

## “God & Abraham”—Fully Alive (2 of 4)

Last weekend I began this new series, “**Fully Alive**” by sharing with you my simple and yet honest agenda: *I would like everyone who has not yet become a follower of Jesus Christ to make a stand and choose to follow him. I want each of you to take a step toward Jesus.*

As I mentioned last week each weekend at Sonrise Church, people cross over the line of faith and embrace God’s forgiveness and love in their lives—and yet, some of you sit there week after week and put off this decision.

You like what’s going on here, but you’re content to ride the brake when it gets personal.

Maybe you’ve considered becoming a Christian, but you still have lot of questions.

Maybe God is working in you and you’re starting to experience a spiritual awakening.

Maybe you’re here because someone else keeps inviting you and you’re happy for your friend, or spouse, but it’s not really for you—you’re just here for the moral support!

Maybe you’re on the edge, and when you look over that edge you like what you see, but there is this persistent nagging inside of you that says to hold back.

Whatever your situation, I would like you ask you to give up your resistance to the God who is tugging on your heart and for you to fully embrace a relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

Last weekend I shared with you the two questions that keep coming up when I talk to people about following Christ.

***The first one is this: Objection #1***) Some people either *reject* the message or *put off* the decision to accept Christ because they have a fear as to what is going to happen to their lives if they do trust Christ.

For some people there’s an unspoken kind of anxiety floating around. Saying, “*If I do trust Christ...then what?*”

The truth is: you gain so much more than you give up! You gain a new life with God that begins here and now—and extends throughout all eternity. That’s a bargain you shouldn’t pass up.

God wants to give you “*real life...the best life you could ever possibly experience—life that is rich and truly satisfying!*” Jesus’ agenda for your life is to see you spiritually connected with the God who lovingly created you and made you for a relationship with you.

Sonrise Church is all about leading people in a growing relationship with Jesus Christ. So our agenda is the same as Jesus’ agenda—to discover the real life that God offers you. To turn from a life that is self-directed, and undoubtably broken, to the life that is real life.

***The second objection is this: Objection #2***) Some people feel that once they get all of their questions about God answered, they will be ready to make a decision to follow Christ.

Somehow people think that all of their questions must be answered before they can come to God. But as I mentioned last week, if you’re not a Christian *there is a reason* why you’re not a Christian! And I’m sure you have a very good reason why you’re not a Christian.

If we could sit down to a cup of coffee and talk over your objections, I know without a doubt that your reasons would be very valid.

If someone came up to you after this service and said to you, “*Why don’t you become a Christian?*” You would have a great, well-thought out response to that question.

It could be a question about the Bible, or about God, or about Jesus, or about how much faith you have to have to follow Jesus. But each of those questions would be valid questions.

It would be foolish of me to tell you, “*Just ignore your questions and come to Jesus.*” That would be foolish! Christianity isn’t a brain-dead belief!

Last week I gave my answer to this second objection this way: ***Your biggest questions that hold you back from God actually get smaller as you get closer to God!*** In other words, very few people embrace Christianity after they have *worked through* their obstacles.

People object to God *until* they come up against their need *for* God. (Illus: Crisis & Tragedy)

When people come face to face with God, their objections and questions look pretty small!

Last week I gave an illustration about single people, in particular, guys, that helped understand this a bit. Today I want to give an illustration for the women—this might help.

How many of you ladies have children? Why in the world did you have kids? Didn't you have a list of objections to the whole "kid" thing? **ASK: Ladies' reasons for not having kids.**

And yet, most of you went on to have kids anyway! Why?

Now, when you look at them and they are so cute and peaceful (when they're sleeping) you know that every difficulty is worth it all. **"CHILDREN" became your "CHILD."** That's different.

Let me take you to a story in the beginning pages of the Bible that will address these two objections. It's the story of a man named "Abraham." As you turn there let me give you some background on life at the time of Abraham. **(p. 10 in your chair Bible)**

**BACKGROUND: (God revealed himself on his terms to a person, not in a Religion).**

*"The LORD had said to Abram, 'Leave your native country, your relatives, and your father's family, and go to the land that I will show you. (This was before Rand McNalley and Mapquest! Here's God's promise of blessing) I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others. I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt. All the families on earth will be blessed through you.'* (This is the background of a real man who lived 4,000 years ago in the region we now call Iraq. God decided that he was going to work through a nation, so God looked at this sin-filled world and began with a single man. He found an unknown man with a wife who couldn't have any children—more on that later. God started with a man who had no influence and no kids. That's how God began his plan to restore the relationship and clean up this terrible mess of sin in the world.)

God made Abraham three distinct promises here that have been fulfilled and continue to impact us, even today:

—The first promise God made to Abraham was that he would become the father of a great nation. What nation came from Abraham? Israel! How many of you have heard of Israel? Just checking! Imagine, 4,000 years ago God made a promise that still rings true.

—Next God promised that Abraham would become famous. Again, I'm just curious, how many of you have ever heard of Abraham before today? By the way, how many of you are familiar with King Amraphel of Babylonia? How about King Arioch of Ellasar? What?! Those were all of the famous and powerful kings of Abraham's time—but no one remembers their names.

—Finally, God promised that all of the people of the earth would be blessed through him. That was fulfilled in Jesus: Every person on the earth has been blessed with Jesus—you can *receive him* or you can *reject him*—but God still offered his life to you as a payment for your sin.

God took a nobody and 4,000 years later we still remember him. BUT, it did require an action step on Abraham's part: *FAITH to move out and walk the path that God had for him. What did Abraham do? "So Abram departed as the LORD had instructed..."* Genesis 12:1-4 (NLT)

Wait a minute! That's it? *"But God, what if I leave all of this great stuff and my great life and when I finally get to the place you're taking me, I don't like it? What if I get ripped off?"*

Look down a few chapters. **(p. 12 in your chair Bible)**

*"Some time later, the LORD spoke to Abram in a vision and said to him, 'Do not be afraid, Abram, for I will protect you, and your reward will be great.'*

*"But Abram replied, 'O Sovereign LORD, what good are all your blessings when I don't even have a son? Since you've given me no children, Eliezer of Damascus, a servant in my household, will inherit all my wealth. You have given me no descendants of my own, so one of my servants will be my heir.'* (So far, God wasn't coming through on his promises! As each day passed, Abraham was losing more and more hope in having his own son.)

*"Then the LORD said to him, 'No, your servant will not be your heir, for you will have a son of your own who will be your heir.'* Then the LORD took Abram outside and said to him, *'Look up into the sky and count the stars if you can. That's how many descendants you will have!'* (Abraham was old, and Sarah was old—and they had no children. All of their life's experiences told them one thing: You can't have kids! But God told Abraham once again, "put your trust in me.")

*“And Abram believed the LORD, and the LORD counted him as righteous because of his faith.”* Genesis 15:1-6 (NLT)

When God reached down to Abraham and didn't ask him to obey a list of rules. What did God ask of Abraham? His trust. Abraham trusted God, even though the promises hadn't come true yet. So far Abraham hasn't seen any of the fulfillment of the promises.

For years Abraham walked out of his tent every morning and looked around and didn't see a great nation. For most of the remaining years of Abraham's life he didn't even live in the land that God had promised him. He hadn't reached celebrity status and he hadn't seen any blessing come from his life. And yet he had faith.

In that moment when Abraham is staring at the stars, he made a decision. He decided that he was going to believe. He didn't have a lot to go on, and it seemed impossible to him, but he put his trust in what God had said to him.

The Bible says that in that moment something happened to Abraham that happens to people even to this day. Abraham *believed* the Lord, and the Lord declared him *righteous* because of his faith. Abraham believed God's promise and that act of faith resulted in a *right standing* before God—not because of anything that he had done, but because he put his faith in God.

***THAT'S HOW GOD WORKS, EVEN TODAY.*** God comes to us on *his* terms, not our terms.

***BUT WHAT ABOUT MY OBJECTIONS!*** Let's look at these objections in the light of Abraham:

***Objection #1: If I come to Christ, what if I lose more than I gain?***

*“It was by faith that Abraham obeyed when God called him to leave home and go to another land that God would give him as his inheritance. He went without knowing where he was going. And even when he reached the land God promised him, he lived there by faith—for he was like a foreigner, living in tents. And so did Isaac and Jacob, who inherited the same promise. Abraham was confidently looking forward to a city with eternal foundations, a city designed and built by God.”* Hebrews 11:8-10 (NLT) (Abraham lost a lot when he left Ur, and he didn't get a lot when he landed in Canaan. He lived all of this days as a nomad—looking forward to God's promises to him. And some of those promises had to wait until Abraham died and went to be with God.)

***Objection #2: Shouldn't all of my questions be answered before I come to Christ?***

*“It was by faith that even Sarah was able to have a child, though she was barren and was too old. She believed that God would keep his promise. And so a whole nation came from this one man who was as good as dead—a nation with so many people that, like the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore, there is no way to count them.”* Hebrews 11:11-12 (NLT)

Abraham and Sarah had to act on God's words, even when they didn't see the answers right in front of them—that's why it's called “Faith!” I'm sure they had a whole list of questions for God, but they had to take God at his word and put their trust in God and his promises.

The way to have a relationship with God is by faith, and faith alone. Just like Abraham, each of us must choose to believe and accept God's promises as true. When you put your faith in God and trust in his promises, God puts you in a right relationship with him. There is no way you can fix the mess yourself. You can't clean yourself up, you can't earn it, but if *by faith* you believe in who God is and his promises to you, you can have a right standing before God.

A relationship with God comes by faith. What God wants from you is to trust him. Why don't you take a step of faith towards Jesus today? Believe that he is God and that God offers you life through Christ alone. **(SHARE THE GOSPEL)**

***BUT WHAT ABOUT ALL OF MY QUESTIONS! God wants you to know him more than you want to know all of the answers to your questions.***

***CLOSING PRAYER:*** *“Heavenly Father, I want to know you, more than I want to know the answers to my questions. I still need answers to my questions, but even if I knew the answers I still wouldn't know You. I want to know you.”*