

The Friend of God

(Therefore are ye sent unto your servant)

(Isa. 41:8; James 2:23)

v1)

“The LORD appeared to Abraham”

- He appeared to Abraham in peace. God’s message to every believer is this: *“Grace to you and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ”* (Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:3; 2 Cor. 1:2; Gal. 1:3; Eph. 1:2; Php. 1:2; Col. 1:2; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:2; 1 Tim. 1:2; 2 Tim. 1:2; Titus 1:4; Phm. 1:3; 1 Pet. 1:2; 2 Pet. 1:2; 2 John 1:3; Rev. 1:4)!!
 - Grace in Christ with all blessings.
 - Peace because of grace.
 - Grace and peace with all blessings to all of God’s people at Christ’s expense. Eternal, unending, unconditioned on me, unimpeded by my sin, overcoming all impediments, silencing all protests, in the bounty of God’s riches in glory, abundance unspeakable and immeasurable! O, the grace of God!
 - Grace is the golden word from the throne of God that brings salvation accomplished, keeps unto eternal glory, conforms to the image of God’s dear Son, brings many sons to glory, presents us perfect in Christ, and rejoices over His people with exceeding

joy, with eternal, unbounded, incomprehensible love for all eternity, and all to the glory of the riches of His grace (Eph. 1:3-7)!

- There is no higher favor shown to a man than when God appears to him in grace!!

“He sat in the tent door in the heat of the day”

- Abraham was 99 years old.
- It was hot.
- He sat in the door of the tent, perhaps to view the countryside and goings-on, and probably to catch the fresh and cooler air. Probably under the covering of the tent door for shade.
- God appeared to Abraham in his sojourn, as he was going about his life.
- But this was after Ishmael was born, after Abraham begat a son in the flesh and after the flesh, committing that act of unbelief!
- It was after Abraham prayed for Ishmael.
- It was after God covenanted with Abraham to give to him and to his seed all the land of Canaan: all of that physical land to his physical seed. And to give all of that heavenly country -- that inheritance of eternal salvation in Christ -- to Abraham and his spiritual seed, the Church of God.
- The heir of God, the heir of eternal salvation and eternal glory, nevertheless had to live his life one day at a time by

faith in Christ, looking for that promised blessing, waiting, expecting that God would do as He had said, living in the strong persuasion that all God promised, He was able to also bring to pass, because all depended on God's word and Christ's work, and nothing depended on Abraham's works.

v2)

“He lifted up his eyes and looked.”

- Believers look for that blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ (Titus 2:13)!

“And lo, three men stood by him.”

- When God appears to us, it is always and only from His word, concerning Christ, applied to our conscience by the Spirit of God (Isa. 6:5; John 12:41; John 1:18; 14:9; Matt. 11:27; John 6:44-45). The fulness of the Godhead dwells in Christ our Mediator, the God-man (Col. 2:9). Therefore, when God makes Christ known to us, He makes Himself known in all of His glory (2 Cor. 4:6; John 14:13). God's Spirit reveals Christ, and seeing Christ, we see and know the Father and the Son (John 17:3; Matt. 11:27; John 14:6-9).
 - The Father brings us to Christ (John 6:44-45). Jesus Christ brings us to the Father (Heb. 2:10; 1 Pet. 3:18). And when we come to Christ, we come to God by

Him (John 14:6; Heb. 7:25). All who so come shall be saved to the uttermost!

“When he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself to the ground.”

- It is clear that Abraham was a humble man. He was humble before the LORD. He was humble before his nephew Lot, when he offered Lot the best of all the land. He humbled himself later before the sons of Heth when he bought the field with the cave in which he buried his wife Sarah (Gen. 23:12). But it is clear Abraham had a high regard and great respect for these three in whom the LORD appeared to him. *“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD”* (Deut. 6:4). One LORD, one Father, Son and Holy Spirit (1 John 5:7).
- Grace always humbles a man: not in terror, but in reverence, in awe, in truth for His great grace at so great a cost by so great a God and Savior! But the law puts men in fear. It hardens them in their lies. And it makes dishonest sinners all the more proud. But grace humbles us. It strips us down. It convinces us what we are. It shows us who Christ is. It shows us that Christ is all to God and all for sinners! Grace therefore takes away our fears. And grace makes us honest before God and men. Grace humbles us before God and men (Php. 2:5-8). Grace makes us say in

truth, “I am a great sinner, and nothing at all, but Jesus Christ is my all in all.”

“...*he ran to meet them from the tent door..!*”

- See the 99 year old man run and bow in the heat of the day!
 - He was over-awed, and overjoyed to see the Lord had come to him, even the one LORD in His threefold character, revealing Himself in Christ the God-man!
 - When God comes to us and appears to us in Christ, we run to Him. We bow to Him. We are in awe but not in terror, because grace draws us near. We are in awe and by this God-given persuasion of faith in Christ, we worship Him for saving us by Christ alone, to His glory alone!
 - We should pray and look every day of our life for God to appear to us in Christ. This is life eternal (John 17:3). Once we see Christ, we don't go away content; we want nothing more than to see more and more of Him, to see none but Him, who is the revelation of God, the salvation and acceptance and eternal inheritance of sinners!
 - He appears to us in the Gospel. In the Gospel, we see Jesus Christ. In Jesus Christ crucified, we see the glory of God (2 Cor. 4:6).

v3)

Abraham said, “*My Lord, if now I have found favor in thy sight...*” The LORD came to visit Abraham. God visits His people with salvation. “*The Lord hath visited and redeemed His people*” (Luke 1:68).

- Sick people visit the doctor.
- But when God saves a sinner, the great Physician of our souls visits us. He is the great Physician because He came from heaven to earth to visit His people to make redemption for them in His own blood! His word saves because He offered Himself to save, and obtained our eternal salvation by His own blood (Heb. 9:12).
- “*Thy sight,*” because it is what God thinks of me that makes all the difference.
- “*Favor,*” because though God had been favorable to Abraham, he asks for continued favor, to allow him to serve in this trivial thing; trivial because the Lord is in need of nothing, but it is our greatest privilege to honor Him.
- Therefore, Abraham asks to be allowed to do what he is about to do for the Lord. Believers ask God to allow them to serve Him in everything. We therefore pray for His Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, that we might do so (Luke 11:13).
- Everyone taught of God asks God for His favor:

- “4 Remember me, O LORD, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people: **O visit me with thy salvation;** 5 That I may see the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation, that I may glory with thine inheritance” (Ps. 106:4-5; Deut. 32:9; Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:25-27).
- Favor from God is grace from God. Favor from God to sinners is always undeserved. If God shows any man favor, it is always out of pure grace, out of His sovereign, uninfluenceable, holy will.
- Favor always begins in God and proceeds from God to us.
- And Abraham counts it a great grace to him if he would be allowed the company of the Lord in this meal he is about to prepare in His honor.
- Abraham wanted to do something to honor the Lord, to show his high regard for Him.
- He craves the Lord’s communion. He looked for Him and saw Him and ran to Him and bowed to Him and now wants nothing more than that He would remain with him!
- He calls Him, “*Lord.*”
- He bows to Him, even towards the ground, because in his own eyes, Abraham was but dust and ashes (Gen. 18:27), one who had found grace in the eyes of the Lord! O Lord, there is no greater thing than for this dust and ashes sinner than to find “*grace in Thy sight!!*”
- He calls himself the Lord’s servant (v5).

- It is unmistakably clear that Abraham understood this was the Lord, even though He appeared in the form of three wayfaring men.

“Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved” (Rom. 10:13)! “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved” (Acts 16:31)!

- Abraham was eager to be hospitable to others. *“Let brotherly love continue. Be not forgetful to entertain (to be hospitable to) strangers, for thereby, some have entertained angels unawares” (Heb. 13:1-2).*

v4)

“Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree” (v4).

- Hear what Abraham asks, as a servant would ask his master. He wants to serve the Lord.
 - *“I pray you...let...”* Let me, your servant, by your will, have grace, to do this (Heb. 12:28)!
 - *“A little water be fetched”*
 - *“and wash your feet”*
 - *“and rest yourselves”*
 - *“under the tree.”*
- All of these things speak of salvation in Christ.
 - *“a little water...”* God sprinkles clean water upon us to cleanse us from all our filthiness, our idols and our

sins (Ezek. 36:35). Christ cleansed the people with His own blood (Heb. 13:12; 1 John 1:7). Jesus told the woman at the well that if she knew the gift of God and who He was that spoke to her, she would have asked of Him, and He would have given to her living water (John 4:10). We must be born of the water and of the Spirit (John 3:5). Therefore, the cleansing water in scripture is the Gospel of Christ's precious, redeeming blood, sprinkled upon our conscience by the Spirit of God, when He persuades that Christ is all of our salvation, that God has provided and accepted Him for His people, that though we are sinners, we have been washed from all of our sins by His sin-atoning blood, even by Him who is the Lord from heaven, who is now seated on the right hand of the Majesty on High, and who is our Lord (Lev. 16:30; Heb. 1:3)! The water points to the blood of Christ that is applied to us by the Spirit of God by which our conscience receives what God has done by Christ and accepted from Christ in heaven.

- “*wash your feet...*” It is by fresh application to Christ that the Spirit of Christ gives us fresh views of Christ, and we are made again to see that even our walk in this life is cleansed by Him.
- “*rest yourselves...*” Rest signifies comfort and cessation from work. God rests because the work of

salvation is accomplished. The New Covenant has been put into force by the blood of Christ. We rest in believing Christ. We enter that land of salvation by faith. God rests in Christ's work in full satisfaction and delight. Christ rests in satisfaction of His own work. God declares that all Christ did is “very good” by His resurrection and by the honor and glory He gave to Him when He sat Him on His own right hand as our God-man, Mediator (Rom. 4:25; Heb. 8:1; 10:12).

- “*under the tree...*” The tree provides shade from the heat of the sun. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, as it is written, “*Cursed is everyone that hangeth a the tree*” (Gal. 3:13).

- God rests in His love for His people (Jer. 31:3; Zep. 3:17). Christ rested from His own work and rests in His own work (John 19:30; Heb. 4:1, 10 - His rest; Heb. 4:3,5 - my rest). Christ is satisfied with His own work (John 17:4; 19:30), and God is satisfied with Christ’s work (Isa. 53:11); He looks for no other, because His is all that He required, provided, and accepted. God therefore rests in Christ for His people. Every weary, sinner, heavy-laden by the law, is called to rest in Christ (Matt. 11:28; Acts 13:38-39). In Christ crucified, God meets with and holds communion

with His people (John 6:56). And every believing sinner finds his rest in Christ, because He finished the work of our eternal salvation when by His one offering, perfected forever them who are sanctified (Jer. 17:12; Heb. 10:14)! We will enter our final rest in glory (Rev. 14:13).

- Abraham asked the Lord if he could fetch these things for the Him. This indicates that the salvation in Christ by which Abraham was saved was the way in which He served and worshipped God. In all of our life, in all that we think, do and say, we want to serve the Lord. But that can only happen when we look to Christ and honor God by Him and look for Him in hope (Gal. 5:5; Rom. 8:24).
- And, it means that God Himself, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, all look upon and find utmost delight in Christ's sacrifice of satisfaction to God for the sins of His people, a sacrifice of love, of Himself, nothing withheld. "*Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour*" (Eph. 5:2).
 - Christ, Abraham's Seed, is the ultimate Servant. He provided all of these things to the Lord for His people (Ex. 21:2-6; Heb. 10:5-14). In these, God appears and meets with and takes delight in His people, who serve Him by bringing these things from their hearts, with delight, and do all that they do to the glory of God.

v5)

“And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts; after that ye shall pass on: for therefore are ye come to your servant.”

- Abraham believed that the LORD visited and appeared to him for the purpose of holding communion with him in the things of Christ.
- Every believer realizes that all that God has done from eternity, and all that He does in time, is to bring His people to Himself, to make Himself known to them, and to hold communion with them in Christ (Rom. 8:28-29; Eph. 1:22-23; 3:11; 5:25-27; Jude 1:24)!
- It is the believer’s delight, his one desire and hope of salvation to meet with God in Christ, to serve and worship Him by His revelation of Himself in His Son (2 Sam. 23:5; Ps. 27:4; Isa. 55:3ff).
- Just as it was all of Christ’s life and desire to come, to live and serve God, and as man, to live to God, and as Mediator, to save and bring us to Himself to see His glory, so it is our salvation and life and desire to come to Christ, live in Him and live on Him and serve Him to His glory. We follow Christ as God’s dear children.

“And they said, So do, as thou hast said.”

- God accepts our feeble worship and service for Christ's sake.
 - God does not need food and water. But He delights in whatever the believer does, no matter how outwardly insignificant, because the believer does all with a view to Christ's eternal purpose and work, in thankfulness to God for Christ, and in worship of God in Christ.
 - God honors no one who does not honor His Son (Ps. 2:12; 45:10-11).
 - But God honors all who honor His Son. *“All men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him”* (John 5:22-23). *“If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour”* (John 12:26).
- If what you do, you do by faith, trusting God to accept your service for Christ's sake, out of a heart believing in Christ as all of your salvation, all of your life; if you live in thanksgiving for His grace that provided and accepted Christ's blood and righteousness for you; if you live in thankfulness for His eternal love and unfailing care; then...
 - Do all that is in your heart with all your strength for the glory of God!
 - Whatsoever you do, whether you eat or drink or whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God.

God is glorified in Christ, and Christ is glorified in His saints

Believers want and seek to glorify Christ in all things.

- In all that we do. “*Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God*” (1 Cor. 10:31).
- In all that we say, in all of our service. “*If any man **speak**, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man **minister**, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: **that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen***” (1 Pet. 4:11).
- Because He has changed our mind, so that we see our utter sinfulness and helplessness outside of God’s grace in Christ, turning us to Him in faith. “*When they heard these things, they held their peace, and **glorified God**, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life*” (Acts 11:18; Acts 20:21).
- Because He has given us faith according to His eternal purpose of our salvation in Christ. “*When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed*” (Acts 13:48).
- In all of our reproach for Christ’s sake. “*If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the*

*spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but **on your part he is glorified***” (1 Pet. 4:14).

- In life and in eternity. “7 *To you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, 8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: 9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; 10 When **he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe** (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day. 11 Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power: 12 **That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ**” (2 Thess. 1:7-12).*

vv. 6-8)

“6 *And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes upon the hearth. 7 And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetcht a calf tender and good, and gave it unto a young man;*

and he hastened to dress it. 8 And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat.”

- Abraham hurried. He did not want to keep the Lord waiting. As a servant, Abraham ran to do what the Lord had granted him to do, and he did it without delay, as fast as he could (Php. 2:12-13).
- Abraham told Sarah his wife to prepare for the Lord, to help him. Abraham engaged his wife in his service to the Lord. Do this, do that, do it quick, make it nice, it is for the Lord! She was his “*help meet*” in the Gospel.
- Abraham ran to the herd to fetch a young, tender calf. He took special care to find the best in his herd for the Lord.
- He gave that calf to a young man to dress it for the meal. He enlisted the help of his servant in his service to the Lord. Abraham used all that the Lord gave him, and put it all to work to serve the Lord.
- He took butter (fatness) and milk (of the Gospel) and the calf that he had dressed, and set it before them. When all was ready, he set the feast before these three men, before the Lord. All who have no money, who have wasted their labors on everything that does not satisfy, are called to “hearken diligently unto Christ” and delight yourself in fatness, to but wine and milk without money and without price! Therefore, milk and butter signify the fulness of salvation and delight in Christ’s work, declared to us in the

Gospel from His word. It is for sinners! It is for the glory of God!

- He stood by them under the tree, and they did eat. He stood by them under the tree. They did eat.
- The Lord accepted Abraham's service, even though, taken by itself, it was only a meal, yet what was by absolute measure of no consequence to the Lord, yet, because Abraham gave it in worship out of a heart of faith, asking that the Lord accept it by His grace, and because all was for the Lord in reference to Christ, God accepted Abraham's service. And so the Lord accepts all from His saints for Christ's sake, even when, as the widow with two mites, they give Him all of their living (Matt. 12:44).
- It is a delightful thought to see Abraham, at 99 years of age, serving the Lord as a young man: running, working, preparing, like a child doing something for his father, or as a servant who loves to do anything as long as it is for his master!
- He stands under the tree while they eat.
- Can you see in this the communion between the Lord and Abraham in the death of Christ?
 - The bread is the broken body that endured the heat of the hearth of God's wrath to make the food of Christ's sacrifice the eternal life of sinners!

- The calf is the slain sacrifice of the young, good tender, sinless, spotless Lord of glory, the Lamb of God!
- The butter and milk are the fatness and life-nourishment declared in the Gospel and relished by every needy sinner.
- The tree is Christ crucified.
- The Lord eating while Abraham stands by is God's delight in Christ crucified to the salvation of all of His people. Abraham is the believing sinner standing and looking and beholding God's satisfaction and glory in that sacrifice (Eph. 5:2)!
- And Abraham said, *"For therefore are ye come unto your servant"* (v5).
- This is the reason: God, in grace, comes to sinners in Christ. It was His will. He provided all for them. He offered up His own Son, Christ offered Himself. And every believing sinner fetches again from God's testimony of Christ the only thing we can bring to Him: what God has done for Himself, and for my salvation!
- It is God's purpose in coming to us to have fellowship with us in His Son.

"11 this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12 He that hath

the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. 13 These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God” (1 John 5:11-13).

What can I bring to the Lord?

- What can I bring to the Lord? What can I, a poor, no account, guilty sinner possibly do to serve Him?
 - If I have found favor in His sight, then let these Gospel tokens be brought forth and spread out and let me see God's acceptance of Christ, and my acceptance in Him. Let me see God's delight in Him, and let me find my communion with Him in Christ alone. And let this be all my service, that in all of my life, I will do all by the Spirit of God, with faith in Christ, asking Him to receive Christ for me, and in so asking, running to serve Him, knowing that though I am insignificant by any honest measure, yet, God received Christ, and receives sinners who come to Him by Him (Heb. 7:25; John 6:37)!

“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,..., let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil

conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water” (Heb. 10:19, 22).

Summary

“*‘The LORD appeared’ to Him*” (Gen. 18:1). Appeared to him in Christ, which is the greatest grace and favor!

“*Therefore are ye come to your servant*” (Gen. 18:5). God’s purpose in coming to Abraham was to hold communion with him in Christ as His friend, to promise Christ’s coming to him again, and to tell of the certain fulfillment of His promise through Isaac.

Abraham ran, hastened, ran (Gen. 18:2, 6-7). He did not sit indifferently in the tent door. He longed to serve and see and fellowship with the Lord in the things of Christ.

Rest yourselves under the tree (Gen. 18:4); *he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat* (Gen. 18:8). All of our communion and rest and satisfaction is seeing God’s glory in His delight in Christ who offered Himself for His people, to have them and bring them and make known Himself to them.