



## Sermon Transcription • Abbotsford

### February 3/4, 2018 - Greg Harris Meet Abe - (Genesis 12:1-9)

**[Please Note: This transcript has been lightly edited for ease of reading. Also, some headings have been added in square brackets to aid the reader in locating portions of the sermon.]**

We're starting a new sermon series, and it's going to be on the life of Abraham. So, in the past we've done a few sermon series on characters and people in the Old Testament, and so we're going to do that again with the person of Abraham. And if you've been coming to Northview for maybe a few months, or maybe a few years, you might have noticed that for some of our sermon series before the preacher comes up there's like, a video with graphics and really intense music behind it, and it's epic, right? Well, we don't have one of those for this sermon series, but I did not want you guys to feel deprived of having a sermon start with a video, and so for your blessing, we're going to run this video.

Yeah, that's enough. [Laughter] Look, I show you that video, mostly because I've done a few of your weddings and I've been at weddings, and you all need some new dance moves. So lead with the trunk and the arms will follow, right? [Laughter] Look, now, you have one move. One. You can get out there, I promise. But I actually wanted to show it because when it comes to characters in the Old Testament, usually we do one of two errors. We either patronize them and just think of them as basically cartoon characters. Not even as real people, just as, like, these fake fairy tales of these interesting people. And so we just kind of, you know, we do the one-off songs about them and then kind of wipe our hands of them and then we're done with it. We treat them like cartoons, or we put them on a pedestal so high above the rest of us that we treat them like they are the superheroes. Like they are completely different from you and me. Well, in reality, it's not that they're just a cartoon character, they're actually really important real people in God's plan. But they're also not superheroes; they're regular people. They're just Abe. And so we're going to walk through the story of Abraham over a few chapters in Genesis over the next few weeks, and as we go through those passages, I think we're going to see that Abe is, without a doubt, one of the most important figures in all of Scripture, in terms of how God worked through him to bring salvation. And yet, he's just a normal dude.

And so, today we're going to start this sermon series, we're going to be looking at Genesis 12, and as we're unpacking this text, we're going to be talking about the text for sure, but the things that I say this morning are going to be helpful for us as a bit of a framework for the entire sermon series moving forward. So, the things I'm talking about today hopefully can stay in your mind a little bit as we walk through all of the different accounts that we're going to in the next few weeks. So, as we unpack Genesis 12 and go through the rest of the series, here's two things I want you to keep in your mind. That when it comes to understanding the story of Abraham properly, we have to recognize that we're



not Abe, and that Abe is not the hero. So, to understand Genesis 12 and to understand the story of Abraham, we have to realize that we're not Abe, and Abe is not the hero.

### **[We're Not Abe]**

So first, let's look at how we're not Abe. We're going to look at Genesis 12 starting in verse 1, if you have a Bible that's great, if not it'll be on the screen for you as well. Genesis 12:1:

“The LORD had said to Abram, ‘Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.’ So Abram went, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Harran. He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated and the people they had acquired in Harran, and they set out for the land of Canaan, and they arrived there. Abram traveled through the land as far as the site of the great tree of Moreh at Shechem. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. The LORD appeared to Abram and said, “To your offspring I will give this land.” So he built an altar there to the LORD, who had appeared to him. From there he went on toward the hills east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. There he built an altar to the LORD and called on the name of the LORD. Then Abram set out and continued toward the Negev.”

So, in these first nine verses we see a few things. Two in particular, one, we have some travel plans, and we also have some promises that God has given to Abraham. So first, let's kind of just get our mind, a little bit, on the journey that Abram had to take. In this part of the story, his name is still Abram, later his name will be called Abraham. I'll probably just use those names interchangeably but the same guy, okay? So, Abram started his journey in Ur, which was a metropolitan area, and I actually think we have a map that is going to help us understand it. And there's a real picture of Abraham right there, so there you go. [Laughter] That photographer was lucky, he got a good shot. So he started down in Ur, and Ur was a metropolitan area, he travelled about a thousand kilometres north to Harran, which was more of an agricultural setting. And from Harran he travelled another 800 kilometres down to Canaan, and that's where Shechem and Bethel and all that kind of place, that we just read about, that was the land of Canaan, that was the land God was going to give to Abram's offspring. And then he realized that there are people in Canaan, so obviously he wasn't going to get the land quite then, because the seat was taken. And so he kept going toward the Negev, which is a region between Canaan and Egypt, and it was a drier area where not a lot of things grew, but he was going out of Canaan and continuing on his journey.

To help us understand the kind of journey that Abram was taking, so God promised to give Abram a land for his offspring, but he was travelling from a major metropolitan area, so think in your mind something like San Francisco. A pretty significant city that people would have known was a major metropolitan area. He travels about a thousand kilometres towards a more agricultural setting, so think in your mind something like Cranbrook. He's going to the Kootenays, right? It's a similar



distance also, from Ur to Harran, from San Fran to Cranbrook. And so, from Cranbrook though, the goal wasn't to stay in Harran, to stay in the Kootenays, the goal was to get to the Promised Land. So he had to travel another 800 kilometres, to the land of Canaan. So picture going from the Kootenays to Winnipeg, okay? Promised Land. [Laughter] Brother, you're like, "I'm from there! It's awesome! Mosquitoes, and ice you'll love it." So another 800 kilometres, he goes from the Kootenays to Winnipeg, he goes from Harran to Canaan, and that was the journey he took. Now Abram had to leave everything that was familiar to him. He had to leave his family, he had to leave, he would have known everything about the city of Ur, he would have known the good restaurants to shop at, he would have known all the little spots in this area. And he was called to leave that. I don't know if you've had that experience where you had to leave the place where you grew up, you had to leave your family and friends behind, you had to leave your familiar knowledge of you knew what transit to take to get where, and what time that perfect burger place opened at, and all that kind of stuff. You had to leave what was familiar to go and transition to something new. This is what Abram's journey was like.

But it was more than just him leaving some personal connections and familiarity behind. Abram was leaving his religion behind. See, in the ancient world, it wasn't an atheistic society where everyone assumed there was no god, and then God comes to Abram and he's like, "What? There's a god? I didn't know that." No, they were in a polytheistic setting, so they would have worshipped multiple gods. So Abram probably had a regional god that his family worshipped, his family or his father probably had another god that was responsible for taking care of their family in particular. So, by God calling Abram, out of Ur towards the land of Canaan, what he's asking Abram to do is not just leave his familiarities behind, he's asking him to leave his religion behind, to go to the land that he had promised him. But here's the thing, what God promised Abram was more than he could have ever dreamed of. God promised him all kinds of things. We're actually going to see now, in the first few verses of Genesis 12 what God promised him. So starting Genesis 12:1,

"The LORD had said to Abram, 'Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.'

And then in verse 7 when Abram was in Canaan, and he saw people in there, the Lord appeared to Abram and said,

"To your offspring I will give this land."

So look, Abram is promised protection, prosperity, a purpose, popularity, a new place, and a people. So he's leaving what's familiar but what he's getting is beyond what he could have imagined. In particular, what would have been great for Abram was the promise of a nation coming through him, because his wife, we learned in Genesis 11 that his wife, Sarai, was barren, and in the ancient world, children were the sign of blessing. So to not have kids is to not be blessed in the ancient world. And so, for him to be offered, not just popularity and a purpose, and a place, but a people, that's beyond what he would have dreamed of. So yes, he's leaving everything that he knows behind, but he's going



towards a promise of something that was more than he ever could have imagined. See, this is a great story of someone leaving everything behind, towards a future that they can't even yet imagine, but in order for us to understand this story properly, in order for us to understand the life of Abraham properly, we need to realize that we're not Abe. That God does promise believers all kinds of great things, but we're not promised exactly what Abraham was promised.

Look, it's really common in the Christian world today for teachers and preachers and writers to talk about passages as though they're directly for you. That the promises that Abraham received are the promises for you. When it comes to Bible study, we talk, as pastors and people who study the Bible, we talk about a good way to study the Bible being exegesis. So what that means is, you have a text, and you're trying to get the meaning out from the text. "Ex," out of, the text. So you're taking the text and you're finding the meaning out of it. This is what we try to do in our sermons, and in our men's and women's Bible studies, and all the ministries we do. What we're trying to say is, this is the text, and this is the meaning we get from the passage, out of it.

But there's another way to study the Bible, and that's called "eisegesis." It's putting our meaning *into* the passage. So whatever we think, we put it on top of the language of the Scriptures. One of the ways that, an example of this, is in Colossians 1, Jesus is called "the firstborn over all creation." Well, imagine you're sitting at home watching the Superbowl, and you get a knock on your door, and it's a Jehovah Witness. And they come to your door, and here's what they might say to you from that passage. They might say to you something like, "Hey, that passage, Colossians 1, where it talks about Jesus being the firstborn over all creation, being firstborn, that means that he's different from God. He was born from God. He's not God himself, he was the firstborn from God. See how Jesus isn't actually God?" they might say to you. Well, here's the problem. Yeah, being firstborn can refer, in our day obviously it refers to being born from someone. But in the ancient world, when this was written, in the first century, in Rome, being a firstborn over something meant that you had authority over something. So for us to read that Jesus was the firstborn over all creation, is for us to understand, when we're reading it from out of the text, that he has authority over all creation. That eisegesis, that we read into the Word what we think the Word means, even if it's not what the Word in its context historically, actually, was trying to get across.

There's a special way though, today, that people will be eisegetical, reading things into the text. And I didn't make this word up, but I've seen it thrown around, and so I'm going to use it because I think it's helpful. And it's called "narcigesis." We read ourselves into the text, right? If someone's a narcissist, if they're obsessed with themselves, you say, "That person's such a narcissist." We get that word from the Greek mythological story of the god Narcissist. The story goes that he didn't care about anyone. So it didn't matter who was around him, he was completely indifferent to them. Until one day, Narcissist's breath was taken away by a sight he could not imagine the beauty of. And it turned out to be his reflection. And he wanted so desperately what he could see, but he couldn't have it because it was his own reflection, and he was very distraught, because he loved what he saw so much, this Narcissist. See, narcissists are obsessed with themselves. And narcigesis is when we look at characters and events in the passages of Scripture, particularly in the Old Testament, and we read ourselves into those people, and we read ourselves into those stories. It's a very common technique



that's used all over the place, right now, and the problem with it, though, is not just that it's bad Bible reading, but that it sets us up for thinking that God has promised us something for what a normal Christian life should look like, that he actually hasn't promised us.

Here's a few examples of this. From the story of Abraham, there's a teacher, author, writer by the name of Lisa Comes. Her maiden name is Osteen. It's part of the family business, her brother's name is Joel. Here's how she teaches Genesis 12 with the promises to Abraham:

“God says in Galatians 3:9 that we are blessed along with Abraham. That means that every blessing he had we can have. In Genesis 12, God pronounces a seven-fold blessing over Abraham. And these seven things belong to you and me. [She's a narcissist.] Number one, [I'm not going to read all seven, but number one] I'll make you into a great nation. Abraham was the first Hebrew person, and God birthed the nation of Israel through him. If you study all the Scriptures, you'll find that God said to Abraham, “I'll multiply you, increase you, make you powerful!” That's what God wants to do in your life. This is your legacy, your inheritance. God wants to increase you in every area. He wants to increase your finances. God wants to make you great and multiply what you have, just like he did for Abraham. Number two, I'll bless you. Abraham was blessed with abundance. In fact Genesis 24:1 says that Abraham was blessed in every way. I love that! God can bless you with things that you didn't even have to work for. Deuteronomy 6:11 says that he'll give you houses you did not build, and wells you did not dig, and vineyards you did not plant. Number three, I'll make your name great. Everywhere Abraham went, people knew him. His reputation preceded him and followed him. He was a mighty prince, he was highly favoured of God. God will enlarge you and make your name great, just as he did for Abraham. Number 4, you'll be a blessing. This is where the phrase “you're blessed to be a blessing” comes from. One of the main reasons God wants us to have more than enough is so we can bless and help others. God wants us to be generous, he wants us to be blessed so we can give to those in need. He wants us to share our blessings.”

This is narcissism. Here's the story of Abraham. I'm going to read myself into the place of Abraham, and what God promises to Abraham are promises to me. And that develops an expectation for the normal Christian life that God has not intended to promise us.

T.D. Jakes is the name of a pastor in the States, and he is a narcissist, man, he does this all over the place. He did this in a recent tweet, talking about Moses and the burning bush. So if you're not familiar with this story, Moses was out in the wilderness, and God wanted to use Moses in a very particular way, to save his people from captivity in Egypt. So Moses was going to receive a very specific call on his life, to be the one through whom God would deliver Israel. And the way that God called Moses to this ministry, this calling, was through a burning bush, where God is speaking to Moses through this burning bush, right? Very specific call, burning bush. Here's how T.D. Jakes teaches this, via Twitter: “Each time you think you've put your dreams to sleep, God will send you a burning bush which will ignite your passion. God has placed that burning desire inside of you to fulfill his purpose for your life.” See, do you have a particular purpose which you think your life is meant to be about? And maybe you're having second thoughts, that maybe you weren't called to be a teacher, maybe you were



supposed to be a lawyer? Or maybe you weren't supposed to be a doctor, maybe you were supposed to be a missionary? Do you have doubts over that specific calling God placed on your life? Don't worry, he'll send another burning bush around, to confirm that where you are is where God wants you to be. This is narcigesis. This is reading into the descriptions of things that happened to people in the Scriptures, our very personhood, and saying, "Those promises, or those descriptions are for me."

But the problem with this is that it's not just bad Bible reading, it makes disciples of people who have expectations for their life that God has not promised them. See, Abraham, without a doubt, was the recipient of an abundance of blessing. But we can't read into that story, and say, "See? Because Abraham got an abundance of blessing, me too! That means I'm going to get the bigger house, I'm going to get the boat. I'm going to get the job with more money, because Abraham had a blessing, and he had abundance, and I'm just like Abe!" We're not Abe. Now listen, you might, it's possible that you're going to get the job with more money. It's possible you're going to get the bigger house and not be house poor, to actually able to afford it. It's possible that you're going to get the bigger boat, and it's likely, the reason you have all the stuff is so that you can be a blessing, for sure. But listen, just because it's possible that that can take place in your life, does not mean that God's *promised* it in your life. But if you think he's promised it and you don't have it, you're going to have unmet expectations that God has never actually given us. We're like Moses and the burning bush, and his really particular call in that moment to have a purpose for his life. We look at our life, and we think, I'm not going to choose a school to go to, or a job to take, or a person to date, or do anything until I have that "burning bush calling" moment. God gave it to Moses, he'll give it to me. No. It's possible that you'll have a very clear call on your life of what in particular you're going to do in the world to serve God, or what specifically your life is going to look like. It's possible that that's going to take place. It's not promised.

Or, people love doing this with David and Goliath, right? David comes, and there's a giant, and he has to defeat the giant with the stones, and he defeats the giant, and see? The giants in your life are meant to be defeated. So do you have financial needs that's a giant? God intends for you to defeat that giant. Do you have relational issues? God intends for that issue to be defeated. Do you have health issues? You just need a breakthrough, man, defeat the giant! Look, it's possible that the giants in your life of your financial situation, of your relationship situation, of your health situation, it's possible that those giants, by God's grace, may be defeated. But it's not promised. Because we're not Dave. But look, when we narcigete our way through the Bible, we develop expectations for what a normal Christian life looks like, that God has never given to us. We expect abundance because of Abraham, and Jesus teaches his disciples to pray for their daily bread. We expect the giants to be defeated because David defeated Goliath, and yet Jesus says, "I've overcome the world, but you're going to have troubles." See, narcigesis is actually really damaging to us. So as we read this story of the life of Abraham, please, let's not read ourselves into it. There is good news for us through his story, but we are not Abe.

### **[Abe Is Not the Hero]**

Secondly, to read this story well, we also need to recognize that Abe is not the hero. So, in our text where we left off, Abe was called out of Ur, he goes to the Promised Land of Canaan, but the seat was taken, so he heads towards the Negev, which was a region known for being really dry. So, if you were



to hear something like, “There’s going to be a famine in the Negev,” you’d be like, “That’s as surprising as hearing there’s going to be rain in the Fraser Valley.” So Abram’s in the Negev, Genesis 12:10,

“Now there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to live there for a while because the famine was severe. As he was about to enter Egypt, he said to his wife Sarai, ‘I know what a beautiful woman you are. When the Egyptians see you, they will say, ‘This is his wife.’ Then they will kill me but will let you live. Say you are my sister, so that I will be treated well for your sake and my life will be spared because of you.’ When Abram came to Egypt, the Egyptians saw that Sarai was a very beautiful woman. And when Pharaoh’s officials saw her, they praised her to Pharaoh, and she was taken into his palace. He treated Abram well for her sake, and Abram acquired sheep and cattle, male and female donkeys, male and female servants, and camels. But the LORD inflicted serious diseases on Pharaoh and his household because of Abram’s wife Sarai. So Pharaoh summoned Abram. ‘What have you done to me?’ he said. ‘Why didn’t you tell me she was your wife? Why did you say, ‘She is my sister,’ so that I took her to be my wife? Now then, here is your wife. Take her and go!’ Then Pharaoh gave orders about Abram to his men, and they sent him on his way, with his wife and everything he had.”

So Abram is on a journey towards Egypt now, because in the Negev there was a famine, no big surprise, that’s like the Fraser Valley having rain. He’s heading towards Egypt, because that’s where you go when you need to find food, because Egypt was a place that had a lot of fertile ground, great agriculture, there was water coming in from all kinds of places. So you could grow crops, you could have food, it was a very common trip for people to take to go into Egypt to find relief from a famine, it was a land of opportunity. Andy, who’s preaching the sermon, Andy Steiger, he’s our young adults pastor, he’s preaching the sermon in Mission this weekend, and he found a great quote from an Ancient Egyptian text around this time of the Egyptians not feeling so happy with everyone coming into their land always, to get food from their land. Here’s the text, I think you’ll hear how history repeats itself. In response to people coming into the land of Egypt, they said, “There will be built a wall of the ruler. Life, prosperity, health, and the Asians will not be permitted to come down into Egypt, that they might beg for water in the customary manner, in order to let their beasts drink. And justice will come into this place while wrongdoing is driven out.” Right, sound familiar? Build the wall, make Egypt great again. Right? They didn’t want people coming into the land to receive the benefits of the land, but this was very, very common.

So Abram makes a plan to keep himself alive before he can enter into the land of Canaan, because remember, seat taken. So his plan is to go to Egypt, part one. Part two of his plan was, implement “plan wife is not wife, she’s actually sister.” So he goes in, and he says to Sarai, “Look, I know you’re in your seventies, but you’re still turning heads, okay? So, I need you to lie about not being my wife, I need you to say that you are my sister so I’m not killed because of your beauty.” So she does it. And, actually, it wasn’t just Abraham being like, “Oh, I love you honey, you’re really beautiful.” But the Egyptians were like, “What a beautiful woman.” So they bring her into Pharaoh’s house to be one of his wives, and because of this deception, because of this act of self preservation in his own favour, not



trusting God, God brings judgement on Pharaoh for the sin that's taking place, of him sleeping with another man's wife. And Pharaoh comes to Abram and is like, "What are you doing to me? You could have just told me the truth." But Abram built himself quite a bit of wealth from this move, right? He got all kinds of stuff given to him, he was treated really well? Plus he wasn't killed because of his hot wife? Everything looked like it was coming out great, but actually his act of not trusting God was an evidence of how this guy's not actually a hero. It doesn't take long in Abram's story to find out he's no hero.

But look, in the book of Genesis so far, to this point, you would expect Abram to be a hero. Here's why. Starting in Genesis 3, all the way through chapter 11, it's like one big story of exponential wickedness taking place in the lives of humanity. Starts with rebellion against God, it continues into murder, continues into all kinds of sexual immorality. It escalates to the point where humankind was saying, "We are God. We can build a huge tower and actually get up to the heavens so that we can be God," and it's just one story after another of the wickedness of people. And how is God going to respond to this? Genesis 12. He comes to Abram, and he says, "I choose you, that I'm going to work through you to be a blessing to the world." Now if you're reading this story and you're thinking to yourself, "Abraham's a good dude to choose. Obviously there was something in Abram that made him so attractive to God to choose to be the guy, right? Obviously he's a pretty righteous guy." Cue verse 10, and "wife is actually my sister" plan. You realize really early the plot twist, that actually, Abram's not the hero. He's just a regular guy. Yes, he responded in faith to the call of God on his life, moving from Ur, to the land of Canaan, for sure, he demonstrated faith, but he's no hero. He's not the hero of his own story.

See, what the problem for humanity was, that there are rebels against God, and they are separated from God because of their rebellion. And so God needs to redeem people from their rebellion, and he needs to reconcile the relationship that has been separated. But instead of going straight to Jesus, God starts by revealing himself through people like Abe. See, the Old Testament is stories about real people, that actually lived, that God worked through, and events that took place that God worked through, to reveal who he is. See, in the story of Abraham, we see that God reveals himself as God Almighty, the promise maker. In the story of Moses, we see that God is severe towards those who oppose him, but gracious and merciful towards those who put their trust in him. Through Moses's story, we learn his name, this God, his name is Yahweh. Through the development and giving of the law, we learn that this God who is there is perfect. Through the temple, we learn that the God who is there is holy. Through the sacrifices in the temple, we learn that the God who is there, to be reconciled to him, to have forgiveness is costly. Through David, we learn that he's our king. Through the prophets we learn that if you repent, he will welcome you back in. All of the Old Testament is sprinting towards the revelation moment, that's going to be the best revelation moment yet. His name is Jesus.

Look, if we're going to understand Abraham's story well, we have to realize he's not the hero of the story, he points to the hero of the story. We learn about God through the story of Abraham, and he helps us see how Jesus is the fulfillment of the promises given to Abraham. Jesus is the fulfillment of the promises given to Moses. Jesus is the fulfillment of the promises given throughout the Old Testament, like Paul said in 2 Corinthians, "For no matter how many promises God has made, they are



‘yes’ in Christ.” See, Abe’s not the hero. Jesus is. But before we get to Jesus, we have to learn about what God wants to reveal, how he wants to reveal himself through the person of Abraham.

Look, here’s the deal. In our culture, it’s very common for us to believe that we are the heroes of our own stories. And in this room, there are thousands of stories, and you are the hero of your own. But in reality, there is one great cosmic story being told, and the hero of that story is Jesus. God works through people, he works through events in history, the Old Testament and history today, to help people see the one hero who is Jesus. It’s through Jesus that our rebellion can be redeemed. It’s through Jesus that our relationship can be reconciled, like it was meant to be. You’re not the hero, Abe’s not the hero, Jesus is the hero. And look, if you come to this God who has revealed himself most fully in Jesus, and you respond in faith, you will receive blessings. Not the same that Abraham received, but you’ll receive a hope and a future, and a land that will last an eternity. And you will be redeemed and reconciled to the God who is there, and your future is nothing but friendly, because of your faith in the true hero, Jesus.

Galatians 3:7-9, Paul writes this:

“Understand, then, that those who have faith are children of Abraham. Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: ‘All nations will be blessed through you.’ So those who rely on faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.”

Not *because* of Abraham, we are blessed along *with* Abraham, the man of faith. Look, Abraham’s important. He demonstrated faith in God, and we should emulate that faith in God, but Abraham’s not the hero of his story. The only reason the story of Abraham is good news is because it’s not the whole story. There’s one hero, and his name is Jesus. And look, father Abraham had many sons, but the sons who receive the blessing that God intends to give, are those who respond in faith to Jesus Christ. Because when you respond in faith to Jesus Christ, it’s not only that you are a spiritual child of Abraham, it’s that now you are a child of the Most High God, because Jesus is the hero of the story. Not you, not me, not Abe. Jesus. So look, I’m excited for this sermon series, because we get to meet Abe. Not because he’s a hero, but because through his story, we’re going to get to meet the true hero. Let me pray for us,

Father, I’m thankful for your Word, I’m thankful for the way you have moved in history to make us see Jesus and who he is, and what he’s done for us. For those of us who are here who have responded in faith in Jesus, for the salvation of our sins before, I pray that you would give us great joy in your steadfast faithfulness. The fact that you don’t choose people like Abe because they’re great, you choose them because you’re gracious. Father, overwhelm us with that good news again today. And for those who are here who don’t yet know you, I pray that you would transform their hearts so that they would see Jesus as the hero of their story, not themselves. And that they would receive the blessings and the promises that come along with that, which is relationship with you for eternity. And we don’t deserve any of this, but we’re so thankful that we have it in Christ. And it’s in his name I pray. Amen.