

God's Covenant With Abraham

Genesis 11

Sermon Transcript by Rev. Ernest O'Neill

Loved ones I did promise that I'd give an opportunity for any questions in the light of last Sunday evening's sharing, so are there any questions?

[Inaudible question from the audience]

I don't believe that that is right as far as God's ideal will is concerned. If you look, loved ones, at Genesis 10:1, it is interesting to see "These are the generations of the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham and Japheth; sons who were born to them after the flood." Then the list is given of the descendants of the different sons of Noah right up to the very end of the chapter, you remember. Then in verse 32 of Genesis 10, you read, "These are the families of the sons of Noah according to their genealogies and their nations; and from these the nations spread abroad on the earth after the flood." It does seem that the nations were undoubtedly God's ideal will and were not the result of the Tower of Babel. They were created by God and with various differences in the calculations, people seem to feel there are about 70 original nations there.

But it seems, Ted, [who asked the question] that the nations were not the problem but the next chapter, Chapter 11 was the problem. It was when the nations began to gather together in order to take over God's universe. That's when God said in Genesis 11:6, "And the Lord said, 'Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language; and this is only the beginning of what they will do; and nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. Come, let us go down, and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.'"

So it seems that even those 70 nations had the same language back then, but when they began to determine to take over the universe itself and to do whatever they wanted, then in verse 8, "So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth; and from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth." And it was that scattering that was God's response to their pride that was in the nations.

So it seems to me that the original plan of God was that there would be a diversity of nations but that there would be a great oneness and unity among us. But then as we began to turn that unity against him in our pride, he had to come down and scatter the nations. Then, Ted, it seems to me it's the combination of the pride that we have developed inside ourselves with the result of God's condemnation of us and the result of him...do you remember in Romans...giving us up to what we wanted to do, that that has brought about the war among nations. And that actually, that war is part of God's vital sign to us; "this is not the way it was meant to be."

So it seems to me rather than that the wars between the nations were God's original ideal plan for us, it's rather the second best or the futility to which he has committed the creation in order to bring home to us "All this, whether it's the United Nations or League of Nations, this is not the kind of unity that I planned for you." Do you want to push me on that?

[Question from Ted—inaudible]

Answer:

You can see what fun it is to be in one of Ted's classes!

Well loved ones, we're coming tonight to the end of the beginning of the Old Testament. That's really what it is if you look at Genesis 11:9 -10; it's really the end of the beginning. See the way it runs, Genesis 11:09, "Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth; and from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth." Then this historic statement, "These are the descendants of Shem. When Shem was a hundred years old, he became the father of Arpachshad two years after the flood." Shem, of course, of the Shemites...the Semites, the Jews and they end up in that vital verse in verse 26, "When Terah had lived seventy years, he became the father of Abram."

That is a watershed in history; where God turns from the nations as a whole and turns to this little nation of Israel. Now it might be good to remind you where this all started. A good place to begin might be to point out the incredible pervasive presence of computers today. It is unbelievable, isn't it? Even I who love gadgets have held back from what seems to be a frenetic frenzied rush to get a computer. You just have to have a computer. Even though the majority of them are used to play TV games, yet you must have a computer. I asked my wife, "What are we all going to compute?"

Of course, it isn't just computing. The idea is that it stores knowledge. It is amazing, isn't it that we think if we can only, with these computers, control all the knowledge that we're accumulating, we'll be able -- to what? Well, we'll be able to search out the people whose tires are wearing out on their cars and we'll be able to send them information that we have this deal on tires. We'll be able to compute all the babies that are going to be born and will need Pampers and what areas of the country they'll need those Pampers in. We'll be able to calculate where the Russians will be in the Space Age, and above everything else, we'll be able to control life. We'll be able to make it work for us. We'll be able to get ourselves into an invincible position, where we'll be secure. It is amazing, isn't it?

I mean, way at the back of it all, that's really what we're all hoping. We believe and we say it even, that knowledge is power and if you can manipulate and manage that knowledge, you'll be able to control the earth. That really was where it all started back in Genesis. God said, "Look, just walk with me day by day." Loved ones, He says to us again this evening, "I know you, my son. I know you, my daughter. I know your name. I have actually even computed the hairs on your head. I have planted you here carefully. I have a life plan for you. Now, walk with me day by day. Pray to me, talk with me and I'll guide you through your life. I'll show you what to do and when to do it." That's what he said to our dear forefather, Adam. You remember, Adam said, "No, I think that I can manage this myself without your help. I can be independent of you if I only have enough knowledge of good and evil."

So you remember, Adam and Eve ate of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Presumably what they really did, it's presented to them and to us in the form of a tree, but presumably what they did was do more or less what you and I do; we try to master the world by our knowledge. And you know that brings perversions into your own life. I'm sure you've been like me where you felt, "If I could only manage this person and get them to do this, then this part of my life would turn out alright." Or "I know this about this person and I know that about that person. If I can just tell that person

this thing about this other person, and tell this person this little bit about the other person, then I can manipulate them and I can work it round."

We keep on thinking, as we get further on, "Well, if I only knew what was going to happen to that company, then I would know what to do with these stocks and shares." And it's amazing when you begin to depend on your knowledge, how you begin to become perverted even in your own personality. I don't know how many of you think that you have one up on somebody else because you have just a subtler brain or a cleverer brain, and you think you can manage something that they can't do. It's amazing, the pressure it begins to bring upon you isn't it?

I don't know how much pride you find yourselves with, but it's easy to get proud, isn't it? It's easy to think, "Yes, yes, but I know a subtle little something that they don't know. I have a subtle little insight into life that they don't have." We all have a temptation to think we're just one little step up on somebody else or even on everybody else. It begins to pervert us and begins to make us like Jacob. You remember Jacob was such a manipulator; he was always manipulating circumstances. He was always manipulating people. He couldn't look a person straight in the face because he was always thinking, "How am I going to use that person?" It's very easy to find yourself doing that kind of thing in regard to knowledge.

That's of course what happened to Adam and Eve right back there; the moment they began to work that way, God knew they had immediately torn apart the personality that he had given them. Can you see it a wee bit, loved ones? If you compare a little 6-year-old child with a shrewd, cynical, old 50, 60-year-old who has bargained his way back and forward up the corporate ladder. You can tell the difference first by the wrinkles in the face. But then, isn't it true, they're two little minds? They're both equally small, really, but they work differently. One little mind works like a little lamb, a little innocent, a little gentle thing, very trusting. The other mind wouldn't trust his grandmother! It's shrewd, clever and it's working about half a dozen different angles. There is just a vast difference, isn't there, between the two?

You can see what began to happen back there in the Garden of Eden; they began to be twisted, they began to be deceptive, they began to be manipulating and managing, not the innocent, trusting, little people that God had made them at the beginning. God saw that something had to be done right there and then. Actually, he did it right there and then -- that's important for us maybe just to notice again because it happened immediately after Adam and Eve had made their choice.

Back in Genesis 3: 12 if you look at it, "The man said, 'The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.' Then the Lord God said to the woman, 'What is this that you have done?' The woman said, 'The serpent beguiled me, and I ate.'" Then immediately after that you see, "The Lord God said to the serpent, 'Because you have done this, cursed are you above all cattle, and above all wild animals; upon your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise your head' the seed of the woman, 'he shall bruise your head' because the serpent was Satan -- the seed of the woman shall bruise your head, Satan, 'and you shall bruise his heel.'"

Right there God planted the answer: Jesus, of course, was the seed of the woman that would bruise Satan's head, even though Satan would bruise Jesus' heel and Jesus would die in destroying Satan. But loved ones, it was back then that God immediately worked the change and we need to see that. We need to see that it was right back then that God saw the little child that he had made in Adam, the little trusting simple being that trusted God openly and saw the monster that he had become in Adam

and Eve where they started to lie right back then. At that moment, God took that monster and put it into his son Jesus, right back then, and destroyed it, and made it new, and made it a little child again.

It's vital to see that because the Old Testament makes no sense if you don't see that God did not require waiting to 29 AD to destroy us all in Jesus and raise us up new. He saw that way back then, that's what that verse in Revelations means, loved ones. Those of you who haven't seen it will be interested in it and those of you who have seen it; it's so good to read the Good News again that you won't be bored I think.

It's Revelation 13:8, "and all who dwell on earth will worship it, every one whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that was slain." Now, even in that format you can see that the implication is that the name was written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that was slain. So even there the truth comes through. But the fact is that the adverbial phrase "before the foundation of the world" does not actually occur in that position in the Greek; it occurs after the verb "slain" so in the Greek the verse runs, "every one whose name has not been written in the book of life of the Lamb that was slain before the foundation of the world." That's when Jesus was slain, and that's when you and I were placed in him.

If you would like another verse because you don't like, maybe, to lean on one verse, look at 1 Peter 1:20. It follows that famous verse that we were saved with the precious blood of Jesus like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. Starting at 1 Peter 1:19, "but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. He was destined before the foundation of the world but was made manifest at the end of the times for your sake" so that all was done in Jesus from before the foundation of the world. He was manifested at the ends of the times for our sake, but loved ones, that was all done back then. Then here's what God did; he raised us all up, including Adam and all his descendants, to his right-hand in Jesus. He then began to give to men the things that they had there, in that position. Now, what are those things? Well, look at Ephesians and you'll see some of the things that we were given immediately when we were raised up there. Ephesians 2:1, "And you he made alive, when you were dead through the trespasses and sins in which you once walked." Then you look down to verse 6, "and raised us up with him, and made us sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus."

Now, what had we up in that position? You can see it if you go back one chapter to Ephesians 1:20, "which he accomplished in Christ when he raised him from the dead and made him sit at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come; and he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all."

God began to give some of that to the descendants of Adam. He gave them freedom. Immediately after the Garden of Eden experience he gave them the freedom that he had actually made available to them in Jesus. You remember what they did -- they used the freedom to destroy each other. They took the freedom that God gave them and they destroyed each other to the point where the whole earth was filled with violence. All flesh became so corrupt that God had to destroy it with a flood. Then after the flood, you remember he gave to Noah's descendants the other attribute that they had there at the right hand of God; authority, because Jesus was given authority; he [God] put all things

under his feet, and God gave to Noah authority. You remember that he gave civil authority to him; the power of the sword.

Of course Noah and his descendants, because they would have nothing of the rest of what was in Christ, they used that authority to oppress each other, to build the Tower of Babel and to raise themselves up and even against God, and to begin to take over the whole universe. You see what they were they doing? They were taking something of what God had given us in Christ, but they understood nothing of the change of their natures that had actually taken place in Jesus' death, because only a few of them sensed what had actually occurred.

So that was the situation that God was faced with. Here was a mass of people whom he had renewed completely in his son Jesus, but they knew nothing of the inside working that he had wrought in Christ in their own natures. So they were actually taking those precious pearls and they were using them to destroy themselves with it. So God turned finally from them and he decided he would turn to one little nation and he would painstakingly reveal to that little nation what he had given them in Christ. And that's why this is such a crucial moment in history: he turns from the nations as a whole because they haven't understood the salvation that he has worked for them in his son, and he turns to this little group of the Jews and he begins to educate them, he begins to show them what he had done for them in Christ.

Loved ones, the whole history of the Jewish nation is the history of God unfolding what he has done in Jesus. But if you don't see it that way, the Old Testament becomes just meaningless to you. If you see it as the gradual unfolding of the New Testament covenant that had originally taken place in Christ, then it begins to make sense. For instance, it's obvious that even though God turned to Abraham, yet Abraham was not the first one that had faith. If you look at Hebrews 11 you'll see there were other men that had faith besides Abraham and before Abraham. If you say to me, "Do you mean they knew Jesus' name?" There are some things that make you think they did, but you can't tell. I suppose that isn't important, whether they knew his name or not, but they obviously sensed that some mighty work had been done in someone that was in God's own heart that enabled them to be changed. They knew that this power that they felt that overcame the selfishness in them came from some mighty act that God had done.

So you get them there in Hebrews 11:4, "By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he received approval as righteous, God bearing witness by accepting his gifts; he died, but through his faith, he is still speaking." You remember Abel actually offered blood sacrifice and obviously he believed there was some mighty sacrifice that had taken place from before the foundation of the world. So Abel was a man of faith. Then verse 5 "By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death." In other words, Enoch lived the resurrection life, just as Jesus resurrection life burst through him in the moment of transfiguration and transformed his physical body from a temporal one into, for a moment, an eternal one. So the same thing happened for Enoch because he didn't die "and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he was taken, he was attested as having pleased God."

The only way a man could do that would be if he had accepted the change that God wrought in him in Jesus. "And without faith, it is impossible to please him. For whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him. By faith, Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, took heed and constructed an ark for the saving of his household; by this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness which comes by faith." So even Noah knew in some sense that he was made righteous and holy by what God had done to him by some

mighty miracle. So then there was Abel, there was Noah, and there was Enoch -- Abraham was not the only man who had faith and yet God chose Abraham. God chose Abraham not because he was the first one that had faith in what God had wrought in Jesus, but he chose him freely, just of his own freewill.

Love ones, that's the position with all of us in this life. I suppose it speaks especially to the men, because I think we men often want to achieve something in this life. But I think possibly to you ladies too, because I think many of you wonder, "What am I going to do with my life? Am I going to get married? Am I going to have children? Am I going to achieve something worthwhile in this life?" Loved ones, it's actually an irrelevant question, it really is -- our place is to have faith like Abraham. We're to have faith in the fact that Jesus has transformed us completely and then God may choose us freely to do something like Abraham or he may actually choose us to do nothing -- but that is the great freedom we are in -- you need to grab hold of it. Especially those of us who have began to wear ourselves out trying to achieve something, trying to be something or trying to think, "Oh but my life has to account for something." That's for God to decide; all we have to do is to have faith, but it's God that chooses the Abrahams. It's God that chooses the Noah's. It's God that chooses what we are to do in this life. Abraham was not chosen because he had more faith than all the others. He was just one man who had faith and God decided he would use him to beget, among others, the Jewish nation, among whom Jesus, God's son, would be born.

Now, it's the same with us. God may well choose you to die tomorrow. The world may look at you and say, "What had he achieved with his life -- nothing." But that's what God had for you to do. In heaven he is utterly glorified, absolutely delighted and pleased with what has happened in your life, because our place is to have faith; it's God's place to choose what we will do. He chooses, actually, out of sheer grace. That's why he chose the Jewish nation -- he chose them out of sheer grace and you can see it there in Deuteronomy 7:7, "It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set his love upon you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples." There is no place in the Old Testament where there is a suggestion that the Jews are chosen to be the nation that will dominate the world or that were chosen because they were a good people. Every indication in the Old Testament is that they were chosen just out of God's sheer grace; he just chose them to be the people to whom he would explain and prepare the way for a son to come here to earth.

It's the same with you and me. I don't know how many of you look at some great artist or some great singer; or some great speaker and think, "Oh, we hope that we will be like that." Loved ones, it's not our place to choose that. We are to use our freewill to either believe what God says is reality -- that he has transformed us in his son Jesus and he has worked out all the selfishness and has created us completely new and able to live above sin -- we choose to believe that or not to believe it. Then after that God decides, out of sheer grace and sheer freedom of will, what he will do with us, and it takes a great burden off us, it really does.

So with all our striving and with all our training to be somebody great or to be somebody important or to be somebody successful, it will come to nothing, because God is the one that chooses what we do in this life. That's why that verse in Ecclesiastes is so good. It says there is nothing more for us to do than enjoy with all our hearts the toil that God has given us to do under the sun. We're to enjoy it. We're to eat, to drink, to enjoy our food and to enjoy what God has given us with all our hearts. We're to rejoice in him and not to burden ourselves with, "Am I going to be the father of the Jews or am I not?" Think how silly it would have been if Abraham had been all concerned about that. God just chose him -- he could have chosen anybody. In fact he does it

purposely; he chooses the things that have no right to be chosen at all, that have no value or worth in them at all.

I don't know how many of you are concerned about those things, but it came home to me so strongly in my own life because, for a number of years, I did try. I tried so hard to do it well, to be something and to achieve something. I tried far harder in those old days than I try today. Then, God just decides, that's it, he just decides. It has nothing to do with our own worth or our own value -- it's nothing to do with your value or your worth. It's just, God decides; he takes a guy or a girl and he does something with them. The world says, "Oh, wonderful...wonderful...wonderful," and claps their hands and it's not their doing at all. It's just that God has decided, "I'm going to do a work here and I'm going to take them to myself." At the end, it will be as if they had never been. It will just take place and it will be as if they've never been. But during the time, people will have come into the kingdom. But loved ones, that's the way it is with our lives, so rest and relax in what God has made you. See that if you are nothing and if you are worthless, if people think of you as weak and hopeless, you're somebody that God might be able to use because that's the kind of person he chooses.

Why does he do it? You can see in 1 Corinthians 1:27. This is really why he chose a people as poor as the Jewish people and a person as unremarkable as Abraham was. 1 Corinthians 1:27 "but God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise, God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong, God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are." Why – "so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom, our righteousness and sanctification and redemption; therefore as it is written, 'Let him who boasts, boast of the Lord.'" That's why he does it; he chooses the things that are not, so that the glory will go only to him. We need to see that; to know in our own operation here, and in our own body [church]. It is good to be half sensible and it is good to be normal, but it is important to be willing to be thought a fool or to be thought nothing or to be thought worthless, because God has promised that he will use those kinds of people.

Those of you who ever think of going abroad, never get into the syndrome of thinking that you have to be worthy to go abroad or you have to have some special talent or some special ability. If you have, God probably won't be able to use you much. But if you have nothing, if you're weak, poor, useless and hopeless and if you're kind of a nothing, God may be able to use you abroad. So you need to think that way. Don't think, "Am I talented enough for God to use me? Have I enough education for him to use me? Am I bright enough in my personality for him to use me?" No, but think "Am I poor enough? Am I worth so little? Have I such a low estimate of what I am able to do for God?" If you're like that, maybe God will be able to use you because he'll be able to use you and yet bring glory to himself.

That's why he chose the nation of Israel. It is true that the nation of Israel received certain privileges because of that and Paul outlines those in Romans 9:4-5, "They are Israelites, and to them belong the sonship, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises; to them belong the patriarchs, and of their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ. God who is over all be blessed, forever. Amen." So you might say, "Oh, well, they got extra things. I mean, he chose them, but he gave them extra things." Yes, but then he gave them incredible responsibilities, loved ones and you see some of them in Hosea Chapter 8:1-3, "Set the trumpet to your lips, for a vulture is over the house of the Lord, because they have broken my covenant, and transgressed my law." You see, some of the Israelites would have cried out and said,

"Oh, but Lord, we're your chosen people." Verse 2 "To me they cry, 'My God, we Israel know Thee.'" But God said, "Israel has burned the good; the enemy shall pursue him." So even though Israel has special privileges, they had heavy judgments upon them because they rejected the privileges that God had given them.

So in a way, God chooses Abraham and chooses the Israelites, not for salvation but simply as the people among whom his son would be born. Meanwhile, loved ones, he does not turn from the nations completely; he simply begins to concentrate on the nation of Israel. But you remember, to the nations generally he continues to give the testimony of nature -- all the nations are able to see the world and to see God's part displayed there. So whether they are Malachite's or Moabites, whether they be Jebusites or whether they be Hittites, they still continue to hear from God.

So it's not fair to say God turned his back on everybody else and turned to Israel. No. He began to concentrate on Israel to prepare them, but he continues to give his revelation to the nations, to those other 69 or so nations. They continued to see the stars in the sky, and continued to see the sun rising each day. It's mentioned in Romans 1:19 that they continued to have the natural revelation that God had planted in the universe, enough, really, for them to come to him if they wanted to. Romans 1:19, "For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. Ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse." They can see the design in the universe. They can see the size and magnitude of the universe. Then in verse 21, "for although they knew God they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking and their senseless minds were darkened." So even though they knew that, yet they turned against it.

God also gave them the testimony of conscience in Romans 2:14-15, "When Gentiles who have not the law do by nature what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that what the law requires is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness and their conflicting thoughts accuse or perhaps excuse them on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus." So God continued to reveal himself in the consciences of the heathen nations. Then you remember he did give them people like Socrates and Plato and others; he did continue to give wisdom to them. If you read Plato's Republic, you'll realize how close, even a heathen philosopher was able to get. You remember he talked about the one true good, and the one true good that he described was certainly very close to the God that we know.

So the Father did continue to give to the heathen nations revelations of himself in human government. He continued to give human government to them so that they would sense that there was a right and a wrong. He continued, in some way, to guide the history of the nations. You remember how he says he used Pharaoh or how he used Cyrus; so he continued to guide the history of the nations so that in some sense they continued to sense that there was a God. Then in way God turned from the nations and concentrated on Israel, but in a way he kept his revelation coming to all men.

There's no doubt when you turn to the covenant with Abraham that you get a great watershed in history and you get God turning to these little people to begin to concentrate on explaining to them what he had done to all the world in his son Jesus. Of course that's the paradox of this; even though God turned from all the nations to Abraham, he did that only for one reason; he said to Abraham, "In you will all the nations of the earth be blessed." So he turned from everybody to one

little group, so that he could again turn to everybody and bring everyone to himself who was willing to accept what he had done to them in Jesus.

So, loved ones, this is a great moment in Genesis 11. As we go on next Sunday or the following Sundays we'll begin to follow out the promises that God began to give to the Israelites and off course, we'll begin to see ourselves as the new Israelites. I believe God will begin to teach us lessons of faith that we can use in our own lives. We have probably just one more Sunday together [before summer break] and I would like us to spend the last Sunday talking once more about the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

Then the next Sunday after that we'll have our very first graduation service, when two or three of us will be graduating from the Christian Core Training Program and we want to talk about what that means and certainly want to enable them to sense that this is the opening out of life for them. The sense that they have now the great commission to fulfill and they have these nations to go to and to spend their own lives among them. After that it will probably be the second Sunday in June and then we'll begin our services outside.

So let us pray, and think about some of the things that God has shown us.

Dear Father, we thank you for the way you choose us. Lord, we thank you that you don't choose some of us for salvation and some of us to be lost. We thank you Lord that that is in our keeping; that is for the use and the exercise of our freewill -- we are free to choose whether we will accept what you have done for us in Jesus or not. But Lord, we thank you that once we have done that, then you decide where our place will be in this world. Father, we thank you for that.

Thank you that you choose us freely, it's not because we're bright or are clever, not because we have a better grasp of things, not because we have talents, but Lord you choose us out of your own free grace. Father, we would, each one, just rest where we are. We want to thank you for where we are. Lord we may not appear very important in anybody's eyes, but we thank you you've chosen this place for us. Thank you Lord, this is a good and a comfortable place, this is the place that is best for me. Lord we thank you for that.

Thank you, Father that we don't need to strain and strive, we don't need to try to prove our worth or our value. You, our God, choose the place of our dwelling, you choose the job that we will do, you choose the person we will marry and the home we will have. Lord, the one thing you've promised us is we'll not be without a place to lay our heads; you'll always supply our needs. Father we thank you for that. Thank you that we can start resting, start relaxing in our Father's arms. Lord, if you want us to be married, you'll marry us and if you don't want us to be married, we'll waste our time. Lord if you want us to be rich, you'll make us rich; if you don't want us to be rich, we'll frustrate ourselves. Lord, if you want us to be poor, we'll be poor. Father, we thank you.

Thank you Lord that the one great decision that is ours is Jesus or self; after that, you take our lives into your hands and you will make us an Abraham or a Noah if you so choose. Lord, how we thank you that when we get to heaven, we'll find we were all Abrahams, we were all Noahs -- what the world saw of us was false and you see us differently. You see us all as heroic princes and princesses of God. Lord, we thank you for that.

Thank you for giving us to each other and enabling us to share the certainty and truth that we are

all nobility, we are all born of God, and we are your own dear sons and daughters, the very apple of your eye. Thank you, Lord.

Now may 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 throughout this coming week. Amen.

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