

Trusting God's Providence: Saying No to Worldly Wisdom

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[0 : 0 0] for some reason I have been working on losing my voice so I'm crackling all over the place one of the ways that we adore God and one of the ways that we're able to behold God is by coming before the Lord in the truth of God's word and honoring him from that truth by the obedience of our lives so that we're seeking to obey God not because we're so much afraid of being thumped by the Lord as much as we love him and we want to offer obedience to him because it's a way to show that love to him and that's what I pray we'll keep in mind this morning as we move through the message together the title of my message trusting God's providence saying no to worldly wisdom

I've tweaked this message a little bit I preach this message believe it or not let's see over seven years ago my very first message when I came to this area to Williamsburg to preach so Greg you'll probably remember maybe a couple of you will remember that this was the one I started off with and this is the one I preached in view of a call so this was kind of the one like alright do we like this guy doing this or not and I don't know why I chose this one in the Lord but I did I don't remember so I've just reworked some of this for you this morning I love this section of scripture because of the way that it encourage our hearts encourages our hearts to think carefully about the way God works with us even in our failures even in the ways that we fall short of being faithful to the Lord as he works in us let me ask you a few rhetorical questions don't answer out loud about this issue of believing the Lord and walking with the Lord as we move into the passage

I'll read it in just a moment the first question that I want to ask you do you believe that God is always always in complete control of his creation alright that's number one the second question do you believe that God always does the right thing for our highest good and then finally do you also believe that God always does what is best for you at just the right time and in just the right ways now I think if we're honest we would all say you know I want to believe and most of the time I think

I do believe that God is always in complete control over every aspect of his created order to include me I think I want to believe and most of the time I do believe God is always doing the right thing for our highest good as his people and I think I want to believe and most of the time I do believe that God always is doing what is best for me at just the right time and in just the right ways but then life happens and my belief in all of those realities about my God begin to falter and sometimes my belief even fails now I'm careful to say to you we fail God doesn't God remains faithful he remains on his throne and all of these things are absolutely true about him whether we believe it or not and whether we act like we believe it or not it's true now where that becomes so hard for us is when life gets really hard when we face challenges and trials that poke around in our fears and our doubts and our anxieties when we are confronted with the reality that we are not as in control of our own life and ourselves as we like to think we are that's when it gets tough

Romans 8:28 is a favorite verse for many Christians and we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God to those who are called according to his purpose but do we really know that God causes he doesn't simply allow he causes all things in our lives to work to his good purposes well I think most of us want to believe that and do believe that and do try to live that in our lives but we struggle with it don't we and this is the truth this is the reality we want to believe this and want to live this until the trouble and the suffering and the pain and the heartache the sense of loss the loneliness begins to slam against our lives that's when we can begin to lose our grip on this and we know that God causes all things to work together for good that begins to slip and we need each other that's when we need each other the most to remind each other and walk with each other maybe

[6 : 20] Romans 8:28 would read more accurately of our lives sometimes if it said this and we need to try and remember and to rehearse to ourselves that God causes all things you know but it doesn't say that it doesn't read that way does it beloved it does not it doesn't say to remember and rehearse it says and we know we are rock solid grounded cemented in that we know and that knowing is so important to our walk with the Lord especially in times of the unknown when we when we are tempted to forecast out into the future and kind of resolve the issue in our own minds and typically we do that because we're anxious and fearful it's not like we're forecasting out into the future and seeing the best of the best we usually do that kind of thing when we expect the worst or when we're afraid we need to come back to what we know we need to learn to wait and trust and that's hard and I know it's hard so I want to bring you encouragement this morning

I want to show you a monumental failure failure in a servant of God from ancient times and I want to show you what God does with that kind of thing and why it's so important for us to learn to wait and trust I want to build you up in your believing and also when you're experiencing God's goodness to you so we're going to be in Genesis 16 if you're not already there Genesis 16 and we're going to read this bizarre account in the life of one of God's chief servants and the man that all of our faith actually hinges on Genesis 16 verse 1 now Sarai Abram's wife their names have not yet been changed it will be

Sarah and Abraham in the future but not right now right now it's Sarai and Abram now Sarai Abram's wife had born him no children and she had an Egyptian maid whose name was Hagar so Sarai said to Abram now behold the Lord has prevented me from bearing children please go into my maid perhaps I will obtain children through her and Abram listened to the voice of Sarai after Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan Abram's wife Sarai took Hagar the Egyptian her maid and gave her to her husband Abram as his wife he went into Hagar and she conceived and when she saw that she had conceived her mistress was despised in her sight and Sarai said to Abram may the may the wrong done me be upon you

I gave my maid into your arms but when she saw that she had conceived I was despised in her sight may the Lord judge between you and me but Abram said to Sarai behold your maid is in your power do to her what is good in your sight so Sarai treated Hagar harshly and then Hagar ended up fleeing from her presence now we'll stop right there this is a direct attack on the sufficiency of God's holy word that is to these people God's holy promise God made a verbal agreement with these people and made a promise to them and they're not standing good in that promise the Lord is and the question that we want to ask at this point from a New Testament perspective trying to understand this as

Christians today on this side of the cross where is Romans 8 28 in all this mess and God causes all things to work together for good you see any good in this you discern any good here are we going to say that God caused these people to sin absolutely not well then what's going on where's Romans 8 28 and all this how in the world did these two people who are advanced in their walk with God who've heard the promises of God my goodness God's talked directly to this man how in the world did these two people get to the place where they thought that this was a good plan that our good God would be good with how did they convince themselves that God would be okay with this and bless this when we get into it I think you'll see how crazy ten years ten years have passed since God promised

[11 : 54] Abram a son now that's significant isn't it God made a promise to these two people that I will give you a son together between you and your wife and ten years have gone by Abram now listen to this is 85 years old Sarai is 75 and she's been barren her entire life a barrenness wrought by God's hand and she knowingly points that out in verse 2 she knows that the barrenness is from the hand of God the problem is this this is a shameful thing in her culture for a woman to be barren for a woman to be barren at this time and in this culture and this will go on throughout the history of Israel ancient Israel for a woman to be barren means that God has some sense of displeasure toward you and the barrenness is an example of that displeasure it's an outward manifestation that God has something against you and so it's very shameful it's something that she can't seem to throw off at least that's what they thought

God had a bigger reason for keeping her barren a good reason a odd I cause all things to work together for good reason in her life now could she see all of that at the time no but she had a promise now here's the rub the promise wasn't good enough you see the promise of God to bring her a son wasn't holding fast in her heart and it wasn't defining the way that she thought about God thought about her husband thought about her own life and she strayed from that with terrible terrible consequences so what does she do she reasons within her own heart a way to have a son it's a way which she wrongly assumes is what God wants her to do Sarai's idea reflects a heart embracing the wisdom of the world not the wisdom of God and that's the big problem

I want to define this for you as we get into this so if you'll look here how do I understand the wisdom of the world as it's related to us in this context it plays out this way the wisdom of the world is how ungodly unbelieving society the world that we live in thinks about and resolves the everyday issues of life they're not concerned with God they're not concerned with truth they're not concerned with pleasing the Lord they don't have any higher purpose for any of that resolution beyond relief beyond what's in it for me they're not thinking about God worldly wisdom works to discourage our hearts in knowing that is that knowing is believing and doing believing and behaving that God causes all things to work together for good so worldly wisdom tempts us to doubt and to dump the truth and to do what is right in our own eyes instead of following

Jesus in faith that's an important characteristic of how worldly wisdom works against the truth in our lives now we're all vulnerable to this and every day of our lives in one way or another we're all facing the temptation to live in the wisdom of the world the wisdom of the world can also be redefined this way what I think is right in my eyes that's worldly wisdom folks so it's not like I'm saying to us that we all need to take our finger and point at the world and everything external and say that's right that's right that's what's corrupting me because we don't do anything anything in our lives that we don't do out of our own heart but the wisdom of the world is tempting us away from truth and the foundation of the promises of God in Jesus Christ as we live in the power of the Holy Spirit pulls us away from a life like that wants us to be defined by what we think is right in our own eyes now here's how all this plays out in this scene between

Abram and Sarai so here's what I want to give you I want to deal with three aims in Satan's use of worldly wisdom to draw our hearts away from faith in God's truth in his goodness and provision and he'll use fear he'll use anxiety he'll use lust greed pride it doesn't matter he will use anything to tempt you in worldly wisdom away from the wisdom of God and how you live your life I want to try to tie this up just a little bit to how we're approaching understanding demonic attack on Wednesday nights when we gather and we expose the different ways that demons want to tempt us away from faithfulness to Jesus alright so the first thing that we'll point out in the first aim is this the world's wisdom deceives and it deceives our hearts that's the first aim to deceive us if we look again at verses 1 and 2 in Genesis 16 now Sarai

[17 : 58] Abram's wife had borne him no children and she had an Egyptian maid whose name was Hagar so Sarai said to Abram now behold now this is interesting the Lord has prevented me from bearing children and she almost seems to use that as a justification for doing what she wants to do to get a kid it's almost as if she's reasoning in her mind the Lord's prevented me from doing this so I'm going to find a way I'm going to make a way I'll circumvent what God's put in my life and I'll find a way to get what I want now that doesn't sound like us at all we can't relate to that in any way shape or form please go in to my maid here's her plan perhaps I will obtain children through her and Abram listen to the voice of Sarai now here it is the plain fact is that Sarai has borrowed this idea from her culture she didn't just pick this out of the air she joins what Abram has told her that is that God said about giving him an heir

God spoke directly to Abram and told him I will give you an heir I will provide you a son through this woman and Abram has told her that to comfort her she knows all about it she takes that and combines it with what she can reason from the way the world handles this issue how does the world handle this issue well she has an answer taken from man and God and she thinks that she can blend those two things successfully not good with their eyes squarely fixed on the problem and not on the provider they conclude that having a baby at their age and in Sarai's condition is impossible and that is true you see this is how Satan works he wants to take that kernel of truth and mix it with error and make it go down easier it's true in her current condition and at her age she's past childbearing age put on top of that she's barren she stands zero chance to having a baby y'all in any human term that's true and unfortunately she's looking at that issue to be the defining part of how she views this relationship with God relationship with her husband how God's going to make good on his promise it's almost as if she's forgotten who God is by looking to the world she mistakenly assumes that she's been given a workable fix to their problems and you can just put out equal sign pragmatism pragmatism is a philosophy of life it's a way of approaching life and pragmatism says at its basic form if it works do it if it works it's good whatever it takes to make it work is justifiable that's pragmatism you see all that's wrong with that you see all kinds of holes in that philosophy for living life if I can find a way to make it work for me

I'm good well it didn't work for Sarai and it will not work work for us what happens is she succumbs to the tempter it is Satan who's hatched this plan to turn her and her husband's hope away from God and his promise God promised Abram an heir in his own time and in his own way they needed them to operate in obedience to what God had said to them you said Jeff what should they do now that he's 85 and she's 75 she's been barren all of her life God's made this promise that he's going to give them an heir what should this couple do what would you do Jeff what would any of us do that would be hard 10 years have passed they're getting older and older it's looking more and more grim what would you do whatever I would do doesn't matter what we all need to think about is this do we obey the

Lord or not do we trust God and his promises or not do we walk in faith and not by sight or not do we believe that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God and they're called according to his purpose that's when this comes in on our lives and hits our hearts is that what we believe the law of the land and the culture in which Abram Sarai and Hagar live allows for this kind of provision for children that's what they allow this this was a way in ancient times that people could receive a child and it be their child the maid or the servant or whatever relative has the child on their behalf and typically it would be born into the lap of the other woman and so there you go the deal's done and that's what she has in mind as she talks to Abram let's borrow from the culture and it's perfectly fine borrow from let me put another word in there pagan culture the worldly world the world without God well here is Satan's snare in all of this here is his snare adopting the world's wisdom requires compromising

God's truth period worldly wisdom and godly wisdom are incompatible oil and water you can't mix them they never were designed you can't take a little bit of what man says and a little bit of what God says and put them together and make a hybrid good thing that does not work you can't take truth and mix it with a lie and make it good it's one or the other that's how we live that's what God's called us to as his people society saying that something is legal which is exactly what's happening in this scenario does not automatically and safely stamp something as right for Christians to do in the sight of God now you can think of several examples right away as I say that to you let me say it again just because society says something is legal does not automatically and safely stamp it as right for Christians to do in the sight of almighty

[25 : 10] God and you think of the first thing out of your mind what do you think of somebody say it abortion right where we've been living for so many years and where people still want to drag us back into abortion on demand how about this one no fault divorce what an oxymoron really no fault divorce two people are going to come before a judge and tell the judge no fault no foul we just don't like each other anymore we just don't want to be married anymore oh well that's that's nobody's maybe it's God's fault how about same-sex marriage I mean the list just goes on and on and on those those things are all legal but but the question is are they biblical are they pleasing in God's sight look folks nobody cares okay nobody cares about that stuff unless they love

God unless they love holiness that is living a life to please God so we're not going to find the world coming alongside of us to help us live beyond this kind of temptation to compromise God's wisdom by bringing in the wisdom of the world and trying to make everybody happy in the process what God has called us to is a life of holiness and we trust God with the results don't we we seek to live holy before the Lord and we trust God with the outcomes and that's not what's happening here it's sad but it's also dangerous let me put it up here this way and maybe this will continue to communicate some of the danger in all of this anytime we are tempted to run a course which requires us to compromise in any aspect

God's wisdom and truth for living we are headed in the wrong direction that's what I'm saying again it can't be even a little bit of the world with a lot of the Lord or vice versa if there's any aspect that we're dealing with that causes us to compromise God's wisdom and truth we cannot abide it Abram and Sarai compromised God's design for a one woman one man marriage and what they did was they adopted the unbelieving cultures way of dealing with Sarai being barren they kind of just took matters into their own hands and like many worldly things without the aid of biblical truth to help us discern right from wrong and good from best there are a lot of good things out there but they may not be the best things that's where discernment comes in discernment helps you go beyond figuring out truth and error and helps you then distinguish the good from maybe the best you might have several good options but you might be able to discern that one of those options or maybe even another one is the best option in terms of your spiritual life there's a way to approach that does this good thing in any way tempt me away from faithfulness to Jesus is this good thing if I participate in it if I do it if I adopt it into my life will it encourage those around me to follow me as I follow Jesus or will it serve to be a discouragement or a temptation to this one over here or that one over there you see what I mean we start asking questions like that and now we're in the centerpiece of

God's will as we say Lord we just want to do what is most pleasing to you not what's expedient for me not what solves my problem quickest and easiest but what brings me to the place of pleasing you in this so that I begin to walk in these steps of faith not by sight but by faith these steps of faith trusting that the long haul the marathon of this will bring about your good purposes in my life now again why does that why is that so hard yeah I hear you I say that and I see heads nodding why is it so hard to do it though why is it so hard to stay faithful in it because life's hard because we're constantly tempted because our flesh longs to have relief from what we're suffering with or straining with or being challenged in we crave relief more than faithfulness and we need the Holy Spirit to help us with that don't we that's right and he will you're going to see God pour out his compassion on these people even in the midst of all of this nonsense that's going on now

Abram and Sarai compromised God's design for marriage and it led to all of this nonsense that's going on we cannot afford to assess the things of life from a self-centered or worldly point of view we're always going to end up in the wrong place when we do that so here's what happens again I'm just trying to find different ways to express this to you as soon as we begin to turn our eyes to the world's wisdom in the things of life we open ourselves to deceit and we start a progression which takes us away from single minded devotion to God and toward empty deception that is just a scary dangerous progression to think about and we just don't even want to take the initial steps toward something like that not even a little bit now for

[31 : 42] Abram's part verse 2 ends in a very interesting way to me look at verse 2 with me and how does it end my text says and Abram listened to the voice of his wife now that doesn't have to always be a bad thing right I'm not titling my sermon don't listen to the voice of your wife I'm not saying that each of us here probably married over our heads guys if we're honest and so our wives are tremendous blessings in this way not this time not this time this is a time when he shouldn't have listened to the voice of his wife why why very straightforward listen because it was an ungodly plan that led them into sin it reminded me of Genesis 3 when God pronounced a series of curses because Adam listened to the voice of his wife in other words Adam didn't lead and protect Eve spiritually and he sinned now what was that what can we term that what did what did

Adam do and how is it likened to what Abram's doing now here's what it is it's abdication it's abandonment this is abdication of Abram's God ordained role as spiritual head of his wife spiritual leader the idea of spiritual leadership in our homes as people who are loving Jesus together as a married couple is that the man sets the tenor and the tone and the pace for how Jesus is being served and followed in that home so the man is in effect in effect saying to his wife follow me as I follow Jesus and the wife comes with him and stands with him and upholds him and undergirds him as he seeks to chart that course that's leadership we constantly look to that direction and move in that direction together so it's not it's not it's the very opposite of lording it over you know with the whip do what

I say I'm the boss my word is you know whatever no it's not any of that what Adam and Abraham tossed aside was that role of standing in the place of being able to say this is the way that I think we need to go this I think will most honor the Lord and then here's what that man does if we get down the road and we start to see oh okay so I can see now where maybe this wasn't the maybe the best and you know please forgive me please forgive me here here's how I think we can course correct a little bit on this one so let's do this together you guys I'm sorry that that happened but I really think we can see it's okay to ask for forgiveness guys it's okay to say I've I've dropped the ball now it's not okay for you to drop the ball and then act like in your pride that you didn't drop the ball that's not good because that's not emulating

Christ now as I say these things ladies I want you to know that every single husband in the room right now is feeling weight on their heart okay so we'll cut you some slack in saying we're all in that boat together Greg is in that boat with me and we are in that boat with you gentlemen and we'll all row together in that tide of trying to follow Jesus and ask our family to follow with us no there's no man in this room right now who gets that right all the time or is without sin in that and so we need to run to Jesus together guys and trust the heart of the Lord in all of this the point that I'm trying to make is abdication just like with Adam Abram's sin and lack of leadership had a tremendous negative impact on his marriage and guys that should sober us that should bring us to the point where we're constantly before the Lord asking God to help us know what that walk with him is to look like and what that leadership of our family is to look like now here's the larger question at this point here's the big question did did this sin that's going on with

Abram and Sarai at this point did this sin nullify God's promise and did it ruin the covenant that the Lord had with Abram in other words has God just kind of washed his hands of this whole thing and said you know what I've decided I'm not going to use you two after all to bring the air of promise into the world not going to do it you're not going to be I'll get somebody else is that what's happened is he done with these two will this sin thwart God's plan to bless and provide for Abram and Sarai in the way that God promised did Satan and did sin and did selfishness win out well what's happened is Abram and Sarai have taken the devil's bait and next Satan sets the hook ungodly thinking leads to ungodly actions unless truth intervenes and that's what's happened she had an ungodly plan and an ungodly idea an ungodly belief and that is going to give birth to sin unless truth cuts it off and so here's what happens next the world's wisdom defiles our relationships that's another aim that Satan has in tempting us away from

[37 : 47] God's wisdom the world's wisdom defiles pollutes corrupts our relationships that's exactly what we see happening to these two now verses three and four and Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan Abram's wife Sarai took Hagar the Egyptian notice that notice who's doing the action here Sarai took Hagar the Egyptian her maid and Sarai gave her maid the Egyptian Hagar to her husband Abram as his wife you understand this is polygamy this was never God's plan don't think that God condones this he does not from Genesis 1 all the way through it has always been the Lord's plan for one woman and one man to be married and to share life together we Greg didn't we go over that in a couple of times ago on Wednesday night is my memory okay so for those of you who were here a couple Wednesday nights ago we hit one of those aspects kind of hard so she went in to her husband became his wife now look verse 4

Abram went in to Hagar and yeah of course she got pregnant and when she saw that she had conceived that she was with child now Sarai her mistress was despised in her sight now I think it's clear what happened here we don't have to go into great detail what's taken place it's hard for us to accept that Sarai actually came to believe that this was God's will do you see how desperation can do some crazy stuff to us I just wonder this I wonder Sarai what if you had taken this plan to another woman in your life walking with the Lord and said here's what I'm thinking about doing if that woman would have went are you crazy have you lost your mind don't do that to yourself I don't know but apparently she wasn't listening to anybody she's just listening to herself desperation can make us vulnerable to deception just mark it down desperation can make you vulnerable to deception and deception often ends in defilement that is corrupting yourself polluting yourself defile means exactly that it means to corrupt or to pollute the world's wisdom is sinful and will always birth corruption in our relationship with God and with other people now look at this

Abram's Abram's complicity is shocking to me because I know he knows better this was not God's design for marriage and procreation and both of these people knew it they also knew God's promise I will give you an heir through the two of you not through manipulating little games that you have to borrow from pagan culture remember I'm God I can do anything and they didn't remember that shocking Abram got into bed with the world and we do that this is the power of satanic deception self-deception and the seductive lure of the world's wisdom it's very seductive what the world's wisdom always promises is some aspect of a fix what they don't tell us is what it's going to cost us to get that fix that's when he sets the hook it promises much delivers nothing of value and then it destroys now what happens next in this scenario is predictable shocking and tragic

I want to show you this it's predictable because sinful deception always births sinful actions when left unchecked by God's truth thank the Lord there's repentance but if we don't repent in this process of moving towards sin then it will give birth as it were and it did here with tragic consequences we're told in verse 2 what form the deception takes it's an ungodly plan by Abram's wife Sarai as I've already pointed out the fact of its predictability is laid down for us in principle in Genesis chapter 3 something these people would have been familiar with Eve was deceived Eve was deceived gave to her husband he took and sinned do you see the pattern there Sarai was deceived gave to her husband he took and sinned

I want to remind you of a passage that we've turned to often as Greg and I have been teaching through this screw tape letters it's in 2nd Corinthians if you wouldn't mind turning there with me 2nd Corinthians chapter 11 we've turned here several times over the last few months of our teaching let me get into 2nd I'm in 1st it's so helpful 2nd Corinthians 11:3 but I am afraid Paul says that as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness your minds will be led astray from what led astray from simplicity and purity of devotion to Jesus that's always the goal to draw you away from a simple and pure devotion to Jesus where you're trusting God in your life no matter how hard it gets no matter how much you don't understand no matter how uncontrolled the situation feels right now or how much out into the distance you can't predict what's going to happen and you can't you might reason oh I see this train wreck coming but you never know what the

[44 : 16] Lord's going to do it's predictable because of what God has laid down in his word this is why your brothers and sisters can come to you at times when they see a certain progression or pattern in your life and they can sit down with you knee to knee and hopefully kindly and graciously point out to you that this is going on in your life and say to you if you continue in this way this is what we can expect to happen and they can flip the pages of the word of God and they can read these scenarios to you and say this is what's coming if you don't stop I've done this with folks I've also been guilty of it myself but the Lord has given us what we need to know this now why is it shocking well it's simply shocking on a human level because as we read about Sarai's plan at least it was for me our senses are assaulted with the wrong of it I mean

I read it and I went no this is a train wreck that's about to happen stop don't do this and it's tragic it's tragic because the consequences are brutal for these two people and now for all those who are going to come after them well how so well if you're back in Genesis with me 16 now I want you to read what happens as a result now the angel of the Lord found Hagar by a spring of water this is she has fled from Sarai's presence because Sarai's been so harsh to her and she's by a spring of water out in the wilderness by the spring on the way to Shur and God said Hagar Sarai's maid where have you come from and where are you going and she said I'm fleeing from the presence of my mistress Sarai then the angel of the Lord this is God speaking to this woman through this angel then the angel of the Lord said to her return to your mistress and submit yourself to her authority now there you go you don't want to hear that that that's not the solution right now

God's telling you something that's exactly the opposite of what you thought you'd too many to count the angel of the Lord said to her further behold you are with child you will bear a son and you shall call his name Ishmael because the Lord has given heed to your affliction he will be a wild donkey of a man his hand will be against everyone and everyone's hand will be against him now this is a prophecy that carries forward and he will live to the east of all of his brothers then she called the name of the Lord who spoke to her you are a God who sees you are a God who sees God blessed these people the child born of Hagar was Ishmael his name means God hears God blessed him with 12 sons just like he did later in the 12 tribes of

Israel God blessed Ishmael with 12 sons and as God said in verse 12 Ishmael his descendants would become a thriving people too many to count but a people in constant conflict with each other and with God's chosen people Israel many many Arab nations trace their ancestry to Ishmael not all of them but many of them do and so now you see what's coming don't you you see where this conflict was born that's why I'm saying to you with confidence the Middle East crisis that we call it as we refer to it is never ever going to be resolved by the wisdom of man it will take the redemption of almighty God to fix that fracture because God said this is the way it's going to be and it can all be what does all of that say this is the reality of what sin is and what sin does it deceives corrupts injures indiscriminately and it always exacts or demands a high price and that brings us to the final element in this sinful progression here it is the world's wisdom and one aim of

Satan using the world's wisdom is that it demands what does it demand from us our allegiance it doesn't want a little bit of you it wants all of you it wants your allegiance your loyalty I can say it another way it wants your worship Satan wants your worship he doesn't want you to give it to God this is five and six and Sarai said to Abram may the wrong done me be upon you I gave my maid into your arms but when she saw that she had conceived I was despised in her sight may the Lord judge between you and me but Abram said to Sarai you know what your maid is in your power so you do to her what is good in your own sight so Sarai treated her harshly and she fled from his presence folks worldly wisdom wants its way it's bound to determine to get it the reality of the failure and folly of the plan is now going to hit this couple full force perhaps we're tempted to say well you know what she's so upset about

[50 : 03] I mean what what does she expect after all this was her idea Sarai though is incensed because she thought she was doing the right thing and Abram's cooperation in it further suggested to her the rightness of it so here's Sarai assessed her situation without the benefit of using her spiritual eyes of faith in God polygamy was never God's plan God never told these two people go borrow from pagan culture to make the promise that I've made to you be fulfilled it's almost as if they're saying God you haven't come through and we don't trust you to follow through anymore I don't even know if you're powerful enough hands I'm going to do what I think needs to be done okay you good with that and he's not good with that and you're not going to be good with that because that's a train wreck but that's what we do it's as if we're looking up into the heavens and saying you haven't been God enough for me do you hear me oh I know you're God you just haven't been God enough for me so here's what I'd like to suggest you need to step up your game y'all don't like it when I do this kind of stuff do you we don't we don't I don't think we consciously think that stuff but when we just put it out there for what it is and let the Bible define it for us isn't it amazing that God loves us as he does and is as merciful toward us as he is yep well she's indignant Sarai is indignant she feels she gave up a lot whereas Abram gave up nothing right she's getting the entire backlash from this deal going sour and and here it is when it all blew up in her face she comes to

Abram demanding and listen to this word now justice she's demanding justice be done the grammar here in Hebrew uses legal terminology this is the language of the courtroom she even pulls out the big guns by insisting that God judge between you and me as to who's to blame for this spiritual leader worldly wisdom demands its own way it becomes demanding that's what we see in them now both of them demanding where's that coming from so Sarai Sarai gives voice to the form and fashion of the world when it feels it's been wrong she cries no fair I'm innocent I'm a victim and she demands her rights that's the pattern of the world

Abram's response what does he do well he did exactly what Adam did Adam what have you done it was the girl what have you done it was the serpent I'm a victim nobody's to blame it's not my fault it's terrible in effect Abram is saying don't don't even try to put me in the middle of this you do whatever you feel you have to do leave me out of it your idea the things that we can say to each other I don't I don't know I'm extrapolating obviously but we've got enough here to see that they're at odds with each other and I've been married long enough to understand that sometimes you can get at odds with each other and you can say and do things and it's it's not good so folks to assert ourselves to demand what we're owed where do we get that idea it's the way of entitlement and self exaltation so we don't have to wonder about why it is that the world builds an entire system politically and people helping wise everything is based on this kind of understanding this kind of mentality worldly wisdom will not allow you to serve two masters more importantly

God will not allow you to serve two masters it doesn't sound as if it ended well because it didn't and we're meant to see the tragic hurtful ongoing consequences of living in worldly wisdom and compromise and I don't have time to extrapolate and explain all the different ways that this came out bad but if you've read the Old Testament you understand the conflict between Israel and the pagan nations around them and the conflict that Israel now is even having with Arab nations around them even though Abram and Sarai didn't wait on the Lord they didn't wait they took matters into their own hands look God's purposes were not thwarted they were not thwarted 13 years is going to pass 13 years are going to come and go and when

[56 : 02] Abram is 99 and Sarai is 89 they're going to have who Isaac the son of laughter the promised heir and God will bless Hagar and he will bless Ishmael and the point is this even your sin cannot thwart God's good plan to be good to you now let me say that again and then I want to add something to it even your sin beloved cannot thwart God's good plan to be good to you sin is not more powerful than the grace of God working in your life it's not as soon as I say that though I will add this there are consequences when we sin did these people suffer consequences for their sin yes God didn't just erase those consequences they've carried on but did

God bless them and keep his promise yes so it sobers us to think carefully about how we mix worldly wisdom or doing what's right in my own eyes with the truth of the Lord so learn my friends learn to look to listen to to wait on God and here's a way for you to remember what's involved in waiting on the Lord because as soon as I say wait on the Lord I think there's so much confusion about that what does wait on the Lord just mean to sit somewhere and just read the Bible and just wait until I hear something so let me help you with that a little bit these are just a few principles there are more but let's let this get us started here's what it means to wait on the Lord watch for God what in the world does that mean look for evidence of

God's grace to others and to you learn to become someone who looks for the way that God works in other people's lives and the quickest way and easiest way to do that is look for evidence of the work of the spirit the Holy Spirit the fruit look for the fruit of the spirit are you engaging other brothers and sisters that are kind did they did you receive a kindness that's the work of the Lord and the fruit of the spirit isn't it kindness have they loved you in a and you've learned from watching them in that trial as they move patiently through it you should go to them and you should say I wanted you to know even as we've been praying for you through this trial that you've been in we've seen a tremendous patience in you isn't a patience a fruit of the spirit learn to watch for the way God is working in other people's lives and get in on it join it speak to it identify it wouldn't you like to hear that and then look for the ways

God is working in your life there's so many ways you could stop in the midst of your trial and suffering and all of the anxiety and fear that you might have or whatever it is and recount the blessings of God on your life learn to watch for the way God is working and trust that what you can't see doesn't mean he's not working because you have lots and lots of evidence to see that he is working you just can't see all the ways he's doing that in this particular moment in this particular thing but trust that he is because you have a track record of seeing him do that in your life and in the life of the people around you there's number one folks that's how you wait on the Lord waiting on the Lord doesn't mean sitting on your hands and doing nothing it doesn't mean lighting a candle in a room and sitting there don't do that here here's another one a adorn

God's gospel what does that mean live the beauty or live in or live out the beauty and wonder of Jesus in you Jesus lives in you friend if you're a Christian Jesus lives in you let the quality of who Jesus is and his character and goodness to you be lived out in the beauty of who he is don't let that thing that's going on in your life eclipse the work and the beauty of the person of Jesus in you don't let it cloud it and push it down live Jesus to the world you know do you believe that you can do that and still grieve in your heart can you live the glory of Jesus in your life and still be sad and still grieve yes you can Jesus wept that didn't mean he didn't love the father or trust the father man he was a compassionate man and that things hurt his heart and then this one

[61 : 22] I invest in God's people selflessly love as God loves you I could say it more broadly invest in the things that God has put priority on in life his word his people his kingdom in the lives of people this is where you should be spending the lion share of your investment on this planet as a Christian by pouring your life into the things that God poured his life into Jesus as he was here the people of God and the truth of God you can't lose in that combo how much of your life is being invested and poured in to the things that God has already said are the priorities of heaven his people and his word those are the souls of his people and his word are going to be the things that transport into heaven and last for all eternity everything else is going to burn so that's sobering and then this one

T W A I T trust God say what does trust God look like go back to I A W and that's what that looks like trust God walk by faith walking God's goodness to you that is live it out live it out again please please hear your pastor tell you carefully in much love and grace living like this doesn't mean that you're not sad it doesn't mean that you don't grieve it doesn't mean you don't have concerns to be sad and to grieve and to have concerns doesn't necessarily mean you're not trusting the Lord those could be flags that you want to check but you can have a certain sadness over a situation a certain sense of grief and a certain concern and not sin against the Lord but let your brothers and sisters rally to you all right for each of us who've been saved by

God's good grace for each of us who've been given hearts to love God the Lord will work he will work his promise to cause all things in our lives to work together for our good but one last thing we need to define what the good is do you mean the good in that I'll get a brand new car a brand new house suddenly ten thousand dollars will appear in my checking account no not necessarily all those things could happen God's big enough to do it but here's what God means by good in Romans 8 28 here's the good you've probably heard this before here's the good good refers to God's purpose in setting us apart that is to make us holy to conform us to the likeness of his son in other words he's saying everything that happens in your life I'm big enough to work toward the end of making it make you more like my son

I want you to have the character of my son the heart of my son the life of my son living for the glory of God God will do that that is the power of God's good grace working in our lives I hope you'll be encouraged this was a train wreck that God took and said you know what there are going to be consequences however I will not allow what you've decided to thwart what I've decided and what I've promised and his promise is that he will love us into eternity and he will love us through the trials and challenges and temptations that we face today to God be the glory amen let's pray together Lord as we have just spent even a brief time in such a rich rich passage about the lives of two people who truly lived and this truly happened to them it's not just a story it's a story that bears out the truth of two people who tried to do what was right in their own eyes tried to circumvent the truth of what you had promised to them and so it becomes a lesson for us

Lord help us to live according to your promises make us students of your word and help us to see in scripture where you have spoken to us you have given us precious promises as Peter says precious promises that will carry us forward in our life as we walk in the temptation all around us and the temptation to face off with worldly wisdom and adopt it into our lives because it's expedient it promises a quick fix or it wants to save us from impure desires and thoughts that would lead us astray and away from your truth help us to love you Lord more than anything help us to know to know the God who causes all things to work together for good to those who love you and are called according to your purpose and we thank you for the truths that you convicted us with today and

[66 : 49] I pray your people will be much encouraged to look to you and to experience your amazing grace in Jesus name we pray amen