

# Christ in Genesis: Abraham's Altar

by Stephen Kaung

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of separation from the world and the significance of the cross in our spiritual lives, using Abraham's life as an example.*

**Duration:** 1:00:07

**Scripture:** Genesis 12:1-5, Genesis 12:7, Genesis 22:4, Genesis 22:6-10, Hebrews 3:4

**Topics:** "Genesis"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the third phase of the working of the cross in our lives. He uses the story of Abraham and Isaac from Genesis chapter twenty-two to illustrate the concept of sacrifice and obedience to God. The preacher emphasizes the importance of understanding the cross of Jesus and how it brings salvation and victory over sin and darkness. He also highlights the need for believers to not only know about the cross but to receive it into their lives and allow it to transform them, letting go of the old self and embracing the new creation in Christ.

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## Transcript

Will you please turn to Genesis chapter 12. Genesis chapter 12. We begin with the first verse.

And Jehovah hath said to Abram, Go out of thy land and from thy kindred and from thy father's house to the land that I will show thee. And I will make of thee a great nation and bless thee, and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing. And I will bless them that bless thee and curse him that curse thee.

And in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. And Abram departed, as Jehovah hath said to him. And Lot went with him.

And Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed out of Haran. And Abram took Saria, his wife, and Lot, his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had acquired, and the souls that they had obtained in Haran, and they went out to go into the land of Canaan. And into the land of Canaan they came.

And Abram passed through the land to the place of Shechem, to the oak of Moriah. And the Canaanites was then in the land. And Jehovah appeared to Abram and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land.

And there he built an altar to Jehovah who had appeared to him. And he removed things towards the mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, having Bethel towards the west and Ai towards the

east. And there he built an altar to Jehovah, and called on the name of Jehovah.

Chapter 13, verse 14. And Jehovah said to Abram, after that Lot had separated himself from him, Lift up now thine eyes and look from the place where thou art, northward and southward, and eastward and westward. For all the land that thou seest will I give to thee and to thy seed forever.

And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth, so that if anyone can number the dust of the earth, thy seed also will be numbered. Arise, walk through the land according to the length of it and according to the breadth of it, for I will give it to thee. Then Abram moved his tent and came and dwelt by the Oak of Mamre, which art in Hebron.

And there he built an altar to Jehovah. Chapter 22. We begin with verse 4. On the third day, Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place from afar.

And Abraham said to his young man, Abide ye here with the ass, and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you. And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son. And he took the fire in his hand and the knife, and they went both of them together.

And Isaac spoke to Abraham's father, his father, and said, My father. And he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood, but where is the sheep for a burnt offering? And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself with the sheep for a burnt offering.

And they went both of them together. And they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built the altar there and piled the wood.

And he bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar upon the wood. Let us. Our Heavenly Father, we do thank Thee for Thy precious word.

We ask that Thy Holy Spirit will open Thy word to us that we may see Thee in Thy word and be transformed. In the name of our Lord Jesus. Amen.

We mentioned before that the book of Genesis is a book of biographies. God gives us the biographies of eight persons. And through these eight persons, God desires to show us what His will is concerning man.

How much He is interested in man and what work He has done in man and eventually what glory He will receive out of man. In the first man Adam we see the tree because God's purpose is man should have his life. The tree of life in him.

That he may be united with God and be one with God. But unfortunately man chose the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. In other words, man declared his independence of God.

Man wanted to develop his own soul, his own power to be his own God. And the result is then in Abel we see the sacrifice. It is through the blood of the Lamb that we are able to return to God.

The way to God is through the sacrifice even our Lord Jesus. After we have returned to God then we need to walk with God. And that is what we find in Enoch.

Enoch walked with God and this is what we need to do. And the result of that walking is he was taken by God. And if we walk with God we have the opportunity of being raptured to Heaven without passing through death because we know His coming is very near.

Now the secret of walking with God is to abide in Christ. And that is what Noah's ark tells us. Noah was shut up in the ark for a year and ten days through the whole period of the flood.

And when he came out of the ark he inherited a new earth. And brothers and sisters we are exhorted to abide in Him. And if we abide in Him we shall inherit the new heavens and the new earth.

Now this morning we would like to go to the fifth person, Abraham. We know that God is the God of Abraham the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. Abraham is the father of faith.

In Abraham's life we see one thing and that is the altar. You'll find in his life he built altar after altar. Not just one altar but he built altogether four altars because altar is symbolic of the life of Abraham.

Now brothers and sisters no one will build an altar for himself. You may build a house for yourself but when you build an altar it is for God. In other words, altar is symbolic of our religious life or to put it more accurately our spiritual life.

Without the altar there will be no spiritual life. The altar in the Old Testament is the cross in the New Testament. Because you'll find in Hebrews 13.10 it says we have an altar.

We have an altar. Now what is our altar? And if you read the context you know that speaks of the cross. We must not only have a basic and objective faith in the cross of our Lord Jesus.

We must also have a continuous subjective experience of the cross working in us. We know that an understanding and a faith in the cross of our Lord Jesus is basic. Why? Because if we have no understanding and no faith in the cross of our Lord Jesus then there is no salvation.

We have no life. There is no forgiveness. There is no redemption.

It is the cross of our Lord Jesus that gives us salvation. So we need to know the cross of our Lord Jesus. How our sins were being borne by our Lord Jesus in His body on the cross.

How we ourselves were crucified with Him on the cross because we were in Him. How the enemy, Satan and all the powers of darkness were completely routed, taken captive by the victory of the cross. We need to know all the different faces of the work of Christ on the cross because this is the basis of our faith and this gives us salvation.

But more than that, we need not only to know the cross in all its objective sense but we must receive the cross into our very being and let the cross work in us to cast away that which is of the flesh, of the old creation, of ourselves and to bring in that which is of the new creation, which is of Christ. That we may be transformed and be conformed to the image of God's Son. So brothers and sisters, the cross is most vital to our spiritual life.

If there is no cross, there is no Christ. If there is no cross, there is no Christian. It is as important as this.

You cannot separate the cross from Christ and in the same way, you cannot separate the cross from Christ. Now in the life of Abraham, we find altar all through his life. When he was in Earl of Chaldea, that was his native.

In Acts chapter 7, we are told, the God of glory appeared to Abraham in the land of Earl of Chaldea. Tradition tells us that Abraham's father, Terah, he was a maker of idols. And excavation showed us

because Earl of Chaldea has been excavated.

It was a city full of idols. You know, at that time, the whole world left God. The whole world worshipped and Abraham's father was an idol maker.

But the glorious thing was, out of a city of idols, even from the family of an idol maker, God called Abraham. The God of glory appeared. God called him out.

Well, the story said, Abraham was seeking after the truth. He often wondered about these idols. So one day when his father went away, he told his son Abraham to take care of the idols that he made.

But after his father left, Abraham began to take away one arm from one idol and a leg from the other idol and broke them all into pieces and put them all into confusion. So when the father came back and saw all these idols falling on the ground and falling upon each other and all broken up, he was very angry at his son. And he said, Why didn't you take care of my idols? And Abraham said, After you left, these idols began to fight against each other.

And that's the result of the fight. And his father said, That's nonsense. These idols couldn't fight.

And Abraham said, Why should we worship them? And that was a Jewish... It was not a Bible. But anyway, but anyway, you find that here was a man who was completely delivered from idol worship. The God of glory appeared to him, calling him to leave his land, his kindred, and to go to the place where God would show him.

That was how. But unfortunately, Abraham consulted with him. So the result was, instead of his leaving the land and his kindred, in Genesis chapter 11, you find, it was his father Terah who took Abraham and his nephew Lot, and they left Ur of Chaldea on their way to the land of Canaan, but stopped in heaven.

Evidently, Abraham, after he heard the call, he consulted his father. And when his father saw that he was insisted on leaving, his father said, Alright, I'll take the initiative. So Terah took him up.

And instead of following the Lord all the way, he stopped in the middle way. If you look at geography, Abraham obeyed God only halfway. We do not know how long they sojourned in Herod.

Not until God took Terah, Abraham's father, away. Then God appeared to him and told him to leave his land, his kindred, and his father's house to go to the place. So here you'll find in Genesis chapter 12, Abraham, Abraham, took his wife, his nephew Lot, and all the properties that accumulated in Herod, and all the servants that they got in Herod, and from there they went after they arrived in the land of Canaan at a place called Shechem.

Near the oak of God appeared and said, I will give this land to your seed. And for this, Abraham built, and that is the first altar, Abraham. God appeared to Abraham when he was in the earth of Thalia.

But he didn't build. He went out of earth and came to her. And he stayed there for a number of years.

But, he didn't build. He built an altar after he arrived in Canaan. And God appeared to him again and said, I will give this land to your seed.

It wasn't until then he built. You know, you just cannot build an altar anytime, anywhere. Spiritually speaking, there is a time and there is a place for an altar.

Not only there must be the appearing, there must be also the obedience. You know, this altar that Abraham built, we may call it the altar of Revelation. Because the God of glory appeared to him.

You know, the revelation is the foundation of Christianity. If there is no revelation, there is no beginning. But when God appeared, then, it began.

So we may call this altar the altar of Revelation. God appeared. But God appeared to Abraham even when he was in earth of Chaldea.

But there was no altar. Why? Because after God has revealed, God has Inherited Abraham obeyed God only half way. And because of that he couldn't build an altar.

There was no testament. Only after he arrived in Canaan, in a place called Shechem. Shechem in Hebrew means shoulder.

It means responsibility. And Mamre, Mora. Mora means In other words, after God has revealed himself, you have to put your shoulder under the command of God.

Be responsible. Respond to God. Be responsible.

And learn what God wants you to learn. And it is not until then an altar. Brothers and sisters, has God revealed to us? Thank God he has revealed his Son in us.

That marks the beginning of our Christian life. But when God reveals himself to us, invariably you'll find there will be a calling. And the calling is to come out and to go into.

We are called to come out and to enter into Canaan, which is Christ. In other words, when God appears to anyone, there will be a calling for separation. God appears to Abraham to separate himself from his old country.

Even from here. So that he might be completely, and until that separation was completed, there was no building. And in spiritual sense, this must be true.

Thank God he has revealed his Son in us. But with the revelation, we are called to be separated that we may belong to Christ. We are not our own.

We are his. We are bought with a price. Therefore, we must be separated from the world.

Now, brothers and sisters, how many of God's people today who have received the revelation of God's Son, Jesus Christ, and yet fail to follow him in the way of salvation. How many of God's people today are saved, and yet they have not completely separated themselves from the world. Probably they come out of the earth of Chaldea, but they stop short in heaven in the middle way.

Instead of going all the way with the Lord. And it is because of this that we find our life with Christ is nothing. We are one leg, as it were, in the world, and another leg in Christ.

And this, unfortunately, seems to be. We must put up to the cause. We must learn the lesson.

And it is only then, then you'll find the cross begins to appear. Is there the sign of the cross? Are we separated? Do we belong to Christ? Is this our life? So, this is. Then, you'll find Abraham began to, from the plain of Moab.

He began to move south, and move up to the mountains. And when he was moving, he came to a place. He pitched his tent in between two places.

Bethel, in the west, and Ai, in the east. And there he pitched his tent. And after he pitched his tent in between these two places, with his back towards Ai, and his face towards Bethel, the Bible says, he built another altar.

And he called upon a name. This is the second altar that Abraham built. We may call this altar the altar of communion, or the altar.

You know, Christian life is never set. It is true that after we move on a distance, we may rest for a while. To consolidate that which the Lord has shown us.

But you'll find that again, we have to move on. Our Christian life is a continuous, ongoing life. We move from the plain to the mountains.

We are always ascending, and ascending, and ascending. It is a continuous moving onward and upward. This is Christian life.

And after we have separated ourselves from the world, and given ourselves completely to Christ, then you know, we begin to come to a place in between Ai and Bethel. And this is the place where we will put our tent. And it is in that place that the second altar will be built.

In other words, the second face of the cross will begin to be built in our life. We know what Ai is. Ai, the word Ai in original means a heap of ruins.

And we know what Bethel means. Bethel means a house. On the one hand, you'll find a heap of ruins.

That speaks of the old creation. That speaks of the flesh. It is but a heap of ruins.

That speaks of ourselves. In us. That is in ourselves.

There is no good. It is just a heap of ruins. Have we been ruined? Yes.

Ruined by sin. But on the other hand, you'll find the house of God. It speaks of the new creation.

It speaks of that which is recreated in Christ Jesus. It speaks of the spiritual house in which God dwells. So here you'll find as we continue to move on with the Lord, as we fellowship, commune with the Lord, we will come to a place where we will begin to see the division of the spirit and the soul.

We begin to see that which of ourselves, of the old creation, is but a heap of ruins. We will leave it behind. And our face is towards that which is recreated in Christ Jesus, the house of God, Bethel.

Brothers and sisters, this is the place where we will put our tent. There will we stay. Our God is to build.

You know, in Ari, the children of Israel later on, suffered. And the reason was, one of them, Achan, he coveted a beautiful garment of Sheol, that is Babylonian garment. And he coveted two hundred shekels and also, he took them and hid them in his tent.

And because of his sin, the whole army of Israel suffered defeat. Until that sin was... Now what does it mean? It means that he wanted a beautiful garment, he wanted a silver and gold, for what purpose? To

build his own house. And in trying to build his own house, you find it became a heap of ruins.

And how often we try to build our own self. We try to beautify our flesh. We try to build up ourselves.

And the result is, God wants us to see that on the cross, the whole creation. It is now all new. It is now all... And it is only then, when the cross works, not only separation from the world, but separation from that, he may be able to build us up into... He built an altar.

And he began to call on the name of the Lord. Now what does it mean? When you call upon the name of the Lord, it means one thing, and that is, you realize how helpless. Therefore you have to call upon him.

You have to depend on him. When you find that you can help yourself, you won't call upon the name of the Lord. So here you find, we begin to realize that we have to call upon his name and let him do everything that is needed to deliver us even from this, that we may live in the good of the new creation and be built up to that.

And brothers and sisters, this needs to be seen. Has the cross so worked in your life that it begins to divide the soul and the spirit to show you that whatever is of you is just a heap of ruins? And your hope, that which is... It is, you know, Abraham, because of the famine, when he was tested, he went into Egypt. We wouldn't go into the story.

But you find when he returned from Egypt, in Egypt there was no water. Naturally he was blessed because Pharaoh gave him many servants, cattle, and all these things, but took his wife away. There was no water.

But when he returned by the grace of God to the land of Canaan, where did he return? Between Aeons. You had to come back to the place of communion. But after he returned from Egypt, you know, their properties accumulated.

So Abraham had many cattle, many herds, many flocks, and so was Lot. And their herdsmen began to quarrel with each other for the pastures. In other words, you find because of the abundance in material things, the brothers could not stay together in peace.

So finally Abraham told Lot. He said, we are brothers. And when our herdsmen quarreled before the Canaanites, it wasn't a good testimony.

So finally Abraham said, the day has come. The whole land is before you. You choose.

If you go to the east, I go to the west. If you go to the south, I go to the north. You know, God gave the land to Abraham.

God didn't give the land to Lot. Lot just followed Abraham out. Abraham was Lot's friend.

And according to the old custom, surely the young must give ground to the old to respect the old. In other words, even though Abraham graciously told Lot that you may choose first, Lot just said, oh no, you're my uncle. You have the first choice.

You can choose first. And whatever is left, I'll take it. Now that was the right thing to do.

But Lot, having no revelation, having no vision, and God hadn't given anything to him, he thought the opportunity came for him to seize upon the best. So he looked around and he saw the place near what the

Dead Sea today was, Sodom and Gomorrah. It was fertile as the Nile River.

So when he saw that place, he said, I... And after Lot let God appear to Abraham. God said, Abraham, lift up your eyes. Look to the east, to the west, to the north and to the south.

And whatever land you see is yours. In other words, Lot chose his land. But God said, whatever you see, Abraham, is yours.

Because Abraham saw that land too. It's obvious. Now you rise up and go through the land because... So Abraham began to move again.

And he moved to the Oak of Mamre. He built... We call it the Altar of Witnessing. In the incident, you find that Abraham was able to even give... You know, it is very difficult to give up one's right.

When you are able to give up your right, you really give up yourself. Well, you may give up something. But to give up your right... You know, often times we say, but that's my right.

If a person is able to give up his right, he is giving up. He is letting Lot to make the first choice. Whereas the rights belong to Abraham.

It shows that Abraham was able to give up himself completely. He was not trying to grasp anything for himself. But he was willing to give up even his rights.

And in doing that, a war of... You do not measure your life because Abraham was willing to give up his right. He was able to give up himself so completely, even his rights. Therefore, he had entered into an abiding life.

And the word memory means firmness or vigor. In other words, here you find Abraham was fully established. His life is now fully established in God.

And because of that, he was full of strength. Because immediately after that, there was a battle of four kings and five. And the four kings and the Chiduramas overcame the five kings.

And they took away all the people, men and women and children and all the properties of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. So Lot and his family and all that he... his property were all taken captive. And when the news... You know what Abraham... Abraham... Matthew says, Aha! God vindicated.

When Abraham heard the news that his nephew Lot was taken captive. What he did? He gathered the young men that he trained in his own house. Only 318 young men.

And with some of his allies. They traveled whole night until they came upon the four kings. And with that, tenfold of people entered.

And delivered Lot and everything out. What a witness it was! And even after that great victory, you find the king of Sodom said, You may take all the properties, all the riches, just give me the men. I do not want anyone to say that the king of Sodom made me rich.

What a witness! This is what is meant by it. If we have the... Then the life of Jesus will be manifested in us. And also in others.

How can we minister life to other people? Where is the strength? The strength comes when we are willing to. When we are willing to bear in our body the dying of Jesus. Think of the dying of Jesus.

Our Lord Jesus has every right. He being equal with God. He is God.

And there was not something to regret that. And yet He emptied Himself. He gave up His rights.

He gave up His rights as God. His worship. His honor.

His glory. His majesty. His power.

He gave up all these things to become a man. And even as a man He has rights. But He gave up His rights.

He came obedient unto death. Evenly. And gave Him a name that is above every name.

And in that name every knee shall bow and every tongue confess. This is where the strength comes. This is where the witness comes.

This is where ministry comes. It is when we are willing to give up ourselves completely. It is when we begin to be established in Him.

In that abiding life. This is the third point. The third phase of the working of the cross.

And then you'll find in Genesis chapter 22 Give your son. Your only son. Your beloved son Isaac to me.

And when he was tested he rose early in the morning. He didn't console with flesh and blood. He took his son and he traveled three days journey.

Because that was the place. When he came to Moriah he told his servants You stay here. I and the lad will go to the mountain So they began to climb the mountain.

And then Isaac said You have the knife. You have the wood. But where is it? But after they climbed he built an altar.

He bound his son. Put him on the altar. I know that you have it.

I know that you feel it. You haven't kept it. And God be your seed.

All the nations. We call it the altar of worship. Worship is seeing.

Worship is seeing the worth. How much is God's worth? To Abraham God is so worthy. He did not behold.

He obeyed God. Moriah means It doesn't matter whether people see. What is important is to be seen.

Does he see in you that appreciation of his worth? That you will not even withhold. You know all the hope. All the promises of God to Abraham were focused on Isaac.

If Isaac was gone we believe that Isaac will be resurrected. So that's why in Romans chapter 4 the faith of Abraham is Worship is seeing his worth. Worship is not withholding anything back.

Worship is not just words. Worship is that. Worship is life.

Our life must be such that we see God. He is so worthy. You know? To offer Ishmael is difficult.

To offer that which belongs to the natural whatever God has given you whether it is gift or whether it is grace. If one day God says give that stuff would you argue with him and say you give it to me. Even all the grace and the virtues that God has.

If God wants to strip you naked as it were that's the cross. The cross has to be to do not only separation from the world not only separated from the world not only to deny ourselves even our rights so that God the giver do we allow the cross and if we do and we know one thing that it is on Mount Moriah that was the site it is in the place so in the life of Abraham we find that he built altars every altar you'll find that the cross must be seen in our lives. It begins with the cross it continues on with communion and confession into witnessing throughout our lives you know the problem with the cross they are afraid of the standard so Paul handed his letter to them and said see in other words in the life of God is the God of Abraham and in Abraham's life God is your God we do praise and thank you to see as experts oh our father we do pray pray that we may know pray that as we

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