

FIGURES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

Covenant and Fatherhood

The two gifts entrusted to Abraham — covenant, and a son

SPEAKER	Amy Cogdell
DATE	Sunday, September 26, 2021
PASSAGES	Genesis 12; Genesis 15; Genesis 17; Genesis 22
MESSAGE	Begins at 1:08:43 in the service

THE BIG IDEA

Abraham is the one figure in Scripture who is a type of the *Father* rather than of Christ. Read that way, Genesis 15 and Genesis 22 stop being a story about what God demands of a man and become a revelation of what God gives: the greatest gift He could imagine for His friend was a son — and on Moriah He showed, centuries early, what it would cost Him to give His own.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ◆ Adam, Noah, Melchizedek, Moses and David are types of *Christ*. Abraham is a type of the *Father* — and in that respect he is unique in Scripture.
- ◆ Of all the riches God could pour on the friend He had chosen, the greatest gift He could imagine was a son — because that is what is closest to the Father's own heart.
- ◆ Abraham lived before the law and could not keep it. He was saved exactly the way Gentiles are saved — by believing a promise. That makes [Genesis 15:6](#) one of the most important verses in all of Scripture.
- ◆ Waiting was the hallmark of Abraham's faith. He waited; Israel waited for Messiah; we wait for Christ's return. Faith is largely a matter of waiting — so let us not grow weary in it.

- ◆ The terror and darkness of the covenant in Genesis 15 was a gift — the fear of the Lord as a seal, and a veiled, ahead-of-time share in the Exodus that Abraham’s descendants would live through.
- ◆ A type is not a literary device. It is a physical, flesh-and-blood participation in a spiritual reality — which is why enacting the types (communion, baptism, the feasts) ties us to the reality behind them.
- ◆ The binding of Isaac is not a story about what God demands of men. It is a revelation of what He gives — and the Father suffered more than Abraham did, because He did not stop the knife.

Hope Chapel’s walk through the figures of the Old Testament jumped this Sunday from Noah to Abraham, and it changed hands: Matt Ryniker handed the pulpit to Amy Cogdell, who has spent the last two years, as she put it, “kind of lost in wonder, contemplating Abraham.” She has a book to show for it — *My Father Abraham*, written the previous year — and the message opened with a reading from it, delivered in a darkened room by **Kevin Daniel** before she stepped up to preach.

Thirteen chapters of Genesis is more than one Sunday can hold, so Amy narrowed to two: [Genesis 15](#) and [Genesis 22](#). Those two chapters, she said, hold two gifts entrusted to Abraham that are essential to our salvation — **covenant** and **fatherhood**.

What follows tracks her argument in order. Every section heading carries a timestamp link back to that moment in the recording.

About these notes. They were drawn from the recording and then rebuilt against Amy’s own sermon manuscript, which she supplied. The rule followed throughout: *what she preached stands as the record*. Her manuscript has been used to repair garbled audio, fix spellings and citations, and confirm her intent — never to replace her spoken words with her written ones. Where she wrote something she did not say on the day, it is quarantined in its own section, From Amy’s Written Notes, and labelled as such.

A Reading in the Dark

► [1:08:43](#)

Matt warned the room that the sermon would begin with a reading rather than a sentence — something “artful,” he said, a way of approaching God speaking to Abraham. The lights went down. What followed was a meditation addressed directly to God, not to the congregation.

Amy’s manuscript names the reader and the staging: **Kevin Daniel**, reading with a slide of [Genesis 12:1–4](#) displayed behind him. The text is Amy’s, from *My Father Abraham*; the voice was his.

It set the scene by subtraction. A voice, and that was all — except the stars and the trees. Creation was the only witness. No books, no rules, no religion. Legends, yes: a distant past in which God walked with men, sacrifice perhaps offered to powers unseen. But no examples, and no teachers, for the man God chose. “It had to be that way in the beginning,” the reading said — *a walk led purely by the Spirit* — and it named that as the beginning of salvation history and a foretaste of its end, when we will have no need of teachers because we will all know God directly.

Then it began to wonder aloud. What did God see in Abraham that moved Him so — enough to speak to him in human words, to entrust him with a promise dear to His own heart, to seal him with His friendship? Something similar, the reading guessed, to what He saw in Mary. Was it awe? Humility? Longing? *How do You choose those to whom You open Your thoughts?*

And what was it like for Abram the first time — when he realized that the One who called the universe into being was calling *him*, when that voice cried out from eternity and landed in **Haran**, upon him? It must have been electrifying, exhilarating, terrifying and consoling all at once. God’s voice is power and glory; it transcends human imagination. When we hear it our souls are shaken — “or rather they are plowed, laid bare and tested.”

Those who hear must respond, and the choice is simple but weighty: we will believe, or we will doubt. Those who dare to believe receive an eternal seed, which takes root in the soul — a seed of the same stock God gave to Abram.

The reading noticed how gradually God works. He spoke to Abram many times before releasing the great seed He had promised Eve in the garden, the seed that would grow into His own family tree — because before Abram could bear the weight of that promise, he had to trust the voice. “You are kind to Your prophets that way, introducing Yourself slowly, mindful that we humans are dust.” He gave Moses **a burning bush** before **a pillar of fire**. He fed Elijah **with ravens** before lifting him to heaven **in a whirlwind**. He showed Jeremiah **a simple tree** before revealing the boiling pot of destruction. He **sent an angel to prepare Mary** before overshadowing her Himself.

With Abram, the reading suspected, God began more slowly still — because He was doing an entirely new thing: choosing a people as His witness on earth. Abram knew Him as Creator, as God and Judge of all. But Isaac would know Him as the God of his father. Jacob would know Him as the God of Abraham and Isaac. And every man afterward would know Him as **the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob**.

The reading closed on that humility: “I am astounded *at such humility*, that You would choose to be known by the name of men! You love this name, I think, for You are a Father Yourself.” Fatherhood is the joy from which God’s action springs; it is the end for which the world was made; it is the mystery into which He called Abram and his descendants.

Two Years Lost in Wonder

► 1:13:52

Amy named the source: the reading comes from the book she has written, *My Father Abraham*. Two years of contemplation had left her circling two questions. *What does it mean for God to take a man as a friend? What does it mean for Him to lay hold of a people as His possession and inheritance?*

Abraham, she pointed out, is one of the very few figures in Scripture called **a friend of God** — and he is the only Jewish man whom Gentiles can rightly call *father*, because God **changed his name to Abraham**, meaning father of many nations, and because he is a spiritual father to everyone who believes in his seed, Jesus the Messiah.

With the exception of Moses, she said, Jesus refers to Abraham more than any other Old Testament figure — twenty-six times in the Gospels. (She added the words “by name” at the pulpit; the manuscript reads simply “26 times in the gospels Jesus mentions Abraham.”) Amy has come to believe that emphasis is tied to Jesus’ love for the Father. Because Jesus knew He was the seed, the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham, He also understood His Father as a person *who has friends* — and who keeps His friendship with an undying love, **for God is the God of the living and not of the dead**.

She admitted how much she was leaving out. Abraham’s is one of the longer narratives in Scripture, spanning thirteen chapters — a very human, relatable story of faith and doubt, jealousy, hope, fear, pain, valor and love, with Sarah, Hagar, Ishmael, Isaac, Lot, the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah, the mysterious Melchizedek arriving to bless Abraham, and even Pharaoh making an appearance. “It’s all a wonderful story and I highly recommend you go home and read it all.” But time was short, so: Genesis 15 and Genesis 22 — covenant and fatherhood.

Abraham Is a Type of the Father

► 1:16:25

She started with fatherhood, and with a distinction the series had already been building. Scripture is full of men who prefigure Christ — the congregation had met Adam and Noah already; Melchizedek, Moses and David belong on the list too. But Abraham is a type of *the Father*. “In this respect he is unique in Scripture.”

Then the hinge of the whole message. When God looked down from heaven and found a man He wanted to bless, out of all the riches and glory and honor He could have poured on His friend, **the greatest gift He could possibly imagine was the gift of a son** — and that is because a son is what is closest to the Father’s own heart.

◆ *In her manuscript the sentence carries one more clause: the gift was “a promised son, born in freedom of his wife Sarah” — the Hagar-and-Sarah distinction Paul draws in [Galatians 4](#). She let it go at the pulpit.*

The love between the Father and the Son burns at the core of the Godhead, Amy said. It is His being — the love of Father, Son and Spirit. If all the material universe were to vanish tomorrow, the Father’s relationship with His Son would continue; the Trinity would go on perfectly happy, complete in the love of its persons. But the universe will not cease, and we will not be wiped away in a moment of anger, because God has extended His love to us. He intends to make us true brothers and sisters of His only begotten — and He has communicated that fatherly love by binding Himself with promises.

Which is the bridge to the second half: God’s fatherhood is expressed in His faithfulness, and His faithfulness is expressed most clearly and most explicitly in *covenant*. (Written: “expressed in *both love and faithfulness*.”)

Before the Covenant: Famine, Egypt, and Empty Hands

► 1:18:30

A quick review of how Abram arrived at that night. God called him out of Haran with “[come to a land that I will show you, which I will give you](#)” — and he went, with his wife Sarai. Shortly after they arrived in the promised land there was a famine. “Probably rather confusing,” Amy noted: they are finally *there*, and they have to leave.

In [Egypt](#), Abram told Sarai she was so beautiful he feared the Egyptians would kill him to take her — would she please say she was his sister. Sure enough Pharaoh was captivated and took her; God intervened, Sarai was saved, and the family was sent out of Egypt very rich.

And then the years passed. Abram still did not possess the land. He had no offspring. That was the situation when the Lord spoke to him again, as He had in Haran.

“After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, ‘Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward.’ But Abram said, ‘Lord GOD, what will You give me, seeing I go childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?’ Then Abram said, ‘Look, You have given me no offspring; indeed one born in my house is my heir!’ And behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, ‘This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir.’ Then He brought him outside and said, ‘Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them.’ And He said to him, ‘So shall your descendants be.’”

GENESIS 15:1-5 NKJV ↗

The Verse That Lets the Gentiles In

► 1:20:34

Amy put the next verse on the screen and had the whole room read it out loud with her.

“And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.”

GENESIS 15:6 NKJV ↗

This verse, she said, is one of the most important in all of Scripture — and it is *especially* important to Gentiles, because it shows us how we enter salvation.

Remember when Abraham lived: before the law. He could not fulfill the law as an act of faith or righteousness — the option did not exist. Amy was careful here not to let that become a slight against the law. The law of the Lord is beautiful, **converting the soul**; the testimony of the Lord is right; all of it is righteous and glorious. It was a sign given to Israel as a wonder for the nations, and keeping it was for Jews an act of faith and worship. But Abraham himself could not participate in the feasts or the sacrifices of the Mosaic law. **He was saved in exactly the same way we Gentiles are saved — by believing the promise of God.**

Paul, she noted, goes further in Galatians: the promise to Abraham was in fact the gospel in seminal form. “I love this verse from Galatians” —

“Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham. The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, ‘All the nations will be blessed in you.’ So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer.”

GALATIANS 3:7–9 NASB 1995 ↗

The Crazy Kind of Love God Has for His Friends

► 1:22:21

This is where the message stopped being an argument for a minute. “I cannot tell you how happy it makes me to think of Abraham as my father. I cannot tell you how happy I will be the day I am received into **Abraham’s bosom**.”

It must totally blow Abraham's mind, she said, pointing around the room — to see me, and you, and you, and you: all the daughters and sons of the nations born to him thousands of years after he died, born because we believe in the Savior born of his line. "It makes my heart beat hard" to picture our Father God sitting next to Abraham, laughing with joy, showing His friend how far **beyond anything he could have asked or imagined** He has fulfilled — and is still fulfilling — the word He spoke.

Because on the day God called Abram, Amy said, he had no idea that God Almighty was going to entrust to him the lineage of His only begotten. "Who would dare to fathom that? Who could imagine that? What audacity could ever ask for that?"

"Oh, brothers and sisters, this is the crazy kind of love that God has for His friends." And — she pressed — that is the same crazy kind of love and honor He is bestowing on us. She read **1 John 3:1** with her own adjective wedged into it: *"Behold what manner of crazy, insane love it is, that we should be called the sons of God — and that is what we are."*

A Covenant Cut in Half

► **1:24:03**

"And He said to him, 'I am the LORD who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess it.' He said, 'O Lord GOD, how may I know that I will possess it?' So He said to him, 'Bring Me a three year old heifer, and a three year old female goat, and a three year old ram, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon.' Then he brought all these to Him and cut them in two, and laid each half opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds. The birds of prey came down upon the carcasses, and Abram drove them away."

GENESIS 15:7-11 NASB 1995 ↗

Abram already believed, and God was already moved by his belief. "God is moved by our belief. It touches Him. It touches Him when we believe things that we cannot see." Abram was already righteous in His eyes — and yet God kept the conversation going. Amy's reading of that: as God spoke, the Holy Spirit was burning in Abram's heart, stirring up faith, *so that he would ask for a sign*. "How shall I know that I shall possess it?" Abram asks. God wanted the question. He wanted to give a sign. He wanted to enter into covenant — to write His word in stone, as it were, for generation after generation to ponder.

And He wanted something more: to draw Abraham further into the promise, into the mystery of the salvation He was going to work through Israel — a foretaste of a new covenant that was coming. Not to replace this one, Amy stressed, but to push us further into His heart and His plan.

God's answer looks strange: prepare animals for sacrifice. Up to this point in the Old Testament there had been no prescribed sacrifices — nothing God had asked for specifically. **Cain and Abel** offered sacrifices; **Noah** offered a sacrifice; but what they brought seems to have been up to the giver. Here God is doing something different — telling Abram *exactly* how to prepare it, the way He would later do in great detail with Moses. Amy thinks these particular animals point toward the sacrifices of the tabernacle, and that the two birds speak of the redemption sacrifices that would be made for Jesus **when He was presented in the Temple worship**. And the arrangement is unusual: split in two, with a kind of aisle or passage running between them.

Waiting Was the Hallmark of Abraham's Faith

► 1:27:00

"What I find even more fascinating than the sacrifice is the way God made Abram *wait*."

He waited all day, driving birds away, not knowing what would become of the carcasses. Amy let the psychology of that sit. Did he wonder whether he had heard right — all of this had come to him in a vision, after all? *Maybe I imagined it. Maybe I got it wrong*. And God was in no hurry to put him out of that suspense.

Waiting, she said, was the hallmark of Abraham's faith. He waited and waited and waited for the fulfillment of God's word — just as the Jewish people waited and waited and waited for the Messiah, just as we wait and wait and wait for Jesus' return.

"One of the primary lessons we learn from Abraham is that faith is largely a matter of waiting. So **let us not grow weary** in waiting."

Terror and Great Darkness

► 1:28:17

"Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, terror and great darkness fell upon him. ... It came about when the sun had set, that it was very dark, and behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a flaming torch which passed between these pieces. On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, 'To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates.'"

GENESIS 15:12, 17-18 NASB 1995 ↗

When God finally did show up, He came in a way completely unfamiliar to Abram. Instead of speaking words of promise, He plunged him into deep darkness — a soul-shaking terror he would never forget.

That, Amy argued, *was a gift*. It was an encounter with the fear of the Lord, in which Abram was undone — like Moses before the burning bush, or like John, who **fell like a dead man** before Jesus in Revelation. The fear of the Lord was a seal on Abram's heart, an assurance that he was not hearing voices or having delusions.

But this particular darkness, she believes, held another purpose too. It was a share in a mystery of salvation not yet revealed.

A Rehearsal of the Exodus, Centuries Early

► 1:29:50

Amy's claim: the darkness Abraham experienced when the Lord made covenant with him was a foreshadowing of the darkness that would cover Egypt on **the night of the Passover** — terror covering the land as the angel of death passed over the houses of Abram's descendants. And terror gripped the Israelites again as they stood at night on the banks of **the Red Sea** with Pharaoh's army in pursuit.

That night of darkness and fear was the beginning of Israel's identity as a nation. It was the night they saw the Lord's deliverance. It was their first step toward home — their first step toward the fulfillment of the promise given to Abram concerning the land.

Why read the covenant as a prophetic — or, her word, *proleptic* — play of the Exodus? (The word is hers exactly; it appears in the manuscript.) She listed the visual signs: the darkness; the separating of the animals, like the parting of the sea; the smoking pot passing between the carcasses, which calls to mind the pillar of fire that led Israel through. But the clearest indication of all, she said, is what God says outright.

“God said to Abram, ‘Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years. But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve, and afterward they will come out with many possessions. As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace.’”

GENESIS 15:13–15 NASB 1995 ↗

God Himself is referencing the enslavement in Egypt and the Exodus. He is, Amy said, drawing Abraham into *mystical participation* in an event centuries away — letting him experience the darkness, the passage, the mystery ahead of time, in a veiled way.

A Type Is Not a Literary Device

► 1:32:08

The early church fathers, she said, teach that we Christians also share in the mystery of the Exodus — backwards, through our baptism. Or to put it the other way around: the Exodus points forward to our baptism. Immersion in water is a sign of passage from spiritual death to life, from slavery to sin to the freedom of children — like Israel’s passage through the sea. So all of God’s people, past, present and future, Jew and Gentile, are caught up into one glorious story of salvation, typified in the Exodus.

God orchestrated that event with drama, light and sound, she said, so that our flesh and blood could grasp the glory of salvation. He was there with His people in the fire, blowing back the waters. Hundreds of thousands — perhaps well over a million — sons and daughters of Abraham stood breathless on the shore, decked out in gold jewelry, watching in wonder as God claimed them as His own. “It was the most awesome, dreadful, astounding spectacle human history had ever seen up to that point.”

Then the sentence she wanted underlined: **“A type is not a literary device. It’s not a cool thing that authors use. A type is a physical, flesh-and-blood participation in a spiritual reality.”** Every time we enact one of these types — communion, baptism, the feasts of Israel — we tie ourselves to the type, to the story, to the spiritual reality behind them. “Does that make sense?”

“For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea; and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and all ate the same spiritual food; and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ.”

1 CORINTHIANS 10:1-4 NASB 1995 ↗

“What a mind-boggling statement — and I am not going to try to unpack that. I’m just going to leave it at that.” Christ was the rock. It is very close, she noted, to Paul saying the gospel was preached to Abraham: **Christ is the center of all human history.** All who believe are joined together in Him and through Him.

Covenants That Build, and an Ending That Looks Like the Exodus

► 1:34:49

All the covenants of God point toward Christ, Amy said — not invalidating one another but building on one another, unfolding new dimensions of God’s glory. The covenant with Noah revealed His mercy.

The covenant with Abram set in motion the human lineage of His Son. The Mosaic covenant revealed the glory of His righteousness and wisdom. All of them anticipated and made way for the new covenant in Jesus' blood.

But even the new covenant under which we live awaits its final fulfillment — and that fulfillment, the end of salvation history, will harken back to the Exodus once again. The sky will be darkened. Terror will strike the hearts of men. The waters above the earth will be parted, and **we will be caught up in the sky to meet our Lord.**

“But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory. And He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.”

MATTHEW 24:29-31 NASB 1995 ↗

“Amen. So do you see how the glorious day of the Lord mirrors the Exodus? It's a drama which serves as a type of salvation.”

The Binding of Isaac, Seen Through the Wrong End of a Telescope

► 1:36:47

Back to Genesis, and to the more famous of the two stories: Abraham's test — or, as the Jews call it, the binding of Isaac. This one, Amy said, is even more fundamental to our understanding of God's redemption.

She confessed she wrestled with it for years, and asked whether anyone else had. “It is a difficult story.” Her fear ran two ways: that God would one day ask something so terrible she couldn't do it and she would fail the test — and, underneath that, a fear of loving people too much, in case God took them away.

“But I was looking at the story through the wrong end of a telescope.”

The correction: **this is not a story about what God demands of men. It is a revelation of what He gives to men.** It is a prophetic drama illustrating the love between God the Father and God the Son — the love that undergirds the law — and a revelation of the sacrifice that would ultimately fulfill the law. We need the drama, she said. We need human stories to grasp the emotions of God, to understand His thoughts

and His motives, because He is far above us. It is why Jesus told so many parables: to make the Father known.

Amy is convinced the binding of Isaac is held eternally close to the Father's heart, eternally remembered in heaven, because it portrays *the Father's* role in salvation — a role so dreadful and astounding that it has only one type. There are many types of Jesus. But the Father has asked only one prophet in all of history to play His part in the story of salvation, and that prophet was Abraham.

Your Son, Your Only Son, Whom You Love

► 1:39:03

By Genesis 22 the long-awaited son has arrived. Isaac is, in fact, an older youth or a young man by this point. Abraham and Sarah are at peace; their faith has been vindicated; they have seen the fulfillment of the part of God's promise they had to live to see. They trusted that possession of the land would come in time, and they were satisfied. And then God spoke to Abraham again — just as He had in Haran, and on the night of the covenant.

“Now it came about after these things, that God tested Abraham, and said to him, ‘Abraham!’ And he said, ‘Here I am.’ He said, ‘Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you.’”

GENESIS 22:1–2 NASB 1995 ↗

Amy stopped on the phrase and made the room hear it: *your son, your only son, the one whom you love*. This, she said, is the first time the word *love* appears in Scripture. And God knows exactly what He is saying — because He has a son, an only son, whom He loves, who is in fact one in being with Him.

She thinks Abraham heard something in the call — urgency, perhaps even tenderness — because unlike before, he did not question and did not plead. “This time he simply obeyed.”

“So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him and Isaac his son; and he split wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. On the third day Abraham raised his eyes and saw the place from a distance. Abraham said to his young men, ‘Stay here with the donkey, and I and the lad will go over there; and we will worship and return to you.’ Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son, and he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So the two of them walked on together.”

GENESIS 22:3–6 NASB 1995 ↗

The fire pot appears again here, Amy noticed — the same image as the covenant night. Abraham climbs the mountain holding the fire; Isaac bears the wood on his back, carrying it like a cross. Taken together, she said, we have an image of the Trinity — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as the fire — moving in unison toward the mountain of sacrifice.

God Will Provide for Himself the Lamb

► 1:42:08

“Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, ‘My father!’ And he said, ‘Here I am, my son.’ And he said, ‘Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?’ Abraham said, ‘God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.’ So the two of them walked on together.”

GENESIS 22:7–8 NASB 1995 ↗

“God will provide for Himself a lamb. Here is the other key verse from the Abraham narrative — crucial to the gospel.” Providing for Himself a lamb is exactly what God did in sending His Son as an atonement for our sin.

The sacrifices prescribed through Moses were, as Paul says, **a tutor** — a visible sign of the cost of our sin. But **the blood of goats and rams** cannot fundamentally change our nature. Only a sacrifice originating from God and given by God can truly transform us into children of God. And so, before the foundation of the world, Father and Son — in complete unity of heart — agreed that the Son would become God’s sacrifice. Jesus would be the lamb God provides, **the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world**.

Not a Test of Worth — an Entrustment

► 1:43:34

“Brothers and sisters, God was not asking Abraham to undergo some terrible trial to prove his worth. He was not asking Abraham to prove his obedience in order to receive his blessing. **No.** He was entrusting to Abraham something inestimably precious — something so close to His own heart. He was asking His friend to walk in faith through an agony of darkness which would foreshadow the crucifixion.”

And Abraham could not be told the end of God’s intention before setting out, because the agony had to be *real*. He had to enter the pathos of the story. He had to be in pain — in order for us to see the Father. “Does that make sense?”

What the Father Suffered

► 1:44:24

It is easy, she said, to imagine the Father disengaged from the suffering of the crucifixion. Matt has often pointed out how we picture Him turning away from the Son — or sitting in heaven, impassive, knowing it will all turn out fine. The accuser would like to paint the Father as an angry tyrant demanding blood. Satan would like us to see Him as cruel.

“But in reality, God has given us that which He did not ask of Abraham. **He did not spare His own Son** — the one He loves more dearly than we can know.” (Written, with one more clause: “*because of His love for us.*”)

Being human, we can relate on some level to the suffering of Jesus on the cross. We understand physically what that torment would be. We understand the pain of betrayal and denial. We can even imagine a love willing to die on another’s behalf. We can imagine Mary weeping at the foot of the cross. “But can we imagine what it would be like to give our own son to that suffering?”

Amy’s conclusion: the Father suffered more than Abraham suffered, because of the depth of His emotion and the fullness of His union with the Son — something beyond anything we have yet experienced in our flesh. We don’t know what it means to be one in being with another person. We cannot sacrifice another person without violating that other’s being; for us, such a sacrifice would be murder. “And this is why the story has to play out first, before the law.” (Her manuscript gives the reason she left unstated: “*what God asks of Abraham would be strictly forbidden by the Law.*”)

And in the picture of Isaac — in the strength of his youth, standing before his father, allowing the ropes to cripple him, allowing himself to be placed on the wood — we have an image of the trust and love

between our heavenly Father and His only begotten, who desire the very same end: that we would be saved.

By Myself I Have Sworn

► 1:46:49

That Abraham was willing to trust God *that far*, without understanding, moved God's heart deeply. Amy described the answer from heaven as overflowing with love — and, she believes, with a kind of divine gratitude.

“By Myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son, your only son, indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies. In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.”

GENESIS 22:16–18 NASB 1995 ↗

Then a detail Amy clearly loves. Years later, when the Israelites were established in the land, God chose *this very place* — **Mount Moriah** — as the site of His temple: the place where He would establish His name, the place He chose to dwell in the midst of His people.

“That’s how much He loved Abraham. That’s how much this act of faith meant to Him — that He was always right there. This is how much He can love a particular man.”

Closing: A Familiar Verse, Read With Abraham in View

► 1:48:12

Amy prayed it back before she closed it: *Father, I am so grateful that You take men as friends. I am so grateful that our faith can touch Your heart. I am so grateful that You love us with an undying love. I am so thankful that You did not spare Your only Son.* And then, personally: “I cannot wait to meet Abraham. I cannot wait to embrace him as a daughter.”

She asked the congregation to stand and confess the mystery of the faith in light of Abraham's witness — a verse everyone in the room knew by heart, which she said she now sees differently for knowing Abram better. She looked for the slide. “Is there a slide for this? ... Ah, okay — well, there's not, so let's do it this way.” They said it together from memory.

That missing slide cost the sermon its written ending. Amy had prepared a version of the verse with Abraham threaded into it, and it is printed in full in From Amy's Written Notes below. What the room actually said was the verse plain.

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

JOHN 3:16 KJV ↗

NOT PREACHED · FROM THE MANUSCRIPT

From Amy's Written Notes

Everything above is what Amy said on the day. Everything in this box is what she wrote and did not say — sentences the clock, or a missing slide, took out of the sermon. None of it has been folded into the account above. It is set apart here because some of it is lovely, and because the line between what was preached and what was written is worth keeping visible.

THE ENDING SHE PLANNED

This is the largest gap between the page and the pulpit, and it was an accident. Amy meant to close by having the congregation confess John 3:16 with Abraham written into it — her own two interpolations set in the middle of the most familiar verse in the Bible. The slide was not there, so she asked the room to say the plain verse from memory instead. What she had written was this:

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only Begotten Son — **the Son whom He loved** — that whosoever believes in Him — **as Abraham believed** — should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

AMY'S MANUSCRIPT · JOHN 3:16 KJV ↗ WITH HER INSERTIONS

The two clauses do the whole sermon's work in nine words. *The Son whom He loved* is Genesis 22:2 — “your son, your only son, whom you love” — laid over the Father. *As Abraham believed* is Genesis 15:6. Covenant and fatherhood, folded into one sentence the congregation already knew by heart.

THE PRAYER SHE WROTE

She prayed a shorter version of this at the pulpit. Two phrases did not survive the compression — the gratitude for being *preached to* by Abraham, and the picture of what the reunion is actually for:

“I am grateful for Abraham my father, to whom You first preached gospel! I look forward to the day when Abraham draws me into his bosom and we embrace as witnesses and blessings one to another, the way fathers and daughters should be.”

- **“Born in freedom of his wife Sarah.”** The promised son is described in the manuscript with a clause that quietly invokes [Galatians 4](#) — the freewoman against the bondwoman. Spoken, it became simply “the gift of a son.”
- **Both love and faithfulness.** Written: “God’s Fatherhood is expressed in both love and faithfulness, and His faithfulness is expressed most powerfully and explicitly in covenants.” Preached: faithfulness alone. The written line keeps love and covenant in the same breath.
- **The rest of Genesis 15:15–16.** She read as far as “you shall go to your fathers in peace” and stopped. The manuscript keeps going: “you will be buried at a good old age. Then in the fourth generation they will return here, for the wrongdoing of the Amorite is not yet complete.”
- **Why Genesis 22 had to come before Sinai.** At the pulpit: “this is why the story has to play out first, before the law.” On the page she says why: “because what God asks of Abraham would be strictly forbidden by the Law.”
- **“Because of His love for us.”** The written sentence about the Father not sparing His own Son ends on that clause. Spoken, it stopped one beat earlier.
- **The Temple, spelled out.** Written: God chose Moriah “as the site of the Temple, the place where He would establish His name, the place He chose to dwell in the midst of His people. *That is how much Abraham’s faith and friendship meant to Him.*” She preached the same thought in warmer, looser words — “that’s how much He loved Abraham... this is how much He can love a particular man.”
- **The whole definition of a type (1:33:30).** “A type is not a literary device. It’s not a cool thing that authors use. A type is a physical, flesh-and-blood participation in a spiritual reality...” — and the application to communion, baptism and the feasts. Entirely unwritten.
- **The defence of the law (1:21:11).** The manuscript has one clause — “Now the law, with all its instructions and sacrifices and feasts was glorious!” In the room she stopped and built it out with [Psalm 19](#): the law of the Lord converting the soul, the testimony of the Lord right.

- **“Crazy, insane love”** (1:23:48). The **1 John 3:1** riff, and the turn from Abraham’s honour to the congregation’s — “that’s the crazy kind of love and honor He is bestowing upon *us*” — is improvised. So is her pointing round the room: “to see me, and you, and you, and you.”
- **“God is moved by our belief. It touches Him”** (1:24:55), and **“so let us not grow weary in waiting”** (1:28:01) — both added live, and both doing pastoral work the written text leaves to the reader.
- **Abram’s self-doubt** (1:27:14). The manuscript says only “Perhaps he wondered if he had heard correctly.” She expanded it in the room: “All this came to him in a vision, right? ... *Maybe I imagined it. Maybe I got it wrong.*”
- **The Spirit named as the fire** (1:41:53). Written: “an image of the Trinity moving in unison toward the mountain of sacrifice.” Spoken, she spelled the image out — “the Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit *and the fire*, moving in unison.”
- **Turning to the room.** “Has anybody else wrestled with this story?” (1:37:18) and “Does that make sense?” (1:33:47, 1:44:20). The manuscript has no questions in it at all.

Carrying It Into the Week

If the message has one practical edge, it is the one Amy named outright: **faith is largely a matter of waiting**. Abram spent a whole day driving birds off carcasses without knowing whether he had heard God correctly. That is closer to most of our weeks than the mountaintop is. The instruction isn’t to manufacture certainty; it’s to keep driving the birds away.

The second is a correction worth sitting with. If you have read Genesis 22 the way Amy used to — as a warning that God may one day demand the thing you love most, so love carefully — then the whole story is running backwards. It is not about what He takes. It is about what He gave, and about a Father who did not stop the knife when it was His own Son on the wood.

And the third is simply an invitation to reread. Amy covered two chapters out of thirteen and said plainly that the rest is worth your evening. **Genesis 12–25** is where Sarah, Hagar, Ishmael, Lot, Melchizedek and the rest are waiting.

FOR FURTHER STUDY

SCRIPTURE IN THIS MESSAGE

44 passages, quoted or alluded to across the message, the opening reading and Amy's written notes. The translation shown is the one matched to the wording used.

- [Genesis 3:15](#)
- [Genesis 4:3–4](#)
- [Genesis 8:20](#)
- [Genesis 11:31–32](#)
- [Genesis 12:1–4](#)
- [Genesis 12:10–20](#)
- [Genesis 15:1–5 \(NKJV\)](#)
- [Genesis 15:6 \(NKJV\)](#)
- [Genesis 15:7–11](#)
- [Genesis 15:12, 17–18](#)
- [Genesis 15:13–15](#)
- [Genesis 17:5](#)
- [Genesis 22:1–2](#)
- [Genesis 22:3–6](#)
- [Genesis 22:7–8](#)
- [Genesis 22:16–18](#)
- [Exodus 3:1–6](#)
- [Exodus 3:15](#)
- [Exodus 12:29–32](#)
- [Exodus 13:21](#)
- [Exodus 14:10–14](#)
- [1 Kings 17:2–6](#)
- [2 Kings 2:11](#)
- [2 Chronicles 3:1](#)
- [Psalm 19:7–8 \(NKJV\)](#)
- [Jeremiah 1:11–13](#)
- [Matthew 22:31–32](#)
- [Matthew 24:29–31](#)
- [Luke 1:26–35](#)
- [Luke 2:22–24](#)
- [Luke 16:22](#)
- [John 1:29](#)
- [John 3:16 \(KJV\)](#)

- 1 Corinthians 10:1–4
- Galatians 3:7–9
- Galatians 3:24
- Galatians 4:22–31
- Galatians 6:9
- Ephesians 3:20
- 1 Thessalonians 4:16–17
- Hebrews 10:1–4
- James 2:23
- 1 John 3:1 (NKJV)
- Revelation 1:17

FOR YOUR HOPE GROUP

1. Amy read Genesis 22 for years as a warning — that God may one day ask for the thing you love most, so love it carefully. Where have you quietly believed that about God?
2. Of everything He could have given His friend, the greatest gift God could imagine was a son. What does that tell you about what the Father actually treasures?
3. Abram spent a whole day driving birds off the carcasses, with no confirmation that he had heard right. Where are you currently driving birds away?
4. Abraham was counted righteous before the law existed, simply for believing a promise. What are you still trying to earn that has already been given to you?
5. Amy called the terror and great darkness a gift — the fear of the Lord as a seal. Can you name a season of fear that turned out to be one?
6. Faith, she said, is largely a matter of waiting. What are you waiting for right now, and what would it look like not to grow weary in it?

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Amy Cogdell and her husband Thomas run Christ the Reconciler, a ministry and retreat centre. She is the author of Runaway Bay, a testimony of healing and reconciliation with her father. The Cogdells have been pillars at Hope Chapel and in the Austin House of Prayer community for decades.

HOW THESE NOTES WERE MADE

They were written from the service recording and then rebuilt against Amy's own sermon manuscript. The rule throughout: **what she preached stands as the record**. The manuscript repairs garbled audio, spellings and citations — it never replaces her spoken words. Anything she wrote but did not say is quarantined in From Amy's Written Notes.

ALSO FROM THIS SPEAKER

- [Feb 22, 2026 — Inner Healing](#)

Watch the full message:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mJDiRT82MtA&t=4123s>

These notes summarise a message preached at Hope Chapel in Austin, Texas. They are a reader's aid, not a transcript — scripture references link to the full passage so you can read it in context.