

The Flesh and the Spirit

Part 1

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[00:00:01] I am going to read three passages from Scripture, and they are all based on the old Testament. The first is Genesis.

The twenty-first chapter of Genesis. The eighth verse. Speaking of Isaac, it says, The child grew, and was weaned.

And Abraham made a great fuss the same day that Isaac was weaned. [00:01:08] And Sarah saw the son of Agar, the Egyptian, which she had borne unto Abraham, mocking. Wherefore she said unto Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son, but the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac. And the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight because of his son. And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the wife, and because of thy bondwoman, [00:02:01] in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice.

For in Isaac shall thy seed be called.

Two sentences in the twenty-second chapter. The sixth verse. And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son, and he took a fire in his hand and a knife. And they went, both of them, together.

Verse eight.

And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a land for a burnt offering. So they went, both of them, together.

[00:03:06] It's remarkable, it was said this afternoon, that the Spirit of God never repents itself. And yet the sentence at the end of those two verses is the same. So they went, both of them, together.

Both of them, together.

It's a very good thing in our exercise of heart.

Through the circumstances in which we are found, God should teach us things. He does teach us.

[00:04:03] He shows us very often, in patience with us, what his mind is.

Now you know as well as I do, that that's what he did. In the fourth chapter, I think it is, of Galatians. Galatians.

Here was a question, a decision, which Abraham had to take.

And in a similar way, it's a matter which we have to take.

Abraham had been under the thoughts and mind of God for a long, long time. [00:05:02] For twenty-five years he'd been in the land, and God had promised him, the land will be yours, and you'll have an heir, and he shall inherit it.

He went, trod that land north, south, east and west. He must have many variations in his life, and what he passed through. And how often, guided by circumstances, God had definitely promised, he should have an heir, he should inherit the land.

What happened? Half that time had gone, say twelve years, I'm not sure. He'd never had a son. Where was his heir coming from?

[00:06:07] Strange, is it not?

He was often guided by others. His wife said to him, look here, in our household is Abraham.

She's an Egyptian.

He'd brought her when he went down into Egypt. Sad thing.

He was persuaded. And eventually he had a child, Ishmael.

Ishmael grew.

God is not changed by any circumstance whatsoever, from his purpose, and he worked it through.

[00:07:03] The time came then, when Sarah had a son.

He's called Isaac.

True love, true joy.

How often it is that we like things that we gain by our own efforts.

Isaac had come forth entirely through the power of the Spirit of God. No other way.

So the time came when he who was born of the beggar began to mock Isaac, as it were, saying, [00:08:02] I'm the firstborn.

I'm the true heir.

Which shall remind the inheritance. No. And the very woman who told him to take Hagar now tells

him, that man, Ishmael, will not reign in my house with Isaac.

And certainly it must have been a hard thing for him to do. Very hard.

The time came.

Sarah saw the son of Hagar that was the Egyptian, which she had borne unto Abraham, mocking him. [00:09:02] How often the things are reflected. Because here we have that which is of the flesh, and that which is of the Spirit. The flesh always so quickly does it assert itself. Think that it has that right.

It may show itself in many ways. I might say that it brought up in a Christian household. I went to school, Sunday school. I went to the meetings. I learned all. In the meetings, I got it all.

And self-confidence.

It has to be laid aside. You never inherit anything by the knowledge in your head or anywhere else of the things of God.

[00:10:04] However it says, the thing was very good in Abraham's sight because of his son, Ishmael.

He thought much of it. He'd grown up to be thirteen years of age. Thirteen years older.

How often we find that which has been in our life, all the way through, the things which the flesh can bring in. It has to be laid aside. And it's very, very hard.

I know what it is, in some measure. I was brought from my very birth in the things of the Lord. But the time came when it had to be a decision in my heart. [00:11:05] Is it that which I've learned as a child, as an individual, in the things of God, or is it the Spirit? Just a moment.

The two won't go together.

It means that Isaac has to become the heir.

And if he is the heir, Ishmael has to be cast out. Can it be then that in your life and in mine, the time comes when I have to seek Christ in a true life? He is the one who will lead me in the truth. He has given us of his Spirit. And I walk with him, and he teaches me. [00:12:01] It's not my knowledge of it being able to repeat, as I was taught in Sunday school, chapters out of the Bible.

That didn't make me any more a Christian, or to walk as a Christian, than anything else. I have to have the help and the guidance of the Spirit of God. That is why I read to you then, that which came in the 22nd chapter. Abraham took the wood, the burnt offerings, and laid it upon Isaac, his son. He took the fire in his hand and the knife, and they went, both of them together. Now that's repeated, as I said. Why is it?

Because I think there was a communion between Abraham and Isaac, [00:13:02] which no one else could enjoy.

There is a communion between the Lord and me, which no one else can enjoy.

There are things, we're not told what he talks about, that both of them went together. There are things which the Lord can communicate to me, through his Spirit, which he wants me, and he wants me only, to enjoy.

Might we do that, desire it? If it is to be so, let us remember this.

The flesh must also go first.

We like to think we know, we like to think that we know the Lord Jesus Christ, [00:14:05] but the time comes when it's a real thing in our heart. Do we have a sincere communion in our hearts, between the Lord and ourselves, to enjoy Him?

Go to the first book of Psalms. Chapter 16.

And the Lord said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul? See, and I have rejected him from reigning over Israel. [00:15:02] Till I am born with oil and gold, I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided thee a king among his sons. I have provided thee a king among his sons. Six verses.

And it came to pass when they were come, that they looked on Elias, and said, Surely the Lord's anointing is before me? But the Lord said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature, because I have refused him.

For the Lord seeth not as man seeth, for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart. Then Jesse called Abinadab, [00:16:03] and they came fast before Samuel. And he said, Neither hath the Lord chosen this. Then Jesse made Shammah fast before him, and he said, Neither hath the Lord chosen this. And again Jesse made seven of his sons to fast before Samuel. And Samuel said unto Jesse, The Lord hath not chosen thee. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all thy children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, but behold, he can keepeth the sheep. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him, for we will not sit down until he come hither. And he sent and brought him in, for he was ruddy, [00:17:02] and withal a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the Lord said, Arise, anoint him. And this is he. Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren. And the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward.

So Samuel rose up and went to Rome.

You see here another instance of what might be spoken of as the difference between the Spirit and the flesh.

The children of Israel had a wonderful king, [00:18:01] so they thought. He was a man of great stature, head and shoulders above his fellow. He was a great warrior. He could do what many others couldn't do.

He was a great fighter, to fight the battles of the Lord.

But it came in the end to show what was in him. He rebelled in his heart against Jehovah.

He did not obey him.

God said, Samuel, I rejected you.

Look, I rejected you.

Can we come to the point then, in our hearts, that all that we are, however great it may be, intelligent, great in ability, or whatever it is, [00:19:05] that it's no use to God.

But look at Samuel.

He really longed in his heart for Saul.

He mourned the loss of Saul.

How long, says the Lord, will thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him and reigned over himself? Fill thine heart with oil. Send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided thee a king among his sons.

How the Lord has even to teach his own. [00:20:04] You would have thought that a man like Samuel would have been so near to the Lord that he knew all that was required of him, the thoughts of the Lord. He would do the right thing and make no mistakes. But what happens? Here he is, mourning a king, a wonderful king as he was in his day, but rejected by Jehovah.

And then he doesn't learn.

He comes to Jesse.

He says, Jesse, I want to see your sons. Very good. Jesse brings Elijah. Look upon him. Fine man. Lovely man. Grand.

Great warrior. Sure. The Lord must have his eye on that man. The Lord quietly tells him, that's not the man.

[00:21:06] Yes, it says, surely the Lord's anointed him before. No. It says here, the Lord said unto Samuel, look not on his countenance. How often we look upon a fellow, it may be one that can minister well. It may be one that can teach us well. It may be one that's a great help to us.

We look upon the outward countenance. There are some with their intelligence of the English language can give an address. It's marvelous.

Perfect grammar. No mistakes.

He does everything. Written out, you might say, just as it comes out. Everything perfect.

[00:22:02] Don't look upon the countenance.

Or on the height of his stature. Great man.

As we've heard among some of the Lord's people, how they made some of them great men among themselves. Great leaders. God says, I haven't chosen them. Let us be careful.

Because I have refused him. For the Lord seeth not as man seeth. He does not see as we see.

For man looketh on the outward appearance. But the Lord looketh upon the heart. Let us take that to heart. He looketh upon the heart.

The seven sons come before him. Oh, Samuel might say, [00:23:04] is it not one among these seven? He says, no.

He says to Jesse, have you not got a mother? Oh, yes. And the young lad in his teens is looking after the sheep. Bring him here. Bring him here. He saw it.

And he knew it.

And he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy.

And with all of a beautiful countenance and goodly to look to.

That is what marked him. I take that.

It's what ought to mark all those upon whom we put a burden inside. Make him one that is marked [00:24:03] by the good things of the Lord. It's what a man is, what a man does. We accept.

Arise, anonymous.

Let us receive.

And Samuel took the thorn of oil and anointed it in the midst of his brethren. And the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward.

That day forward.

When Saul was eighteen, we find it often that the Spirit of the Lord was upon him and affected him. But immediately he did that which was a distasteful thing in the sight of Jehovah. Disobeying his command, he took his spirit away.

[00:25:03] But here is the man by whom we can set his spirit. This is the man. And it says, the Spirit of the Lord came upon him from David from that day forward.

Here, I wonder how much Samuel saw in David the one which was the true picture for us, the Lord Jesus Christ.

He said this.

He wanted him to be a God.

He is the one who was truly the one after the Lord's own. The one that was due his will. How true it is. [00:26:02] If we've given up looking upon things around us, the people around us, our fellow Christians, and see with our eyes upon the Lord, we'll find that he is the one God has raised up, given him a place, his own right hand, made him Lord and Savior, crowned him with glory and honor, made him to be the head of all, made him the head of his body.

The one that will have all the glory, the one in whom God, with all his desire to do the will of God, is seen in that man. How wonderful it is. May our hearts, then, be set upon any good, kind, clever, eminent Christian, [00:27:02] however much he may be, but put our eyes upon the Lord and dwell upon his glory.

What is it that last sentence is for today? So Samuel rose up and went to Rome.

God, in his goodness, had given Samuel to see that in David there, the son of Jesse, was the one that was going to fulfill all the mind of Jehovah. He saw it.

He says, I can go home now, and I think if I am right, if you don't find Samuel, again, in regard to the second book, the book of Samuel, it doesn't bring it up again. It doesn't come before us. Samuel, as it were, passes off the scene.

David only.

[00:28:03] Has everything else passed out of the scene? All the other great men of the world, or rather of the Christian world, or those that are known as Christians, have they passed away? And is our eyes only upon Christ? Only upon him?

Would to God that it were so. Then we would be willing to leave all the will of God to be accomplished in him.

Turn back to Genesis. What is it?

[00:29:02] The 46th chapter.

And Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to be a shepherd, and offered sacrifices unto the God of his father Isaac.

And God spake unto Israel in the bishops of the ninth, and said, Jacob, Jacob. And he said, here am I. And he said, I am God, the God of thy father. Fear not to go down into Egypt, for I will there make thee a great nation. I will go down with thee into Egypt. And I will also surely bring thee up again.

And Joseph shall put his hand upon mine eyes.

[00:30:05] In relation to that, turn back to chapter 45. Verse 13.

Joseph says to his brothers, he says, and ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and all that ye have seen. We shall hasten and bring down my father. You know quite well the history of Joseph. Rather, I'll begin with Jacob. The history of Jacob. It is a very checkered history. But in the end, he comes to the mind of God.

And in the enjoyment of it.

And in the enjoyment of it.

[00:31:03] He got back to the land after having been 20 years away from it. He lived there in the land.

Famine had come. He was in great stress. He'd lost his only son, that he cherished most of all, Joseph.

Now, Joseph had revealed himself. He said to his brethren, bring my father down here.

On his way, God blessed him. He tells him, once again, as it were, of his promises and his thoughts with regard to him and his posterity. He was going to bless them. But there was one whom he wanted his eyes to behold.

To prepare that, as it were, [00:32:03] he says to his son, his brother Joseph, he says, you shall tell my father of all my glory.

We know it's in Egypt. And of all that he has seen, he shall hasten to bring down my father here.

Is it that we, you and I, have seen anything of the glory of that blessed person in his place of exaltation?

Have we been so near to the Lord, so near to the God whom we have believed, so near that he can reveal, as it were, to us the glories that he has in his own presence with the Father?

[00:33:04] What a revelation it must have been to Jacob to be told that. I have glory.

Yes. The Lord has glory. I know it has a reference to the coming day and to the blessings that his brother has brought. But I want to go beyond that. Have we seen the glories of the Lord to such an extent that we desire to see them? There's much being brought before us these days in our meetings together. We've heard of the glory of God. We've heard of the glory of the Lord. We've heard how all these things were in the mind of God. But our glory, what have we seen?

I feel how much we need [00:34:05] that word which is given by God. That night when he spoke to Jacob, he says, I will go down with thee to Egypt, yes. I will also surely bring thee up again. And Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes.

Why? That he might get a glimpse when he came, though he were an old man, get a glimpse of the glories that God had given to Joseph in Egypt.

He's the head of everyone under God.

How true it is. The Lord Jesus Christ, our blessed Lord, is the head of all the universe under God.

A man in the glory.

[00:35:01] That's the one that we want to see and behold. And I say to you, as I say to myself, may

God, in his goodness, put his eyes upon, put his hands upon mine eyes, that I might see that glory more distinctly than ever. The glory that shall fill the universe and in his infinite grace, I, together with you, the Lord is all. I shall be shared with you. Three hundred and thirty-nine. In David's great house and through the time of old the Lord in Egypt shall come.

[00:36:06] He comes to graceful pleasure to shepherds and pilgrims to give away contrition and ruin and pain.

The heavens which now conceal him in brown, velvet, and white in glory shall reveal him to our rejoicing eyes.

[00:37:04] He who with hands uplifted went from the earth below shall come again, O gifted, with blessings to rejoice.

He shall come down like showers upon a hill of grass and joy and hope like flowers in the shade of the hill of fire.

[00:38:02] Before him on the mountain shall kiss the heavens and righteousness in confidence from hill to valley flow.

Ling shall fall down before him and roll an instant grain.

All nations shall adore him with praise of the ocean.

How strong is thy dominion [00:39:05] O river, sea, and road that leadeest billows o'er the life, breath, and soul.