**Obedience by Faith**

*Abraham was now very old, and the Lord had blessed him in every way.****2****He said to the senior servant in his household, the one in charge of all that he had, “Put your hand under my thigh.****3****I want you to swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and the God of earth, that you will not get a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I am living,****4****but will go to my country and my own relatives and get a wife for my son Isaac.”*

***5****The servant asked him, “What if the woman is unwilling to come back with me to this land? Shall I then take your son back to the country you came from?”*

***6****“Make sure that you do not take my son back there,” Abraham said.****7****“The Lord, the God of heaven, who brought me out of my father’s household and my native land and who spoke to me and promised me on oath, saying, ‘To your offspring[*[*a*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=gen%2024&version=NIV#fen-NIV-599a)*] I will give this land’—he will send his angel before you so that you can get a wife for my son from there.****8****If the woman is unwilling to come back with you, then you will be released from this oath of mine. Only do not take my son back there.”****9****So the servant put his hand under the thigh of his master Abraham and swore an oath to him concerning this matter. (Genesis 24:1-9, NIV)*

Obedience to God’s Word requires faith on our part. Greetings dear brothers and sisters in Christ as we talk today about faith which is expressed through obedience. It is also quite fitting to connect this topic to the sacrament of baptism, which took place just a few minutes ago, which is an example of faith and obedience on the part of the parents of the child. In the Scriptures, we see that Abraham’s servant had to obey his master according to Abraham’s standard of faith. Similarly, in the case of baptism, the parents obey the demand of the Lord (by example in the Scriptures) to devote their children to Him and participate in the mystery of baptism. There is something called believing, which is a decision or a mental task and there is its proof, which is obedience, something that converts faith into action. Let us delve a little deeper into the details of the Scripture passage, out of which we can get a better picture about all of the above.

Relationship with God is the correct foundation on which it is possible to build a life of obedience. Abraham had lived by faith all his life (ever since he was called by God to move). Yes, he had made some mistakes along the way, such as with Hagar and Ishmael’s case or his lying to the kings about his wife Sarah. On other occasions, however, he pleased God with his actions and attitude – remember his tithe to Melchizedek as well as his readiness to sacrifice his precious son for the sake of God’s command. His spiritual life was well grounded on God’s Words. His life had been lived with God’s commands guiding him and he was now instructing his servant to find a wife for Isaac from the only family of faith on earth, which was his. It was time that Isaac got ready to take over being the patriarch of the family, and Abraham, based on his strong belief, was ordering his servant to do as he said, with the expectation that the servant was going to obey his directions. The clearest moment of faith from Abraham showed when he forbid the servant from taking Isaac back to the land of Haran, where Abraham had come out of. In other words, Abraham wanted neither to have a connection with the atmosphere of unbelief in the land he was born, nor did he want his son Isaac to marry an unbelieving woman from among the Canaanites. It was Abraham’s desire that the worship of God and the respect due Him continue to the next generation. He wanted to see his faith not extinguished because of the weakening of the faith of the next leader of the clan due to a marriage with a faithless individual. In the end of the episode, we see that Isaac wife-to-be, Rebecca, would travel by faith just as Abraham did toward the land of Canaan, to be united to Isaac and to cause the continuation of the dynasty that practiced faith in the true God.

Abraham’s directions to the servant were the beginning of a beautiful account of faith and obedience on the part of the servant, during which we could see God’s Providence while the servant travelled and stayed in faith during the process.

A famous missionary-humanitarian worker by the name of Mueller in England once said the following: *“Faith does not operate in the realm of the possible. There is no glory for God in that which is humanly possible. Faith begins where man's power ends.”*

Abraham’s servant, trusting only in Abraham (and his God) and thus obeying him, started on his way with great resources and only his master’s directions.

Our life can often be quite similar to that servant’s situation. We say that we believe, but how do we prove the validity of that faith? Do we bring an umbrella with us when we pray for rain? If we have prayed for financial success, how much does our attitude show that we have truly trusted the Lord with our finances and are satisfied with doing our best and leaving God the rest?

Just as baptism is an act of obedience based on faith, the proof of our faith in God’s words is our obedience to them. If the Word says, “Do not lie,” there must be a good reason for God to say that! If the Word says, “Do not steal,” there is a purpose for the command; if God says, “Do not condemn,” or “Vengeance is the Lord’s,” there are reasons for each of these statements (and it would behoove us to prove that we believe them by obeying them)!

May the Lord make it so that we can obey Him, proving our faith, instead of making decisions about life issues with our own limited logic and understanding. Again, relationship with God is the right foundation upon which it is possible to build a life of obedience. In order to obey God’s Word, faith is required.