

Mailing Address:  
PO Box 797  
Molalla, OR 97038

Pastor Dale Satrum



Phone: 503-829-5101  
Fax: 503-829-9502

---

**People Just Like Me**  
***“Abraham: Flawed, Yet Faithful”***  
(Part 1)

**Intro:** We’ve all learned something by reading about / watching / hearing about the behavior of others? I think about all the things I learned simply from the examples of others. (Things I wanted to do or copy...things I wanted to avoid...the mistakes of others.)

- The word of God has recorded stories about people; their experiences and their faith so we can learn from them as well.

*I Cor. 10:11* “All these events happened to them as examples for us. They were written down to warn us, who live at the time when this age is drawing to a close.” (NLT) Passage referring to the nation of Israel.

- If we don’t know our Bibles...especially the OT, we are missing crucial lessons for us today. This is why I want to be sharing with you some Biblical characters this summer. (New Series)
- We are supposed to know these stories so that we can learn from others. So we can learn from their failures and their victories. We should try to emulate the good things we see and try to avoid the same mistakes.
- Today, we’re going to look at the life of Abraham. He is a very important Biblical / historical figure. He is known for his great faith, yet he was far from perfect. The Bible doesn’t hide the faults of those it writes about.
- Summarize part of the life of Abraham – Explain calling and Abrahamic covenant. (Focus on his three major failures...Ch. 12 – going to Egypt / Ch. 16 with Hagar / Ch. 20 with Abimelech.
- What lessons am I supposed to understand from the life of Abraham. Let me give you three faith lessons.

**I. Faithfulness Is About Defective People Accomplishing God’s Purposes**

- When I say defective, I mean imperfect / flawed / sinful / mistake prone
- A. God calls flawed people
1. It’s part of God program to call flawed people to join God in what He’s doing. God’s calling upon our lives is not dependant upon our performance. He didn’t call us because we were so great!

- He didn't call Abraham because he was the most righteous Chaldean!
- 2. It's not like the NBA draft. You do know that Portland has the #1 pick in the draft? Oden or Durant? (workouts / view tapes / evaluating performance - then they will call one of them to be on the team based on performance.
- 3. God's already called you and I to be on His team regardless of your performance! It's not performance based. If you are a believer, you are called to play on the team!

*Eph. 4:1 "...lead a life worthy of your calling for you have been called by God."* (NLT) Not just the Pastor...but you!

#### B. God uses flawed people

1. The pages of scripture are filled with flawed people who trusted God and saw the fulfillment of His purposes. That's why we're spending time this summer on this series. "People like Me".
2. The people in the Bible are like you and I. They had weaknesses just like we do / make mistakes just like we do / fall on their face just like we do. AND, God still used them.
3. Doesn't that give you some hope? Too many people think they can't be used by God because they're too flawed / their life just isn't "together" enough for God; so you sit on the sidelines. Spectators
4. This is one of the reasons I tend to share a lot about my personal life with you...even my failures. I don't want you to get an elevated opinion of me. I'm just like you. I'm learning / growing / make mistakes / yet God still uses me.
5. For some of you who have put yourself on the sidelines, maybe it's time to get back into the game? Time to believe that God can use you to do great things.

#### C. God is patient with flawed people

1. In the story of Abraham, did God ever get angry with him when he stumbled? Did God ever say, "I've just got to find me another guy!" "Abraham you're hopeless; you'll never amount to anything!"
2. What is very interesting is that God actually made provision with Abraham's mistakes. Both times Sarah was taken by the Kings, God protected her and warned the Kings.
3. Even the child that came through Abraham's impatience to wait on God's promise (Ishmael) God blessed the child mightily.
4. I'm not saying this to make excuses for people's sin, but to point out that God is patient and that he even makes provision for us when we fail! He doesn't abandon us when we blow it!

*1 Tim. 1:16 "But this is why God had mercy on me, so that Christ Jesus could use me as a prime example of His great patience with even the*

worst sinners.” (NLT)

5. When Jesus died on the cross provision was made for us. God’s grace and forgiveness now covers our lives. God’s patience is what we experience not His wrath. This is what gives us so much hope!
6. God has called you / He wants to use you to serve His purposes / and He has enough patience for your flaws. Faithfulness is about God using defective people to accomplish His purposes.

## II. Faithfulness Is Defined By A Process Rather Than Perfection

### A. God is process oriented rather than event oriented

1. We are so event oriented. We can see ourselves failing an event in time and then conclude we are a failure as a person / a Christian.
  - Missed opportunity to witness - fear / blew up at your spouse / failed ministry attempt / My first youth activity I ever did was a Jr High all-nighter. 35 Jr. Highers in a gym. It should have scared me for life! I did everything wrong!
2. Abraham could have concluded after his failure in Egypt that God made a mistake in calling him. Especially, after he did the same thing years later! Ever struggled with the same thing for years?
3. God sees our lives as a process. He understands that there will be plenty of failed events over the course of our lives.

*II Cor. 4:16 “...Though our bodies are dying our spirits are being renewed every day.” (NLT)* Notice the process.

*II Cor. 3:18 “...and as the Spirit of the Lord works within us, we become more and more like Him and reflect His glory even more.” (NLT)* Becoming more and more like Jesus is a process.

4. A failed attempt does not mean a failed life! We must believe in God’s process in getting us where we need to be.
5. This week Lisa and I celebrated our 20<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. There has been quite a bit of reflection for me. I have been thinking of the process God has taken us on in the last 20 years. We are not the same people. How God has radically changed our lives through His process!

### B. God is more concerned with progress rather than perfection

- Abraham’s life is an example of progress over time rather than an example of perfection. Abraham’s faith / understanding and experience with God / His obedience all grew over time.

*Philip. 1:6 “And I am sure that God, who began the good work within you, will continue His work until it is finally finished on that day when Christ Jesus comes back again.” (NLT)* Continual Progress!

1. Since perfection will never be a reality until we see Jesus face to face, our focus and efforts needs to be on progress, otherwise we will live discouraged every day. (WHY? We see our lack of perfection)
2. I should be trying to cooperate with God's work going on in me rather than trying to finish it. (That's His job!) If we have expectations of perfection, we just set ourselves up for disappointment.
3. As a parent, I am more concerned with my kid's progress rather than their perfection. I don't have expectations of their perfection. I do though expect progress! (Academically / Spiritually / Relationally / Life skills / Obedience / I expect that they cooperate with this!
4. Progress is attainable / perfection is not – Progress gives hope / perfection robs us of hope / I can cooperate with progress – It is impossible to cooperate with perfection. Progress happens in this life / perfection happens in the next!
5. Sometimes, in the middle of a journey it is easy to get discouraged. You start wondering if you're ever going to arrive at the destination. (We become like when our kids say..."Are we there yet?")
6. Sometimes it's good to stop and remember just how far you've already traveled. Just how far God has already brought you; and rejoice in the God's process and your progress...Because this is what God's rejoicing in.

### **III. Faithfulness Is Developed By Trusting God Without Tangible Proof**

#### **A. Faith versus reason**

1. Abraham faced this issue. There were things that God asked Abraham to do that wouldn't have made any sense rationally. God Told Abraham to leave his relatives and homeland / Told him to go to a land that God would show him. / Told him that he'd have a son / be the father of many nations / the entire world would be blessed through him. There was no tangible proof to any of this!
2. God develops faithfulness in us by giving us faith versus reason opportunities. Too often, we only follow God unless it makes sense to us...unless it all adds up in our minds.

I'm not saying that God is irrational...or that we have to shift our brains in neutral. What I am saying is that God's reasoning is beyond what we can comprehend, therefore, it requires faith!

*Is. 55:9 "For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts higher than your thoughts." (NLT)*

3. Therefore, sometimes God asks us to do things / believe Him for things that are beyond our reason / beyond tangible proof. It is a faith versus reason test.

4. I believe the process of us trusting God for the purchase of this building is one of those tests for us as a church. There are some people who think we're crazy! It's beyond their natural reasoning.
5. Will we base our behavior / our obedience upon what simply makes sense in our minds or on what God says? Will we live naturally or supernaturally / physically or spiritually /
6. You're probably facing some tests like this right now in your personal life. Will I follow what God's word says OR will I do what human reason says?

#### B. Faith versus feelings

1. Abraham's fear caused him to not trust God and take matters into his own hands. Twice in regards to his own personal safety and once with trying to accomplish God's promise of a son.  
*Prov. 28:26 "He who trusts in his own heart is a fool..." (NASB)*
2. Some people don't follow God unless it feels good. Some people let their feelings overrule what God has said or promised. Therefore, God gives us faith versus feelings tests.
3. Some people won't trust God with your finances because of your feelings / won't get involved in a ministry / won't move into close relationships / stay on the fringe of this church /
4. Their feelings dominate your life / make their decisions rather than their faith in what God has said.
5. This year on vacation, I had my first opportunity at parasailing. OK, I was a little bit nervous. I could have allowed those feelings to keep me away from something wonderful. (explain) Exhilarating experience
6. God wants us to move past our feelings and trust Him for an exhilarating journey, yet our feelings keep us grounded! Our fear keeps us from soaring! We will never be all that God desires us to be unless we learn to follow God despite the feelings.
7. Feelings are part of life / we just can't let them dictate our faith. Therefore, God gives us faith versus feeling opportunities. What ones are you facing right now?

#### C. Faith versus results

1. God promised Abraham a son and that promise wasn't fulfilled until 25 years later. Would Abraham remain faithful even though he saw No physical results for 25 years? Long time to wait.
2. I believe this is yet another test God gives to us to develop faithfulness. Anyone can be faithful if they see instant results. BUT, can we remain faithful even when we see nothing!

3. This is a tough one for us who are part of an instant gratification culture. We just think that obedience should equal instant blessing. We tend to embrace a microwave version of Christianity. We want things to work fast.
4. This perspective just causes us to quit too soon. I believe this is one of the main reasons we just don't see God do as much as He would if we'd grow through these faith versus results tests.
5. We are a very results oriented culture. Results are what matters. BUT, do we only follow God when we see results? I believe there are times when God purposely withholds results in order to grow and mature our faith.  
*II Cor. 4:18 "So we don't look at the troubles we can see right now; rather we look forward to what we have not yet seen..." (NLT)* We look forward to what we haven't experienced yet and we remain faithful until we do.
6. Maybe you're in one of these times. You've been praying / hanging on / hoping / looking / Now will you follow Abraham's example, and just keep being faithful?

From Abraham's life, we see that he certainly wasn't perfect, yet he was faithful and God still used him.

- Faithfulness is about defective people accomplishing God's purposes
- Faithfulness is defined by a process rather than perfection
- Faithfulness is developed by trusting God without any tangible proof.

In what specific ways can you follow Abraham's example of faithfulness?

- Maybe it's time to stop using your imperfections as an excuse
- Maybe it's time to stop beating yourself up over your lack of perfection
- Maybe it's time to finally pass the faith test God has you in.