

Ebenezer  
Part 2: The Altar  
Sermon Small Group Notes  
Speaker: Pastor Dave Patterson

## USING THIS SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE

- This Sermon Discussion Guide is only a tool to aid you in meeting the needs of your group. For most groups, there are too many questions to answer in one session together. After considering the needs of your group, you may choose one of the following options:
  1. one section of questions
  2. one or two questions from each section
- Feel free to adapt the format to meet the needs of your group. If your group is mature and wants to dig deeper, add Scripture and ask suitable questions. Remember that this is only a guide.
- Personal application is key to everyone's growth and should be included in every discussion. When asked how he or she intends to apply a certain principle a group member may say, "I need to spend more time in the Bible and in prayer." It is important for you to help group members make applications that are more specific and commit to a specific plan of action by asking, for example, "How are you going to begin?" An example is to get up 30 minutes earlier each morning, spending 15 minutes reading the Bible and 10 minutes in prayer. Encourage each group member to be accountable to the group for personal progress at the next meeting.
- As the leader your goal is to help bring the group into a stimulating discussion that helps the members recognize their need for personal life change. Ultimately you want them to be willing to commit to change with accountability to the group. Accountability helps us to persevere in our commitments and achieve the blessings of success.

## INTRODUCTION

**Ebenezer** = "The Rock of Help" : a monument to God's faithfulness; a remembrance, an altar or memorial of a time or event where God intervened.

Ebenezer is erected when we have an encounter with God, an **altar experience**. When you have an altar experience we are altered. The experience is for us not for God. When God reveals to you, your salvation, and rescue our response is to remove the idols of the past and replace them with the symbol of Gods power.

The power of an Ebenezer is in the revelation that God has intervened and you have chosen to never forget what He has accomplished.

## MESSAGE

This passage of scripture is arguably the most significant altar experience of all time.

[Genesis 22:9-18]

*When they arrived at the place where God had told him to go, Abraham built an altar and arranged the wood on it. Then he tied his son, Isaac, and laid him on the altar on top of the wood. 10 And Abraham picked up the knife to kill his son as a sacrifice. 11 At that moment the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!"*

*"Yes," Abraham replied. "Here I am!"*

*12 "Don't lay a hand on the boy!" the angel said. "Do not hurt him in any way, for now I know that you truly fear God. You have not withheld from me even your son, your only son."*

*13 Then Abraham looked up and saw a ram caught by its horns in a thicket. So he took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering in place of his son. 14 Abraham named the place Yahweh-Yireh (which means "the LORD will provide"). To this day, people still use that name as a proverb: "On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided."*

*15 Then the angel of the LORD called again to Abraham from heaven. 16 "This is what the LORD says: Because you have obeyed me and have not withheld even your son, your only son, I swear by my own name that 17 I will certainly bless you. I will multiply your descendants beyond number, like the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will conquer the cities of their enemies. 18 And through your descendants all the nations of the earth will be blessed—all because you have obeyed me."*

Because Abraham obeyed and did not withhold from God, God promised that Abraham would be blessed and multiplied.

### **Two altars we need to be living at:**

#### **1. The altar of provision**

Living with an open hand. Living with the declaration, "Nothing I have will I withhold from my God"

To live at this altar you will have to trust the character and nature of God. The altar of provision is not where God provides for you but where you sacrifice that which is precious to you in response to the revelation that God is your provider.

-Texan Pastor-

"God didn't give you the gravy so you can drown in the gravy, God gave you the gravy so you can, Pass The Gravy"

## OUR DECLARATION:

**God is our source and our provider. So we will frequently and obediently give what we have been entrusted with. We will live with an open hand and a spirit of generosity in order to be a blessing to others.... we will, pass the gravy!**

### **2. The Altar of selfless living**

Abraham could have failed the test but he triumphed at the altar of selfless living.

[Gen 22: 16-17]

*“Because you have obeyed me and have not withheld,  
...I will certainly bless you. I will multiply you... and all the nations of the earth will be blessed—all because you have obeyed me.”*

[Galatians 3:26 & 29]

*For you are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 29 And now that you belong to Christ, you are the true children of Abraham. You are his heirs, and God’s promise to Abraham belongs to you.*

Gods promises to Abraham are our promises because of Abraham's selfless living.

God wants us to look beyond ourselves and focus on His kingdom and the restoration of the hurting and broken.

As the church grows we will be called to be uncomfortable to make room for those who are far from God. It's not about us and our special seat two rows from the front third and fourth chair in. It is and always will be about doing whatever it takes to make room for the lost and see them added to the Kingdom of God.

Let's spend time at the altar of selfless living and allow God to alter us.

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. As you take inventory of your house, can you identify some idols or potential idols?

2. Share a time when you passed the test at the altar of provision. What blessings have you seen since that test?
3. What happens when you live an open handed life?
4. Share a time when you passed the test at the altar of selfless living.
5. What can you do this week to live a selfless life?
6. What altar do you need to build and what do you need to lay on it?
7. Which one of these altars do you need to spend more time at?
8. Pray for an altar experience that will alter our lives.