

Faith and Honesty

Genesis 20

Sermon Transcript by Rev. Ernest O'Neill

The world has a life of its own, hasn't it and it's very upbeat at the moment. The economy is going, and the parking lots in the shopping centers are full, the consumer confidence is up, and we're all kind of upbeat about things. So the world has very much a life of its own; a life that goes up at times, and then it goes down at times. The recession was just like darkest Africa; it was pretty pessimistic stuff -- it's alright if you're swinging with the rhythm of the world -- you're okay if you're in there earning money with a job, paying your bills, and able to fight with the weapons that are used against you. So if you can swing with the rhythm of the world, you find it is okay.

But if you ever get out of step with that rhythm you begin to find life is pretty insecure. Indeed, even when you're swinging with the rhythm of the world, there is harshness in it isn't there? There's a competitiveness that operates at almost all levels; not only at the executive level, but at all levels of faculty, of ordinary businesses, or on the ordinary shop floor -- there's a kind of rivalry and competition that can make life hard. There are pains and stresses and strains that can bring a lot of pressure into your own life. The world has its own system of operating. Peer pressures, we all know, are very, very strong and everybody uses that kind of lever to get us to perform better. Peer pressure, the desire to be better than our neighbors, the desire to be up with the Joneses, all those subtle pressures come upon us. And I don't know how many of you in the recession found the pressure of the loan business operating, but it got pretty strong at times, didn't it?

It's okay while you're able to meet the monthly payments, but when you tremble at all, that old pressure is pretty relentless upon us. So there are all kinds of mighty pressures that operate in this world and often you wonder, "Well, how can you ever get secure in the midst of this kind of a world system? Is there any way to overcome this and live above it?" And of course, there is; there is a way to overcome the world. There is a way to live above those pressures and to live free and lighthearted this coming week, despite all those tremendous pressures that come upon you. And it's found loved ones, 1 John 5:4-5, "For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that overcomes the world, our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?"

Now why does faith in Jesus overcome the world? Because of what God did to the world in Jesus, and you find that in Colossians 2:13, "And you, who were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, having canceled the bond which stood against us with its legal demands; this he set aside, nailing it to the cross." He also, "Disarmed the principalities and powers and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in him."

Peer pressure gains its power from the principalities and powers that Satan organized to counterfeit the approval of God and Jesus destroyed those principalities and powers. Its principalities and powers that brings such anxiety to your mind and heart over the automobile, or over your house, or over your payments; it's not actually the payments themselves, it's not actually the house, because a thousand times the things you fear don't happen, but it's the principalities and powers; the

spiritual forces that are organized to control us instead of God -- and Jesus disarmed those principalities and powers. When you have faith in that, you are freed from it.

It's miraculous; the rock is just a rock until Moses realizes that Jesus made that rock and controls all the protons and neutrons that constitute that rock, and that he is able to turn that rock into a fountain. The moment he believes that, the moment he believes that this Christ, who made all things and without whom was not anything made that was made, is able to make these things whatever we need them to be as his children, the moment you believe that, at that moment the power of Jesus' resurrection is released into that apparent solid matter and it is turned into a fountain which gushes water, and that is true with you and me; it is unto you according to your faith.

In other words, it is your faith in Jesus and the fact that the whole world has been crucified in him and all the elemental spirits of the universe have been destroyed in him that gives you power over this coming week. It's our faith in the fact that God has remade the world in Jesus and has remade it so that it works the way he meant it to work. It's that that delivers us into a charmed life and that's working faith. That's why we're studying this book that has so many examples of men and women who walked and lived by that faith. That faith can change your life this coming week. It destroys the evil in you, it destroys the evil in your circumstances, and it destroys the evil in other people who are trying to oppose you.

God took everything that opposes his will for your life and put them into his son Jesus and destroyed them there forever. He crucified that world, and you need never fear that world any longer. The moment you grasp that, and you begin to live by faith in that, that moment it actually changes things in your life. It can make a bill come in on time or be late -- it can if God wants it to. It can bring a receivable in earlier than you had hoped. It can change the heart of your boss. It can change the attitude of your colleague at work. It is actually the power of God, this cross. To those who are perishing it is sheer foolishness; but to those who believe, it is the power of God and it changes things in your life and changes the way your life operates.

That's why we're studying this book and that's why we've been studying the life of Abraham because he is called the Father of all that believe, or the Father of all who have faith. He got that name because of what happened in Genesis 15 when he was a man of 86 and had not yet had a son or a daughter. About 11 years before, when he was a mere 75, God had promised him that he would have hordes of children, and here he was 86 and he still hadn't managed to produce one son. God said to him in Genesis 15:4, "And behold, the word of the Lord came to him, 'This man shall not be your heir; your own son shall be your heir.'" That is, a slave shall not be your heir but, "your own son shall be your heir." And he brought him outside and said, 'Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them.' Then he said to him, 'So shall your descendants be.' And he believed the Lord; and he reckoned it to him as righteousness." Then about 13 years later God confirmed that by the covenant of circumcision, the sign of circumcision and said, "Now, I am going to do that." That's when Abraham was called the Father of all those who believed, because he believed God.

Well then, why didn't God fulfill the promise? He gave him the promise that he'd have lots and lots of children when he was 75. He said it again to him when he was 86, and then he said it again to him when he was 99 and he still hasn't given him a son. Now, why did he keep on saying that repeatedly? It was because Abraham's faith was not yet in God, Abraham's faith was still partially in the world; he still had some hopes in his own ability to bring this about. Loved ones, God is only able to move mightily in your life when you have faith in him alone; when you give up all your

faith in your own methods, and your own manipulations, and your own hopes of helping him. That's why God did not yet give Abraham his son; because Abraham still had one weakness in his faith; he still had one area in his faith where he was depending on himself, even yet, and that was exposed in the study that we're pursuing tonight.

It's in Genesis 20:1, "From there Abraham journeyed towards the territory of the Negeb, and dwelt between Kadesh and Shur; and he sojourned in Gerar. And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, 'She is my sister.' And Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah." He did that 24 years earlier, you remember, and you think, "The dumb guy -- he knows, we've been through all that. Didn't he remember that he told that lie once before when he was afraid that somebody would destroy him for the wife that he had? Why do it all over again, why?" And of course we have to remember that it's just a few pages back for us in the Bible; it was 24 years back for Abraham. You may say, "Wasn't it a memorable event? Why didn't he remember it? Why didn't he remember that he committed that sin before -- that he failed to trust God that God would take care of them whatever? Why didn't he remember?" Because it wasn't a case of memory; it was a case of heart.

So with you and so with me; how often have you done the same thing over again? How often have you caught yourself, "Lord, you proved yourself to me in this situation before. Lord, I've done this before; I've made this mistake before." You do it, not because your memory isn't good -- because sin blinds your memory and blinds your mind -- but because there's something still in you of independence, that's why. So we need to be fair to our dear father here; he did it again not because he had a bad memory, but because there was still some independence in him. There was still some sense in which he didn't trust God utterly to take care of every situation. So it's good to see that; that this was not just bad memory, it wasn't just that Abraham had forgotten; it was that that side in him that was independent of God was still there, and so it is with you and me.

God is so gracious and patient with us; he works, and he works, and he works and he will not answer fully until he squeezes out of us all this little bit of faith in our own ability to tell the white lie and to manipulate the right person at the right time. Yet it's amazing that, even though God saw Abraham do this, God is not looking for an opportunity to kill us. It's amazing to think that when you or I do this kind of thing, God isn't looking for an opportunity, "Ah good -- I can smash him." God is so kind, he's still always working and will always work until the end of this life, to bring us back into line, and you see that in the next verses.

Verse 3, "But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, 'Behold, you are a dead man, because of the woman whom you have taken; for she is a man's wife.' Now, Abimelech had not approached her; so he said, 'Lord, wilt thou slay an innocent people? Did he not himself say to me, 'She is my sister'? And she herself said, 'He is my brother.' In the integrity of my heart and the innocence of my hands I have done this.'" And not only does God act upon Abimelech to prevent a disaster taking place, but Abimelech prays to God, in a sense, in the same way that Abraham prayed to him in the previous chapter. You see in verse 4, "Now Abimelech had not approached her; so he said, 'Lord, wilt thou slay an innocent people?'" And it's almost the same thing as Abraham prayed for Sodom. He prayed, "Lord, will you slay the innocent with the righteous?" He appealed to God's nature.

Loved ones do that in your prayers. You remember when Cho, the Pastor of that huge church in Korea, said there were three things that you needed in order to pray prevailing prayer: a definite objective; have a burning desire for it; and then pray to assurance that God wants you to have it. It's that, that applies to God's nature. When you're praying to God for something, look at his

nature and plead his own nature before him, “Lord, will you destroy an innocent man? I did this in innocence; I did this in open innocence. I didn’t intend this. I did it with clean hands and I have not at all violated Sarah.” It is always right to approach God on behalf of his own nature, “Lord, this is not your nature to do this.”

There is that verse – it’s 1 John 5:16, “If any one sees his brother committing what is not a mortal sin, he will ask, and God will give him life for those whose sin is not mortal. There is sin which is mortal; I do not say that one is to pray for that. All wrongdoing is sin, but there is sin which is not mortal.” That is, sin that is a mistake, or unintentional, sin that is not a premeditated thing. There is a sin which is not mortal and this was the sin that Abimelech was committing and God forgave him for it immediately. And so there is in us; there is an unintentional sin which immediately we think of, we realize it, and we confess it to God and he immediately forgives us. God is gracious to us even in the midst of that apparent sin because look in verse 6, “Then God said to him in the dream, ‘Yes, I know that you have done this in the integrity of your heart, and it was I who kept you from sinning against me; therefore I did not let you touch her.’” God was gracious not only to Abimelech, but very gracious to Abraham. So it’s good for us to remember that. There’s no reason for us to be lax and there’s no excuse for us being easy going with God, but the Father is infinite in mercy and he will work all the time to prevent us from entering into a disastrous situation.

Now loved ones, sometimes even he cannot prevent us because we are so intent on destroying ourselves, so that at times, even God cannot prevent us. But he’s so good, he’s not looking for an opportunity to kill us, he’s always looking for an opportunity to work things around again, to bring things around. That’s why in the body here God has given us that nature when a brother or sister makes a mistake, or makes an error; our desire is always to put out our arms and bring them close to us and to say, “Let’s have another go at it. Let’s have another shot at it.” It is the same way that God treats us, loved ones; he does not deal with us according to our sins, nor reward us according to our inequities; he does not deal with us according to our mistakes, or award us according to our errors. As far as the east is from the west so far is he always removing our transgressions from us. So God is gracious, even in the face of apparent sin by either Abimelech or Abraham.

Then you see in verse 7 he still feels, “Well now Abimelech, you have had more light than you pretend to because I know you do not have the same moral standards as I will eventually reveal in my Ten Commandments. I know I haven’t shown these in tablets of stone, but I have written these in your conscience and I still do know that you knew better than to do what you are doing, so I still require you to ask this man Abraham, who is a prophet, to pray for you and to intercede for you.” So in verse 7, “Now then restore the man’s wife; for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you, and you shall live. But if you do not restore her, know that you shall surely die, you, and all that are yours.” And of course the amazing thing to us is that God still regarded Abraham as a prophet.

Loved ones, there’s a verse that I think is meant to give us all encouragement and reassurance in Romans 11:29. It explains part of God’s incredible graciousness to Abraham who, after all, had caused the trouble, “For the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable.” You may remember in those days when we were dealing with Chapter 11 we said that about the Jewish people, “For the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable.” God has given you certain gifts and he has a certain thing in this world for you to do and those are irrevocable. You can miss it by determining to do what you want in this world, but the call of God will always be there for you. The place that he has for you

in this world, the job that he has for you to do in this world for him, that will always be available. It will always be there. He will always be trying to draw you to it. He will always give those gifts to you that you need for that. Now you may say, "That's pretty dangerous." I think it is -- but I think you'll see the sense of it.

I used to think that God would withdraw any gifts that he gave to me for what he has for me to do if I was unfaithful to him. That was a two edged kind of belief you can see, because in one way you thought it guarded all of us from deception. But in another way it kind of gives us a false sense of safety because we think that while our ministry is apparently being fruitful, then we must be alright. And then of course, you come up against some of the examples that we know of, evangelists who were actually practicing alcoholics and God was blessing their ministry, and souls were saved under them. Loved ones, the truth is the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable and that gives us one great reassurance that you and I need never be uncertain as to whether we'll be able to make our way through this world over the years.

There is a place for us in this world, that's why God sent us, and it's always available to us, and we will always have the gifts to do that job. The other side of that is, the fact that you do the job is no proof one way or the other of your relationship with God. That's a separate thing that is connected with your responsiveness and your obedience to Jesus. But that's part of why God kept on talking about Abraham as a prophet even when Abraham was behaving, as we would think, sillier than any school boy, and more irresponsible than a brand new child of God. There is a sense loved ones, in which your gifts and your call are irrevocable.

Now look again at the great protection that God surrounds us with in verse 8, "So Abimelech rose early in the morning, and called all his servants, and told them all these things; and the men were very much afraid. Then Abimelech called Abraham, and said to him, 'What have you done to us? And how have I sinned against you, that you have brought on me and my kingdom a great sin? You have done to me things that ought not to be done.' And Abimelech said to Abraham, 'What were you thinking of, that you did this thing?'"

It's unbelievable isn't it? Abimelech was a pagan king, you'd have thought he'd have torn into Abraham and sliced him apart for bringing him into such a threatened situation with regard to the Creator of the universe. Isn't it amazing that God used a pagan king and controlled a pagan king in such a way that Abraham's life did not get off course even when Abraham himself made the error of committing the sin? So it is with you; God is not able only to control the Christians in your life, and there is a precious verse that speaks to this in Proverbs 21:1, "The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the Lord; he turns it wherever he will." It's like you're turning on the faucet and you let the water run down into your hand and the Lord turns the water whatever way he will. That's what the king's heart is like, that's what your boss's heart is like, and that's what all the people who impinge upon your life are like. Everybody; the king's heart, the president's heart, the boss' heart, the father's heart, the husband's heart, the wife's heart is like a stream of water in the hand of the Lord; he turns it wherever he will.

He is able, not to force them into heaven, or force them to avoid hell, but he is able by myriad permutations that he is able to operate in their lives to prevent them harming you or preventing God from having his way in your life. It's amazing; God is able to do that, and yet he will only do it up to the point where he is forced to force your free will and then he refuses. He will not touch your free will, but he is able, in a gracious way, to work even on the non-Christians in your life and that's why there's no excuse. There's no excuse and no reason for us to say, "Oh, if you were

in my job, or if you were in my company, or in my firm, you couldn't trust God for them. They don't care about God, they swear at him day-after-day." It doesn't matter; if God was able to so govern Abimelech so that he responded in this way, God is certainly able to control the forces that impinge on your life. That's where we make the error; Satan creeps in behind us and says, "Yeah, God couldn't do anything with that -- he couldn't -- that creature isn't even human. God couldn't do anything." God can. God is able. God is even, at this very moment, doing it and he's praying that you will believe so that the power of it can begin to be realized in your life.

Now let's look at this miserable Abraham and see what he was doing in Genesis 20:11. You remember, Abimelech says, "What were you thinking of, that you did this thing?" The Hebrew says, "What had you in your eye when you were doing this? What had you in mind when you were doing this." "Abraham said, 'I did it because I thought, There is no fear of God at all in this place, and they will kill me because of my wife.'" And it's interesting that, from our viewpoint, we know that of course there was fear of God in this place. In verse 6, "Then God said to him in the dream, 'Yes, I know that you have done this in the integrity of your heart, and it was I who kept you from sinning against me; therefore I did not let you touch her.'" There was fear of God in the place.

So often our faith disappears because we think something is that isn't and we think, "Ah, nobody fears God in this place. There's no way in which God can work." There is a thousand ways that you and I can't see; faith demands that we disregard the evidence, which is very limited, of our senses, our sight, and our hearing. There was fear of God in the place. And then you see what Abraham says, "I did it because I thought, There is no fear of God at all in this place, and they will kill me because of my wife." This is a godless place, and yet Lot was saved in the midst of a more godless place and Abraham knew that.

You remember, back in Chapter in 19:27, "And Abraham went early in the morning to the place where he had stood before the Lord; and he looked down toward Sodom and Gomorrah and toward all the land of the valley, and beheld, and lo, the smoke of the land went up like the smoke of a furnace." And yet he knew that Lot had been saved in that godless place that had been destroyed. But so often you and I get so involved in our particular little context that we say, "Yes, but ours is different; our situation is different to that place that George Mueller was in, or that Hudson Taylor was in, or that that person that testified in church was in. Our place is different." It's not. It's not. It's just that we are letting that so preoccupy us rather than what God has for us to do that we're overwhelmed with the pressure of the environment. But no it's not loved ones, it's no different.

And then you see what he [Abraham] says, "Because they will kill me because of my wife." It's incredible how he threw everything over, isn't it? He actually feared that they would kill him. How on earth he thought God was going to give him a son if he was dead, you don't know! But, that's what we do; we let the situation get so in upon us, we get so preoccupied with it, that all the promises of God, all the plans God has, all the previous times he's spoken to us go out the window and in our frenzy we forget all that God said to us. That's why so often the Israelites used to say, "Remember what the Lord thy God hath done for thee. Remember what he has spoken to you. Remember what he has done for you. Remember what he has promised for you. Remember what he has called you to do."

Loved ones, hold on to all the context of your life; all that God has promised you, all that he's shown you that he wants to do with you. Hold onto that so that when you come into these situations you do not forget all that. Otherwise, Abraham couldn't for a moment have said, "They will kill me because of my wife." If they had then God's promise would have been broken. But it's so easy to

get preoccupied with what's happening to little me, instead of what is happening to God's promise and his plans. The moment you remember that, that moment you know this could not happen to you. Let's look at Genesis 20:12, "Besides she is indeed my sister, the daughter of my father but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife." You almost feel sorry for the guy!

[Winston] Churchill once called someone a liar in the House of Commons and someone got up and opposed it and opposed the unparliamentary language that Mr. Churchill was using. So he said, "Well, I think the honorable member was guilty of a technological inexactitude." And it seems that this is what Abraham is trying to say, "This is a technological inexactitude." It is -- he's being very technological about it but it still is an inexactitude; it's giving the wrong impression. And we so often get into a tight spot, and know that a "technological inexactitude" will take care of it and save embarrassment. It also, at the same time, puts an effective umbrella up so that we get none of the blessings of rain from heaven. It cuts us off from God's blessing. It's us putting up our own shields so that God does not need to defend us, so he has to leave us to ourselves.

Loved ones, it was technically true that she was his sister; but really she was his wife and that was the relevant issue; that she was his wife and he should not put her in any position of being violated by another man. And so it is with us when we get into these situations. No -- don't yield. Don't give into a dishonest little lie that will take care of the situation. Don't get involved in sophistry, or pretense, or giving the wrong impression even though strictly speaking you could kind of defend it. Get out into the open with God. Rather, be rather misunderstood in being absolutely honest, than being partially misunderstood by being half honest. Rather, let them misunderstand you, let them think you're more depending on God than even you are, rather than to go in the other direction. Do not show fear at all. Don't step back, go straight on forward knowing that Jesus is in you and he is going to make a way through the impenetrable obstacles that oppose you. But don't sink to the lie, don't sink to the half-truth, keep moving forward, keep going on, keep believing God.

In other words, there's no place for fear, that's what governed Abraham. He said, "I did it because I thought there is no fear of God at all in this place and they will kill me because of my wife." You look forward to this coming week and say, "The boss is going to get me for that." Or "The car just won't make it through the week. It won't." Or "Oh, that tire, I know it's going to go flat." Or "That roommate of mine, I know we won't be able to make it through the quarter." You fill yourself with fears and they're not just fears -- they're actually beliefs, because Satan is trying to bring all those things about and those are beliefs in Satan and lo and behold they come true because it is unto you according to your faith. The thing you fear most is the very thing that happens because by fear you link yourself up with the powers of evil and darkness and that's exactly what Abraham did; he linked himself up with those fears and those powers.

Don't. Have faith that God will see you through. Look at verse 13, "And when God caused me to wander from my father's house, I said to her, 'This is the kindness you must do me: at every place to which we come, say of me, He is my brother.'" And if you saw the Hebrew, it's Abraham playing a kind of man-pleaser, because the word translated "God" there actually shouldn't have a capital G, "Elohim" plural of the word God, it means gods. But when it is preceded by an article "ha-elohim" it means God in the singular; the one true God. Now in this sentence it has actually no article and so Abraham says, "And when the gods caused me to wander from my father's house," in trying to accommodate himself to the other people. Don't do it loved ones, it's good to avoid hyper-religious language with office people who don't understand, it's good to be sensible there, but it's always wrong to do it because of fear. It's always wrong to deny your Lord just to please the other

people, don't do that. That's not full faith, its fear and of course, that's what Abraham got into.

"And when God caused me to wander from my father's house, I said to her, 'This is the kindness you must do me: at every place to which we come, say of me, He is my brother.'"

The International Version says, "This is how you must show your love to me, at every place to which we come say of me, 'He is my brother.'" And that's not the way you ask your wife to show her love to you, or your friend; to "Defend me even if it means you get into danger." That's not the way to ask a person to show their love to you, but that's what Abraham said. It's not full faith, but it's the old manipulation system. And you remember what's mentioned in Psalm 7:8, "The Lord judges the peoples; judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousness and according to the integrity that is in me."

There is some power of faith that springs up in your heart when you know you're going before God with absolute honesty. There is a faith that rises strong within you when you know you're absolutely honest and straight, when you're not pretending, and when you know, "Lord, I call you to witness I have trusted you right through the deepest valley here. I have not tried to help myself or manipulate the situation by my own clever lies or my own clever ideas. I am absolutely honest with you." There's a power of faith that rises in your heart. Now, Abraham did not yet have that. He was still the old manipulator; still trying to help God, still thinking, "Now, if I'm going to have a child by this old wife of mine I better defend her and defend myself, but especially myself; I better defend myself. And okay, so she may be violated a little but who knows maybe the son will come that way—who knows-- but at least I'll still be alive."

Don't get into that loved ones, forget yourself and believe God right up to the very gates of hell. You remember, what John Bunyan said when they were persecuting him and someone said, "What if they take you and string you up on the scaffold?" He said, "I will leap into darkness by blind faith come heaven come hell." And that's it; by blind faith in Jesus whether heaven is around the corner or hell is around the corner. I leap forward by faith in Jesus, but I will not let my faith in Jesus shake for a moment. Keep going right up to the very end -- till your nose is bumping up against the door. That's why I mention to you about Susan [Gardin] who had cancer; often God allows a thing to come right to the last call, doesn't he, and we've seen that. And too often, as we get to the end, the nerve begins to go and we begin to back off. Don't; go right on through, that's what God asks us to do; to go right on through in absolute confidence.

Then you see how it continues in Genesis 20:14, "Then Abimelech took sheep and oxen, and male and female slaves, and gave them to Abraham, and restored Sarah his wife to him. And Abimelech said, 'Behold, my land is before you; dwell where it pleases you.' To Sarah he said, 'Behold, I have given your brother a thousand pieces of silver; it is your vindication in the eyes of all who are with you; and before every one you are righted.'" So that everyone will know that I did not take advantage of you. "Then Abraham prayed to God; and God healed Abimelech, and also healed his wife and female slaves so that they bore children. For the Lord had closed all the wombs of the house of Abimelech because of Sarah, Abraham's wife."

So God has you hedged around, so he has. He has you hedged around even with the Abimelech's in your life. He has you hedged around with protection, and until the very end of this life your dear Father is after only one thing; bringing you into a trusting confidence in him so that together you can turn part of the world around and bring it into the order that he has for it.

Loved ones, when Jesus said, "Did you not know I would be in my Father's house or about my Father's

business,” you remember the Greek runs, “Did you not know I would be at home in my Father’s things.” We are meant to be at home in this world. This world, reordered by God, is meant to be our home that works for us. By faith in Jesus it will work for you. There is a new world that works for you, it is the world that has been crucified and resurrected in Christ and it is manifested each time you exercise faith in that.

So do you see something coming up this week that you fear? Immediately thank God, “Lord, I thank you that you’ve allowed that giant to arise because you’ve already slain it. Thank you Father, I’m going to sleep well tonight.” And then maintain your heart attitude throughout this week -- especially in the moment when you face the actual situation -- and you’ll see the Father has it like a stream of water in his hands and he’ll turn it around. Because even though other people and Satan and the world intend it for your harm, God intends it for your good and will make it so. Let us pray.

Dear Father, we thank you that there is not a thing that we need to fear. There is nothing in our business, or our home lives, or our school, or our assignments that we need to be afraid of, nothing that we need to worry about. Thank you that you said, “In nothing be anxious. Do not be anxious about anything. Rejoice and again I say rejoice. Let your forbearance be known to all men the Lord is at hand. Do not be anxious about anything but in everything by prayer and supplication let your request be made known to God.”

Father, we thank you that we can simply see that all these things have been foreseen by you, have already been dealt with, and we can walk forward into them and see them absolutely changed. We can tackle them with as much peace as David tackled Goliath knowing that the giant is already fallen, in Christ, and we have only the joy and the delight of cooperating with our Father in manifesting that miracle here in time and space. Father, thank you; we look forward to this week Lord, even the things that people call unpleasant. We look forward to the things that we have tended to say are the bad things. Lord, they’re all good things because you have already dealt with them all and they’re intended for our good, so we receive them that way; to exercise our faith and to strengthen it so that we may pass up through the lower and the upper air at the end of this life with no fear and into your presence and home at last. Thank you Lord.

The grace of our Lord Jesus, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with each one of us now and always.