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- [0 : 0 0] Okay, at Genesis chapter 17, we left with a question last week. What was the question? Well, look at those first verses there.
- The question was in those first verses. Okay, the question was in the first verse.
- What's this business about walk before me and be thou perfect? What do you think of when you think of be thou perfect?
- Not sinning? Not sinning? Not human. What else?
- And a lot of this is the connotation we bring with us, isn't it? We're culturally influenced. We don't necessarily just go by definitions.
- [1 : 2 1] We go by connotations. Look how it's shifted now. What are some of the words we use out of place today? Commonly.
- Well, that's been a long time coming, hasn't it? Love. Gay. Right? What does gay mean? It doesn't mean perverse.
- It doesn't mean perverse. Does it? Okay. What are some others? Well, that one I have to admit never crossed my mind.
- But you're right. You're right. On some of the fringes. But even in our common usage.
- Awesome. Now, how do we generally use it today?
- [2 : 2 6] When you hear it commonly expressed, what do they mean? Good or great. Right. What does the word actually mean?
- To be in love. Or awe-inspiring. It has to do with fear and wonder. And so we kind of shift it.
- But back to our point here. When you read that word, walk before me and be thou perfect. What is God telling Abraham?
- Now, let me ask it this way then. Because I'm just spinning in the mud right now. Uh-huh. So, let me ask it this way.
- When God gave Abraham the first promise when he's in Ur of the Chaldees, what did he tell him? What did God tell Abraham? Basically.
- [3 : 2 6] We don't have to get the quote right. I'll make of you a great nation. Get you up and leave. And I'll make of you a great nation.
- Then a little later, he reiterates it. Now, Paul, in chapter 4 of Romans, is going to use that. So, what did God say to Abraham?
- Did he say, go do what I tell you to do, and if you do it, I'll make of you a great nation? Well, what did he say?
- I'll make you a great nation. Now, how does the Apostle Paul use that in reference to us today? He says, look.
- It wasn't under the law that Abraham was given that promise, was it? He was given that promise apart from the law, way before the law.

- [4 : 29] And he said, the law, which was given 430 years later, does not what?
Does not change the promise. It doesn't set the promise aside. That's what he says. He says, therefore, look. You who trust in Christ for your salvation are apart from law.
You have a promise. And it's based upon faith, not upon the works. Right? Is that not the gospel of grace?
That's in a very tight nutshell. That's the gospel of grace. By faith, not of yourselves.
It is the gift of God. Not of. And there's a reason for that. Lest what? Anyone should boast.
- [5 : 33] You see, God is the Savior. Entirely. Entirely. All the glory belongs to Christ and none to us. Because Christ did all the work.
And God says, you can't come any other way. Well, that's a little jump ahead, way ahead. But, so, what's this?
Let's roll back. Go ahead, Joe. Go ahead, Joe. Go ahead, Joe.
What's he saying to Abraham? Okay, let's look at a couple of verses where it's used otherwise. See, it's not just if I'm faithful to God and doing what God asked me to do.
Should I? Yes. Because, because your position is this, therefore, act like this.
- [7 : 07] And he gives both proscriptions and prescriptions, doesn't he? He said, don't do this. Don't be jealous. Don't be self-serving.
Don't be unforgiving. Do be this. But, thankfully, my position in Christ is not dependent upon my behavior.
And that's why I'm blameless. And there, well, in this dispensation, that's why I'm blameless. Let's look at what he's saying here. Because this is written in Hebrew and not Greek.
So, let's look at some verses. Genesis 15, chapter 16.
Chapter 15, verse 16. I'm sorry. Now, we've already been by here.
- [8 : 16] But, someone read that verse. In the fourth generation, your descendants will come back here. For the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure.
Okay. That's the same word as what we just read in Be Perfect. Full measure. Or, if you're in, some of them will read complete.
Right? Yeah. It means it's not complete. So, one meaning of the word is complete. Or, brought full. Now, incidentally, just as a reminder, we've already been through chapter 15.
But, just as a reminder, this is God. When God went through the covenant alone, he told Abraham, know this for sure.
I'm going to make of you a great nation. And, your descendants are going to go into a country that's not theirs. And, they're going to sojourn there for, he says, four generations.
- [9 : 25] But, 400 years. And, he says, and they will serve and be subservient to the people in whose nation they're living.
And, afterwards, he says, I'm going to bring them out of that nation with great possessions. And, bring them into this land.
Because, the wickedness of the Amorites is not yet full. So, God had a plan. And, he's saying, the Amorites are going to do this.
And, they're going to be, when their wickedness is full, I'm pulling you out. And, I'm going to tell you how long it's going to be. So, that's that context.
Full or complete. Joshua 24, 14. Joshua chapter 24, verse 14. Now, this, of course, is not complete list of the other ways these are translated.

[10 : 32] These are all the same word, though. Joshua 24, verse 14. Would someone read that one, please?

Excuse me. And, through, and put away the gods that your fathers served beyond the river and in Egypt and served the Lord.

Okay. Joshua says to the people, now, therefore, serve the Lord in what? Sincerity.

Sincerity. Same word. Same word. Sincerity. Now, one more time. Amos chapter 1, verse 6.

By doing this, I hope to give myself a complete look at what that word means, so I can glean. After all, why does the church look at the Old Testament?

[11 : 39] We're saved by grace through faith. Well, because God, through the Apostle Paul, said, look, these things were written for your information, so that you will have hope in the Scripture.

And then, elsewhere, he says, to the Corinthians especially, he said, these things are recorded, so that you won't do that. Right?

So, that's why, and we get an appreciation for God's unfolding plan.

And say, okay, Abraham had this much, right? See, I get to go, I get to be way over here and look back.

But I have to be careful that I don't say what Abraham was told is a marching order for me. I'm supposed to glean principles.

[12 : 45] I'm not supposed to say that I'm supposed to pick up and move to a country, and he's going to make me a great nation and give me all this stuff. Because he didn't say that, did he?

Not to me. See, Abraham believed God. Abraham believed what God said.

He did not believe what God did not say. You know some folks who this morning are sitting under teaching that says, if you believe it and claim it, and you have enough faith, what's going to happen?

God didn't tell me that. That's not right. And there are going to be a lot of confused people. And some angry.

You probably know someone, whether they've said it this way or not, who's angry at God because I thought if I prayed and I had faith, God would heal my grandma, and she died.

[13 : 55] You probably know someone. Now, excuse or not, they're still confused.

Because they think God's some sort of a, what do I want to say, indulgent grandfather or something? No.

No. God doesn't spoil his children and send them back to mom and dad. That's for you to do. Okay. I didn't mean to digress there.

Amos chapter 1, verse 6. Would someone read that one, please? Go ahead.

Hang on a moment. I'm sorry for interrupting. Well, not real sorry, but somewhat sorry for interrupting. How does he start?

[14 : 57] That you're going to see that a lot in the Old Testament, especially. Now, who has the right to say that?

The prophets. Now, who got to choose who was going to be a prophet? We know this from the New Testament writings.

Who? God. God chose who's going to be the prophet. I want to digress again, but I'm not going to.

Okay. Thus says the Lord. What kind of population?

The entire. Complete. Or the whole. So, when we read here what Abraham is told by God, God appears to Abraham and he says, walk before me and be thou perfect.

[16 : 15] It means complete or whole or sound or blameless. It can be rendered blameless and sincere.

Now, by the way, since we went through the little etymology thing before, what does sincere mean in its core, the root of the word?

Honest, true, but the idea of the word is held up to the light and examined. You can see it. You know, sincere, if we were using it in common times now, we would probably say, be a sincere person, be a transparent person.

What does that mean? You are what you say you are. Right? What you see is what you get. That's sincerity.

[17 : 23] Well, what I say is what I mean. Now, although, Abraham, God says, Abraham's my...

How is Abraham going to be described in the New Testament? Abraham was the friend of whom?

Of God. Well, he's a father of the faith, too, but Abraham was a friend of God. So, Abraham, before God, well, we know from...

Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness. So, Abraham is sincere, but he's not always going to say what he means.

He's going to lie a couple of times. We've already seen it in the last session. We're going to see it again coming. Spoiler alert. Okay.

[18 : 32] So, this sincerity has to do with being able to be examined or being transparent as a person. So, he's telling Abraham, look, be upright.

Be a complete man and be transparent. Be sincere. Now, that's good for Abraham.

What about us? I mean, this is the dispensation of the grace of God, right?

So, you may also know, I have actually heard this taught on a TV station. I can't remember the guy's name and it's probably a good thing I don't. Some years ago, when we were visiting Craig and Louise, we saw this.

Craig said, hey, listen to this guy. Anyway, his position was, you can be...

[19 : 41] I should be foul-mouthed in the pulpit. I can do... You know, because you need to live by grace.

It was, shall we sin that grace may abound kind of teaching. Now, is that true for the church today? Well, I know I'm not saved by my works, right?

But do my works matter? You can grieve the Holy Spirit. See, God uses anthropomorphic expressions sometimes to describe himself, especially as he relates to humans.

Because God is... Well, we know that God's eternal. So, he is eternally complete within himself. It's not like he needs me.

But God, in his grace and his mercy, allows me to have a relationship with him. And he says, if you misbehave, you can grieve me.

[21 : 00] In fact, in the Old Testament, he was grieved that he had made man, remember Noah? And the days of Noah?

So, 1 Corinthians 1, verse 8. Someone grab that one. Raise your hand if you'll take that.

I want participation. Okay, thank you, Sherry. And Colossians 1, verse 21. I'm going to call on somebody if you don't.

John? Colossians 1, verse 21. Okay, 1 Corinthians 1.

Eight. Okay, who's who? Jesus Christ. That's the gospel of grace.

[22 : 09] Isn't it? Who's going to show me blameless? Christ.

Colossians 1, verse 21. Who was formerly alienated and hostile in mind?

Us. Well, everybody. At this point, everybody. Okay.

Go ahead, please. Yet. Yes. Yes. My position today in Christ is totally righteous.

Saints. Set apart. Now, thankfully, who sanctifies? God does through Christ.

[23 : 30] How am I accepted by God? God. You've heard this phrase, God accepts everybody. He says, you are accepted in the beloved.

I'm acceptable to God because of Christ. Christ. If I march up to God, as it were, on my own, that's right.

Filthy rags. The best day I ever lived with the best intentions I have ever had are not good enough. Right? Philippians.

Right? Okay. That was a real question. So, the righteousness that I have comes by faith in Christ and what he has done on the cross.

He, that's why he is the propitiation. He has turned away God's wrath from me to himself. himself.

[24 : 49] By becoming sin for for me. So that I might be the righteousness of Christ in him.

So when God looks at us, if we have trusted Christ as our Savior, when God looks at us, he doesn't see, he doesn't see us. He doesn't see Harry, he sees Jesus.

that is marvelous. In the real sense of the word. Okay.

Positionally, I'm blameless. What about practically? Well, I know I am, but what about you? What about you? What about you? I love that one.

That's right. Okay. Let's look at a couple. Just for, let's look at positions.

[26 : 00] 1 Timothy chapter 3 verse 10 and well, let's keep reading it. 1 Timothy chapter 3 verse 10 and here the Apostle Paul, God, through the Apostle Paul, is telling Timothy how to set up the politic of the church and he's talking now specifically about deacons.

Okay. If they be found blameless, if there's nothing against them. So, the eldership of the church in terms of deacons is supposed to test them.

They're supposed to scrutinize their behavior. So, behavior does matter, doesn't it? So, in Titus, now this is for the elders.

Titus chapter 1 verse 7. You're back in that area anyway. Yes. Go back to the 10 again. They must be tested and then if there is nothing against them.

In other words, you're saying they've been perfect and no one has been perfect. So, what does that mean then actually? It means that they have a good reputation in the community.

[27 : 27] That is, nothing against them. Well, it doesn't mean in God's eyes. Here he's talking about the church doing the testing. So, you can't see the man's heart, can you?

Let me ask that again and the answer, I'll give you the answer. The answer is that's correct. You cannot see the man's heart. or see his whole life, what he's done in his whole life.

Well, he's not talking about the whole life, he's talking about Christians. You're not talking about before he became Christian. Why did he have to become a Christian? You would not know anyone else could in his life.

Possibly, but you're supposed to scrutinize what you can see. Okay, now we're getting to it. Scrutinize what you can see and what you know about him. Right. You may not know all the sin in his life, you may not be aware of it.

Nor should you. You've been forgiven. Especially, it's all under the blood. Now what he's talking about is, if you're going to put a person in a position of deaconship, they have to have a good, their behavior has to be good before the church and before the men out, before the population outside the church.

[28 : 55] And that's to guard the church. First Timothy, or Titus rather, chapter 1 verse 7, now he's talking about bishops or elders, overseers, sometimes it's right.

What's pugnacious?

Well, that's a word we don't commonly use anymore. We used to use it. What? Yeah. Yeah. What's a pugilist?

A boxer. He's not prone to fight. Now, can he be a Christian and go to the bar and get in a fight?

Yes. Do you want him as an elder? No. That's pretty simple, isn't it? If he does that, he's saved.

[30 : 06] He's a brother in the Lord. You might say, you ought not be doing that. You know, you could avoid a lot of problems if you didn't do that. Life's tough. I don't need to make it worse by being stupid.

Right? Life will be plenty hard enough when I live the way I wish to live. There's going to be plenty in this life that's going to be tough.

I don't need to make it worse. worse. So, that's what he's saying. He's saying, look, he shouldn't, he's, and he's giving specific examples.

He shouldn't be prone to fight. He shouldn't be antagonistic. He shouldn't be a drunkard. He shouldn't do this. Because he's going to represent whom?

Christ, and specifically this congregation, right? So, we want to be careful there. Okay, and then, now these are practical matters.

[31 : 14] He's not saying you're saved by this. He's saying, these are practical matters. And in Philippians chapter 1, verse 9, I'll go ahead with this.

Paul prays for the church, and he says, and this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in judgment. Verse 10, that ye may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense until the day of Christ.

Now, just a word about that. This is very pointed. You may approve those things which are excellent. That word is actually different.

You may approve or prove those things. In fact, Stanley Tam named his book things that differ.

That's where he gets it from. That word is the same word that Paul uses when he talks about the resurrected body and he says there's one flesh flesh of birds and a different flesh of fish.

[32 : 31] That's the word. And so what he's saying is look, I pray that your love may abound still more and more that you may be sincere and blameless and how do I help myself in that?

By approving those things which are excellent or which differ. Specifically that word talks about the things which carry through.

See, there are principles that I learn not only about God, in fact, most of the character and nature of God we learn in the Old Testament.

Right? There that's where he really says, I am the Lord. I am holy. And he made it very plain to Israel.

When when when why did I lose his name?

[33 : 46] Moses' brother. Aaron. When Aaron's sons put the wrong incense in their censers and spread the incense across the altar, what did God do?

He killed them. And then he said to Aaron through Moses, you don't go out.

You do not mourn for them. You have the aphod of the Lord and the anointing oil of the Lord on you. You're going to stay right here and you're not going to mourn your sons.

That's big deal. So we learn about God mostly through what he shows himself in the Old Testament, especially through the law.

in fact, especially through the law, which becomes the tutor to lead me to oh, come on now, I know you know this, the law is given as a tutor.

[34 : 56] Was the law given to impart righteousness? No, in fact, exactly. And that's specific revelation. Paul said, look, the law was never given as an imputation of righteousness.

It's given to show sin as being exceeding sinful so that it drives me to the only one who can help me.

Who's that? Christ. So positionally, I'm perfect. Now, we were just going over some practical things.

So even in this dispensation, being sincere and living a life commensurate with what we read in the word of God is important.

But I need to discern that here's where the carry-through comes. That doesn't mean observing the Sabbath. Right? The church is not to observe the Sabbath.

[36 : 10] Because the law has been what's happened to the law. It's been nailed to the cross. And it has no more effect.

right.

It's a principle that carries through. That's part of what we are to learn. Okay, now, back to Genesis chapter 17, 1-14.

So, God has spoken to Abram. Abraham falls on his face before God. And God continues to speak.

What does God say? Okay.

[37 : 19] Now, as for you, or as for me, behold, my covenant is with you. You shall be what?

Maybe? You shall be. Okay. Neither shall thy name be called any more Abram, but, so he's going to change his name, and I will make you what?

And what shall come out of thee? Kings. Kings. So, I'm going to make nations of you, and kings will come out of you.

And we'll see that both in Israel, of course, and, for that matter, in Arabs, through Ishmael.

But, I jump ahead. Now, one thing let's look at before we end this morning.

[38 : 29] For nations will come out of thee. normally, I say normally, when we read in the scripture where God speaks about nations, to whom is he referring?

Usually, it means Gentiles. Usually, it means Gentiles. it's used about 550 times in the Hebrew scripture, the word nations.

Of those, according to my poor count, approximately 40 times it refers or can refer to Israel as a nation.

All the other times it refers to Gentiles. Gentiles. Usually, it refers to Gentiles. Here, what the word means is peoples, groups of people.

We would call what we commonly hear now, especially through mission work, is people groups. Right?

[39 : 49] That's how we hear it talked about frequently. That's what the word literally means. People groups. So, there are going to be people groups, he's telling him.

Again, usually when you read, either here or even in the New Testament, when you see, especially in the Gospels, the four Gospels, when you see the word nations, he's usually referring to the Gentiles.

So, for example, when Jesus gives the parable of the judgment between the sheep and the goats, has anyone beside Sherry and I ever heard that preached, that that's a judgment for Christians?

Have you ever heard that? That's because you've been here longer. We've heard it preached that, well, that means you have to be careful how you treat people because Jesus said that whatever you do to children, you know, to the least of these, you do it unto me, and that's for Christians.

No, it isn't. That's a judgment after, specifically, it has to do with a judgment after the tribulation, and it's a judgment of the Gentile nations and what they did with Israel.

[41 : 31] So, normally, when you read the word nations, it's going to refer to Gentiles. Normally. The context will usually tell us.

Yes? Yes? More to the point, it would be considered what used to be called races.

Now, that word has been co-opted. That's another word that's been co-opted in a couple of generations. that did not used to refer to color.

It used to refer to the French race, the English race, ethnic groups. And, this really would refer to ethnic groups, specifically.

Not so much, it doesn't refer to, no, it doesn't refer to the church, and it doesn't refer to, it doesn't refer to America, or a different country, it refers to different, because, remember, when this is being delivered, when this is being delivered, the concept of nationality wasn't understood.

[43 : 03] good. The oldest nation that we know of, really, as far as being able to discern it, would be probably Babylon and Egypt.

Those are the oldest nations, the Sumerians, but, but they were empires, too, remember. So they were not just what we call Egypt today, but predominantly, yes.

The idea of nationality wasn't there yet. That is a political thing that's going to come a little later.

It's going to be historically recorded in scripture, but it's not going to be a big deal there. Okay, now, we'll stop.

We'll pick up with, we'll pick up with verse 7 next week, God willing. Have a great day. Have a great weekend.