His name was John Martin and he was a much older man than I and he told me a number of interesting experiences among Christians of a generation previous. And he told me one story that has stuck with me through the years.

He said that many years ago in London that there was a contest in one of the London newspapers over the best definition of home. He said some of the answers that appeared in the

papers were home is the place where our stomachs get three square meals a day and our hearts a thousand. Not a bad definition or description. Home is the place where we grumble the most and are treated the best. It's not bad either. Home is the place where the great are small and the small are great. That's good too. Anybody who has had a home knows exactly what's meant by that.

G. Campbell Morgan, one of the greatest of the Bible teachers of a last generation, in a large meeting in London shortly after this contest had appeared in the paper although there was no evidence that he had read any of these definitions or knew anything about the contest, before a large gathering said, “I have the best definition of home and I am willing to compare it with anybody's definition.” He said, “Home is the only place where I feel at home.” And then he went on to add, “I frequently travel. I travel all over the world as a teacher of the word of God. I reside in the homes of many Christian friends. I am usually ushered in. I am taken to my room and then inevitably, they will say to me, “Dr. Morgan please make yourself at home.” But he said, “I could never be at home. In the first place, I like to raid the icebox before breakfast.” And he said, “If I were to come down and raid the icebox before breakfast in your home, it would violate all the conventions of your home.”

Furthermore, he said, “I like to sit before the fire at night, take off my shoes with my feet still in my stockings and wiggle my toes right in front of the fire. So that would break all of the habits of your home.” He said, “I can never really feel at home in your home.” And then he went onto say Paul was referring to this when he said to be absent from the body is to be at home with the Lord. Then he hesitated and over this vast audience there was a quiet that fell, and then Dr. Morgan said, “Since I become a Christian, this world is not my home.” That's true. Since I become a Christian, this world is not my home. And one of the things that God does in the life of the believer is to bring them to the place where they truly realize that this world is not really our home. We are on the way to our home. We are sojourners. We are pilgrims.

This morning when I left and went out of this door, one of the deacons, yes it was a deacon, Mr. Nixon came to me and said, did you know and I didn't, did you know that Benjamin Disraeli in

his mansion in Britain left off a large stone in the cornerstone of his mansion. And people ask him why did you do that, and he said, “I am just a pilgrim here.” It just reminded him of the fact that he was here only for a time. You see the experiences of life, my Christian friend, are designed to prune us, to deliver us from trust in flesh, trust in man, trust in our own activities, in our own works, in our own capacities, and lead us to trust in him and in his faithfulness to the promises of the word of God. The experiences through which God has passed you are designed to lead you to that. This time, this life is the weaning of Isaac. It's the weaning of Abraham. It's the weaning of Lewis Johnson. It's the weaning of those of you who are believers in this audience, that's what God is doing.

If you are here this morning and you have never believed in our Lord Jesus Christ, well, then of course you don't really know what it is to have a heavenly father who cares enough for you to discipline you. I recommend Him and His discipline and through the Lord Jesus Christ and the saving work that he has accomplished, the blood that was shed, you may have everlasting life. If God, the Holy Spirit, has brought to your heart conviction that you are a sinner and that you need salvation, deliverance from the judgment that is to come, it is available through the blood that was shed. The forgiveness of sins may be yours this morning.

And as I have so often said to you, as an ambassador of the Lord Jesus Christ, I appeal to you to turn from trusting your own works, your own flesh, your own activities, your church, your church work, your good deeds, your education, your culture or whatever it is you may have trust in, and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ who has offered the one atoning sacrifice through which you may have everlasting life. May God move you to come. May you come into the family of God and enjoy the disciplining and the love of a father who cares enough for us to prepare us and fit us for eternity. Come to Christ. Trust Him. Receive the forgiveness of sins as a free gift. May we stand for the benediction.

[Prayer] We are thankful to Thee Lord for the experiences of life and as we have reflected upon the experience of Abraham and Sarah and Ishmael and Hagar and Isaac, we see in You, the

greatness of the love that Thou hast for us. O God! May we be submissive to all that Thou art doing in our lives and may the result be glory to Thy name. Our great triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we worship Thee, we adore Thy name, and Lord if there should be some here who have not yet believed, O God! Move in their hearts through the Holy Spirit, convicting of sin, giving repentance and faith, and salvation through Jesus Christ.

May grace, mercy and peace go with us for His name's sake. Amen.