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## GENESIS 12:10-20

Series: Understanding Your Roots

[PRAYER] Lord, we thank you for your heart for us, that you give us so much that we don't deserve and we appreciate that all the more. Lord, I just am grateful for your word and how the heroes of the faith that we have mentioned in your word we don't just see all the good things about them, we see the weaknesses too. Today as we look at Abraham we ask that you'd give us insight into our own hearts, how we can learn and how we can grow as a result of this study. We ask this in Jesus' name, amen.

Well today we're going to get out the faith meter and we're going to measure the faith of the superheroes in the Bible. We're going to look at one of them in particular. We're going to look at Abraham and we're going to ask the question how is his faith doing.

Now Abraham is one of those guys we see a tremendous amount of faith. I would say his faith is rather strong when he is called out of Ur. He says leave your family and he brings Terah his father with him. So maybe it wasn't as strong as it could be. But then God calls him out of Haran again and they go back down 400 miles to the Promised Land. You've got to imagine his faith level is pretty high at that point. I would suggest his faith level is high because he's going around in the promised land and he's planting these flags. They're called altars. He's putting this altar to the Lord here and he's building another altar to the Lord over here. These altars are all planting the flag of God's presence in the land.

I think in our own lives if we look at the faith meter and we see where we are, we really want to have a faith that's high, a strong faith. Because when your faith is high it helps you so much in life. When it starts to get low, bad things start to happen. For example, when it starts to get low we start to feel more anxious or angry or disappointed with life. But when our faith is high then we're able to relinquish control to the Lord instead of having to control everything. When our faith is high we don't have to be angry and get justice on that person. We can rather allow God to be the one to take on the justice of the world and we can be the ones that are more focused on what God is doing what He wants to do. I think when our faith is low we're easily tempted to go the wrong direction and do what's wrong. Low faith is dangerous. It's faith nonetheless, but we want to do things to increase our faith. I would encourage you to think about ways you could increase your faith because as you do increase your faith, good things will happen and you'll have a strong faith. Be prepared for the various situations that you can face in your life.

So as we come to Abraham, what we see with Abraham is that he is going to be challenged in his faith now and we're going to get to a low point. So if we're looking at our faith meter, he's really on the low side now in this story. So let's look at it and see what's going on with him starting in

Genesis 12:10-20. So get out your Bibles, open them to Genesis 12:10-20 and we're going to read through this. Because everything is going great until verse 10. Verse 10 says – *Now there was a famine in the land.*

You know even if we're following the Lord and we're doing the right thing, bad things come into our lives. We live in a broken world and the brokenness affects us on every level. Even Christians are affected by the brokenness and we suffer, we have bad things that happen, we have challenges in life. So Abraham faces a challenge. There's a famine in the land. The famine means not just they couldn't eat, but remember this is a guy who had a lot of animals, sheep and cattle in particular, and so they didn't have anywhere to graze. He's got a problem. It's a serious problem. So it says in the next phrase – *So Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there, for the famine was severe in the land.*

Now I'm going to give Abraham the benefit of the doubt here and suggest that he wasn't wrong in going down to Egypt. Other people would say he wasn't trusting the Lord, he should've stayed there, and God could have provided for him there. But I'm going to suggest here we don't see anything in the passage that says he's doing the wrong thing. He's going down to Egypt as part of his solution to the problem, recognizing that God is very much in control. Maybe God's leading him down in order to do something.

Egypt in the Bible is often an escape from something. We see it regularly as an escape and it's not always bad, but many times it is. There's almost this sense that Egypt represents the world and sometimes we escape to the world for solutions and sometimes we find ourselves in trouble.

For example, you remember when the Israelites were in... Well first of all let's go back to Joseph. Joseph welcomes all of his family and everybody went down to Egypt where he takes care of them. That's great. Everything seems to be fine. But over a period of time what takes place is that they become enslaved in Egypt. Anybody who is addicted to anything understands the Egypt concept. That's the place where slavery takes place and they want to be rescued from Egypt. They want to get out of there. Because although the world may have some solutions, it's not a permanent place. It's not a place where you're going to find a tremendous amount of freedom. So in this case the Israelites found themselves in slavery.

But what's really interesting is that God rescued them out. Remember? He rescued them out and took them to the edge of the Promised Land. When they get to the edge of the Promised Land there, what takes place? When they get to the edge of the Promised Land they got the spies, the two that say let's go in and the ten that say we can't go in. So what takes place in that moment? The people start listening. And this is what they say: Let's form a leader for ourselves and let's go back to Egypt. That's always the temptation with Egypt. Let's go back. I know it's in slavery, but there's some control about it, there's something that I benefit from in this slavery that I have. If you have an addiction problem, you know there's always this temptation to go back there for one reason or another.

Now it was true that when Jesus was born that God appeared to Joseph and said you need to leave here because they're trying to kill you. So they went to Egypt. Nothing bad seemed to happen. They stayed there a couple years before they were able to come back.

In our story now we have Abraham going down to Egypt. I'm concerned. That's all I want to say is that I'm concerned about him. Whenever we start going to Egypt we should be asking ourselves some really important questions. I'm concerned. Am I wrong? But I'm concerned.

When somebody says to me, "I got a new job. I've got to work on Sundays." There's nothing wrong with that. You can work on Sundays. If that's what you need to do, I say you need to work. That's important. Work on Sundays. But I'm concerned. Because there is this need for us to be connected as the body of Christ. If you're not connected then something can happen. You're just more susceptible to temptation.

I think of the person who says, "I'm going to counseling. It's provided by my insurance at my work, so I'm going to counseling." You've got to understand I'm in favor of counseling. I'm a counselor myself. I think counseling is good. But it's dangerous because it all depends on the advice you get from the counselor. The counselor is giving you feedback and if the counselor is telling you things about your life that is moving you down a wrong path, you are in danger.

Abraham is in danger. I don't know what your Egypt might be. But for Abraham, he's down in Egypt, he's in danger, and notice what happens to him because you're going to find that his faith is rather low.

Look at the next verse, it says – *When he was about to enter Egypt, he said to Sarai his wife, "I know that you are a woman beautiful in appearance, and when the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife.' Then they will kill me, but they will let you live. Say you are my sister, that it may go well with me because of you, and that my life may be spared for your sake."*

So Abraham agrees with his wife here to conspire and tell a lie in order to protect Abraham so he won't get killed. Now they create this lie, which is a half-truth. It is true that Abraham and Sarai were actual half brother and sister. But the implication isn't that. Deception in a lie is this giving the appearance of something that isn't true. And that's what's taking place here. The lie is that we're not married. He's trying to protect himself in the midst of this and it's a rather challenging thing here that he's doing in order to protect himself.

What's motivating this? Well what's motivating this is fear. Now the Bible is full of passages that contrast fear with faith. In fact it seems to be one of the biggest things the Bible is talking about is if you're going to have a strong faith you want to deal with your fears. Because fears cause us to do all kinds of things that get us into trouble. So watch out. If your fear level is growing, it means you're in danger and your faith level might not be high enough. You need to raise your faith level up. You need to move it up on the scale. You need your faith to be strong in order to deal with that.

Let me show you some verses from God's word that share with us this idea of fear and faith. If you're at home you want to get your Bible out or flip through and find Hebrews 13:6. Because there it says these words. It says – *The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What will man do to me?* The idea is I'm not worried about other people, I'm worried about what God thinks. I

want Him. He's my helper. He's going to solve my problems. He's the one I'm going to allow to work in my life. Abraham could've used that verse in this moment.

Isaiah 41:1 says – *Do not fear, for I am with you; do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you. Surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.* I just think that if Abraham would've had these verses it would have bolstered his faith.

Today I'm going to share with you one thing that can bolster your faith. I'm just suggesting God's word helps bolster our faith, but that's not the one thing we're going to see from the passage. But the truth is that the scriptures do bolster our faith. Here's another verse. Psalm 34:4 says – *I sought the Lord, and He answered me, and delivered me from all my fears.* Sometimes our fears get us side-tracked and they just start to multiply and get bigger and bigger and bigger. Notice in that verse in Psalm 34 it says – *I sought the Lord.* When you seek the Lord your focus is different. You're in a different place. If you get focused on your fears they just multiply and get bigger and bigger.

Just see all of these passages that are in the Bible that help us understand more about the fears and how faith is the antidote to them. When God came to Joshua and said, "Joshua, I'm going to choose you to be a leader," and right at the beginning Joshua was ministering. He says these words to Joshua – *Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.* You're going to need this, Joshua. Wherever you go. You need the Lord, you need to trust in the Lord, you need to recognize that He is in control. We're going this direction with Him.

In a similar way as Paul is trying to encourage a young pastor, Timothy, in 2 Timothy 1:7 he says – *For God has not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.*

Then there's the shepherd psalm, the psalm we all love, Psalm 23:4 says – *Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me.* You've got to think Abraham would have benefited a lot from reading these kinds of verses. If he would have focused more on God's word and what God said to him, he wouldn't be so afraid, maybe he wouldn't be taking these mishaps, going in the wrong direction.

Part of Abraham's challenge here is his faith is low when his fears get high and then he starts to make bad decisions. Just think about your life and your own faith meter. Because if fear is a problem for you and you end up making decisions or allowing fear to control you, you want your faith level to be higher. God wants to do that in our lives.

Well let's go on in the passage and see what happens in more of the passage. In verse 14 it says – *When Abram entered Egypt, the Egyptians saw that the woman was very beautiful. I've got to tell you this lady is sixty-five. She is sixty-five years old and she is beautiful. They look at that and they go whoa. And when the princes of Pharaoh saw her, they praised her to Pharaoh. And the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house. And for her sake he dealt well with Abram; and he had sheep, oxen, male donkeys, male servants, female servants, female donkeys, and camels.*

So Pharaoh sees Abraham as the head of the house so to speak. If you're going to purchase a wife in those days or you're going to take a wife of someone, you give them a dowry. So the Pharaoh gives Abraham all this wealth that now he has. It's listed there. Servants and donkeys. He gives them oxen and camels. All of this wealth he's giving to Abraham.

You know I'm thinking wow, that's a lot that he's giving to him. This guy is digging a bigger hole. Can you imagine now what Abraham is thinking to himself? "Oh no. I've really got a problem now. My wife's over there in the palace with Pharaoh who thinks he's going to take her as his wife and I've got all this stuff he's given me. When this gets out I'm really going to be in trouble." I can imagine him going to bed at night saying, "Oh man. I have really made a mess of my life. Things are really bad now. I don't know what I'm going to do."

I work with people regularly and sometimes people tell me their stories and I'm thinking, "That is really bad. You have made a real mess of your life. I have no idea what God's going to do in this situation." But the interesting thing is God has a plan. God works out these things in our lives. God is able to take us from where we are and move us to something much bigger than where we are. He does these great things in the course of things. But I look at life and I go, "Man, that is such a big hole that that person has dumped themselves into."

Most of my counseling work is with parents. I work with parents. Two weeks ago I started a new client and the child is eight years old. I'm mainly working the dad. The mom's there too. But the dad's the one who initiated. They're both with me on the first meeting and they had sent me in advance videos of their child from their ring doorbell. So this child is having these major fits, tearing up the whole front yard. I mean I look at this and I'm going this is a really big problem. So regularly I come to these kinds of situations where we've got a terrible problem going on and I meet with the parents and I end up just presenting material that I think is helpful for them. Here's what I think you ought to do next.

At the end of this session (I remember this was two weeks ago) I said to my assistant in my office, "Wow. This is the time where I have to let it go. I've given them ideas to work on. And I have to step back and watch what is God going to do here. How is His grace going to work?" Because I never know what's going to happen. Maybe they're going to come back and say "this isn't working" and I give them more ideas. Other times they come back with "oh this happened here" and then I can modify things and go forward. It's just a privilege to watch God work. But it's not my solutions that make things well. What happens is that God's grace flows through me, just as it flows through you to other people in order to bring His grace into their lives.

Well I was so eager to listen to what they had to say one week later when they met with me. The dad says this: "I cannot believe the change we've seen in our son. Even in my wildest imaginations I wouldn't have imagined this much could take place in one week. I'm a guy that's a half-empty kind of a guy. So I'm waiting for the shoe to drop here that something bad is going to happen. But I am so pleased with the results that have taken place so far." I'm going this is God's grace at work in a family's life. God is bringing His grace into the situation and it's working. He grace is working. Let's apply biblical truth to a family's life and it's working, good things are happening.

I look at Abraham and I say, “This guy is in such a deep hole. I don’t know. If I were the counselor in that situation I don’t know what I would do here.”

Well let’s see what God does in this situation and how He works in this rather challenging and difficult situation. It says – *But the Lord afflicted Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife.* Does God work through non-believers? You bet He does. God works through people who don’t know Him, don’t love Him, don’t care for Him, don’t even realize they’re being used by Him. But often God will work in their lives in a way that affects those that understand God is at work.

The Bible tells us that God afflicted Pharaoh’s household with some kind of a plague. We don’t know what kind of a plague. It doesn’t tell us what kind of a plague exists. Maybe they had boils all over their bodies or rashes or something. We don’t know. Maybe it was something that prevented Pharaoh from consummating the relationship with Sarai. I’m not exactly sure what it is, but everybody has it. Probably Sarai doesn’t have it. Somehow in the midst of this Pharaoh realizes that this woman is his wife. Now how does he get that idea? We are not told in this passage how that takes place. It could’ve been that he’s trying to figure this and he sees Sarai is the only person who is not afflicted. So maybe he goes to her and says, “Hey, can you tell me what’s going on here?” And she says, “Well here’s the truth. Actually I’m his wife, not his sister.” Or maybe God reveals it to him in a dream or something and says, “Hey that woman you got, you should not have her because she is really his wife, not his sister.” I don’t know. But somehow he knows.

So notice what he does. He’s mad. *So Pharaoh called Abram and said, “What is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife? Why did you say, ‘She is my sister,’ so that I took her for my wife? Now then, here is your wife; take her, and go.” And Pharaoh gave men orders concerning him, and they sent him away with his wife and all that he had.*

It’s just really interesting to watch God at work. I wonder what God would have done if Abraham would’ve come into Egypt and said, “Lord, I’m coming to Egypt because I don’t have any food and my animals don’t have any food. Would you please protect me?” Can God work in an Egypt, in a Pharaoh, in a king? Can He do that? Well He does. You wonder what kind of faith Abraham could have demonstrated in this situation to see that. God always has another move. Satan thinks he’s won the battle, but God always has another move.

There is a painting that I saw. This is a painting from the 1800s. It’s called Checkmate. Sometimes it’s called The Chess Players. But it’s a painting of Satan playing chess with a rather concerned young man. If you look at the board you can see that a number of the young man’s chess pieces are all off the board because he’s losing the chess game. And the name of the painting is Checkmate. You see Satan rather smug looking at the chess board and the young man rather concerned about the chess board. That’s the painting. But it’s more in the back. There’s an angel, there’s two gargoyles, there’s a little spider crawling up. It’s obviously a picture of good and evil. It’s not just a game of chess. This is the game of life. Satan is winning and has won the game of life.

Well a man saw this painting up on the wall. His name is Paul Morphy. In the 1860s he came upon this painting and he was studying it because he was a chess champ. So he's looking at the board. It's on an angle, so it's hard to see. But he's kind of studying the board and he's looking at the board and he's saying, "You know what? This isn't checkmate. That young man has got another move that he can make." He said, "Bring me a chess board." So he gets the chess board out. He puts all the pieces on the board and he starts looking and studying and he says, "You know what? He doesn't just have one more move. I could win this game from his perspective." So he does. He plays it out, he can see that he wins.

The ironic thing about this is Satan is so smug, thinks he's won the game, but there's one more move. There's always one more move with God's children. God is the one who wins the game in the end. He always has one more move. When God created the whole world, He looked at the whole world and He said this is very good. Satan comes into the situation, tempts Eve, and she takes of the fruit and sin comes into the world. He thinks he's won. But God in His curse upon the serpent says it's through the woman's seed that we're going to have a rescuer come along that's going to crush the serpent.

Through the offspring? Satan says okay, let's do the Cain and Abel story. Abel gets killed. Well that got rid of him. And Cain has been banned. But the Bible tells us that Adam and Eve had another son. His name was Seth. Here's God's other move. And that's going to be the line through which Jesus is going to come.

But all the people then become wicked on the face of the earth and it seems like Satan is in control of all of these things that are going on. But God says I'm going to create an ark by the hand of Noah and I'm going to rescue these eight people and they're going to be the way we're going to start this way all over again. God always has another move.

So they get off the ark and God tells them to multiply. All of a sudden you've got this group of people that decide they're going to all be in one place. "We're not going to spread out," they said. You can see Satan glowing and just happy that these guys aren't going to obey God and they're not going to fulfill God's promise and move forward. They're just going to build a tower for a name for themselves. God always has another move. And what He does is He confuses their language. So what do they do? They spread out and multiply all over the world.

Things get pretty complicated. In fact idol worship takes place in a lot of places. One of those places was Ur of the Chaldees. I'm sure Satan felt pretty good about all the idol worship in Ur of the Chaldees. But God steps in there and He calls one man, Abraham. He says, "Abraham, I'm going to make you a great nation." God at that point says I'm going to demonstrate through a man, through a family, through a nation of how I work with them. They are going to be my chosen people.

Yes, this is God coming in with his other move back and forth. This is the story of the Bible. This wrestling back and forth. So finally what happens is we come down the story further we have Jesus born. The Savior of the world has now come. But Herod wants to kill the baby Jesus. So God comes and He tells Joseph, "Go off, get out of here." So again, God saves the situation.

Satan thinks he's won when he crucifies Jesus to the cross. But three days later Jesus Christ rose from the dead.

God always has another move. So in your life don't come to the place where you say, "I don't think God can handle this one. I think I'm going to tell a lie here to get out of trouble. I think I'm going to tell a lie to get what I want." Don't ever get to the place where you say, "Oh God can't control this one, so I'm going to control it with my anxiety. I'm going to control this with my revenge." Don't ever come to that place. God always has another move. It is our job to trust the Lord and allow Him to do that work in our lives. That's what God wants to do. Abraham is missing something really important. I just wonder what God could've done if Abraham would have trusted the Lord. But his faith meter is really low. He doesn't do the right thing.

The other thing that bothers me about this passage I've got to tell you, it bothers me this last line. Because it says that they sent him away and they sent him away with all of his stuff. He got to keep all of the stuff. I don't like that. You know I think's too much grace and too much mercy for this guy who did the wrong thing. I tend to think that justice is more motivating for people to obey God. Here's a man and a wife who have conspired to tell a lie and they kind of get away with it. I say kind of because there is a handmaid who comes as part of this who's going to be a problem down the road that we're going to learn more about. But it seems they get away with it and come out way richer. "Where's the justice in all of this?" I say to myself.

I think about another couple that told a lie in the New Testament. Where Ananias and Sapphira conspired and they said all these new churches are coming out, people are giving their money to the church, they're selling their land. Let's get in on this. We'll get some of the glory. We'll also give our money. Let's sell this land and hold a little bit back. But we won't tell anybody we're holding a little bit back. We'll lie and we'll say we are so it looks like we're giving everything, but we're really holding something back. They didn't have to give anything. But the fact that they lied was a problem.

So they come to Peter and Ananias brings the money. Peter, being warned of the Holy Spirit, says to Ananias, "Are you telling me you're bringing me all of the proceeds? You don't have to bring anything. You can give part of it if you want."

"No," Ananias says, "This is everything." This was a lie that Ananias concocted with his wife. And Peter says, "Are you telling me that this is all of it?"

Ananias says, "Yep, this is all of it." Boom, he's dead. Right there on the floor.

That's justice. That makes sense to me. I like that kind of thing. Those are the kind of sermons I want to preach. Because if you preach justice sermons it puts the fear of God in people and they start doing the right thing. I like those kinds of sermons.

Well the guys take him away. He's going over to the morgue or wherever they take people who were dead in those days. Just as he leaves, the wife comes in. Peter says, "Hey, I've got to ask you a question. Your husband was just here and he said he gave a great gift to the church, but he said all that money was all of the money represented from the land you sold. Is that true?"

She says, "Yes, that's true." Boom, flat on the ground. These guys are coming back and they see her, they take her off to the morgue.

I like that kind of sermon. That's very motivating. If we can preach those hellfire and brimstone sermons people are going to be afraid to do anything wrong. They're going to want to do the right thing.

That's why I have a hard time with this verse. Because this is the mercy of God. This is the one thing that I think can boost our faith that I want to talk about for just a moment. This is the mercy of God. I'm afraid if I preach too many mercy sermons what people are going to do is they're going to take advantage of that. They're going to say, "Well God is going to give me mercy, so I'm going to go ahead and sin." No! I'd like to give you some justice sermons. But this is the mercy of God. And the mercies of God are very motivating.

In fact I would suggest that any time I start saying that person ought to be judged because of their sin, I'm hoping it's somebody else. Because if they spoke of my sin I don't want justice, I want mercy. I only want justice if it's somebody else. But if it's me, I want mercy. Lord, give me mercy. I don't want what I deserve. So when I start making those statements about judgement and hellfire and brimstone and fear of God in people, there is some truth in that. But my arrogance is what can bolster that. When I start thinking everybody else deserves punishment but me, I'm in big trouble. It's the mercy of God that allows me to receive forgiveness, just like He forgives anyone who's out there. We are all forgiven. We are all under God's mercy. None of us comes to God and say, "Hey God, you owe me." None of us can come to the Lord and say, "Hey, I've earned this. You really should be giving me a little more blessing here, God." None of us can do that. We come to the Lord as sinners and anything we receive is the mercy of God that comes on us.

Here's what happens. It motivates us then to serve the Lord more. The greatest thing that can boost your faith today is you'll ponder the mercies of God. Because as you ponder the mercies of God what you see is God's grace at work in your life. And you go, "Yes, I want to give my life to the Lord."

Let me show you a verse in Romans 12:1 that talks about the mercy of God. This is Paul reading this in Romans 12:1 and we're reading what Paul wrote. He says – *Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy...* He's saying let's start with God's mercy. Let's put that out on the table. Because of God's mercy here's what I want to ask you to do. He says – *I urge you, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.* What's the motivation for total dedication to God? It's the mercies of God. We need to ponder the mercies of God. It humbles us. It helps us recognize that we don't own anything. We haven't earned anything. It comes from God's very hand. It's the mercies of God. And those mercies that God gives to us follow us around in our lives.

Let me show you. I'm taking this from the verse in Psalm 23:6, back to the shepherd's psalm again. At the end of the psalm it says this: *Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.* Surely goodness and mercy are going to follow me.

Now the word ‘follow’ there is the word ‘pursue’. It's not just they're kind of tagging along. They're running after me. It's the same word that's used when the Israelites are running out of Egypt. They're leaving Egypt because of the ten plagues. You remember that. And the Egyptians give them all this wealth and say get out of here. So they leave and they're heading off, out of Egypt. They get to the Red Sea there and what happens? They turn around and the Bible says the Egyptians are pursuing them. Not just following. They're pursuing them. Several times in Exodus 14 and 15 it says the Egyptians are pursuing them. They turn around, they're there. Moses says, “Just hold on here. You're going to see something you've never seen before here.” So they open up the Red Sea, people go through, and the Egyptians, the Bible says, pursue them into the sea. They're out the other side and God closes the waters on them. They are pursuing. Catch that.

When you look at this verse in Psalm 23:6 it says – *Goodness and mercy pursue me all the days of my life*. They are pursuing you, they are pursuing me, and as they pursue us we are so motivated by them. We say, “God, there it is again. Every time I turn around I see the pursuit of God's mercy in my life and I say, “God, I need that. That's what I need. I want to serve you. I want to give my life to you. I want to dedicate my heart to you. I want my faith to have this boost in my life.” In order to have that boost, one of the greatest things is to recognize the mercy of God.

The one thing today we're looking at that can boost your faith is the mercy of God. Conquer that, ponder what God has done, what He wants to do in your heart and your life, and allow Him to expand your faith, to grow it. Not get sidetracked. Because when we start thinking we're worthy then we think God owes us something. We're not worthy to receive those things. The one thing that makes us worthy is that we receive Jesus Christ into our lives, that we can walk into His presence and say, “God, I'm here. Not based on my righteousness, but based on the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Thank you for your mercy that allows me to experience you and who you are.”