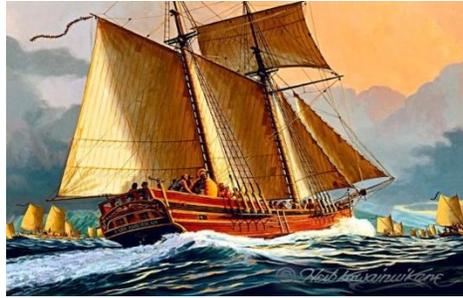


A FRIEND OF GOD

“Don’t you remember that our ancestor Abraham was shown to be right with God by his actions when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? You see, his faith and his actions worked together. His actions made his faith complete. And so it happened just as the Scriptures say: “Abraham believed God, and God counted him as righteous because of his faith.” He was even called the friend of God”. - James 2:21-23



In Hawaiian history, you will find that *Kamehameha Ekahi* had two very intimate “foreign” friends. Namely, they were Isaac Davis (1758-1810) and John Young (1742-1835). Isaac was from Wales, England and arrived in Hawaii in 1790. Upon his arrival, he became the sole survivor of the massacre of his crew of “The Fair American”. *Kamehameha* befriended Isaac Davis and he became an important advisor that had brought western military knowledge to Hawai’i. John Young, on the other hand, was left behind by his captain, Simon Metcalfe of the American ship, “Eleanora”. He, too, was befriended by *Kamehameha* and had brought knowledge of the western world, including naval and land battle strategies and a strong voice on the affairs of state for the Hawaiian Kingdom. Both men were very intimate friends with *Kamehameha*, as well as, each other and their expertise and skills helped *Kamehameha* establish his sovereign rule over the Hawaiian Islands. When Isaac Davis died in 1810, it was a shock to *Kamehameha* and a “dark day” in the life of the king. Then, in 1819, when *Kamehameha* died, John Young was one of the few close friends to be at his deathbed. Years later upon his own death, the estate of John Young was divided amongst his children and the children of Isaac Davis of whom he had adopted.



What a special and intimate friendship they had shared! Did you know that you have a special and intimate friendship, too? In fact, it is so special that God, Himself, calls you His “friend”! In our scripture reading, James writes, “And Abraham believed God and it

was reckoned to him as righteousness, and he was called (HERE IT IS)....the **friend of God.**" (v. 21-23) Don't miss that! Abraham got more than a promise from God! In fact, he got more than an oath! He got God calling him --- "friend". How? By walking in faith and obedience to His commands! Our scripture says, that "his faith and his actions worked together", therefore, making "his faith complete." By the way, did you know that Jesus had an "inner circle" of friends? Can you name them? They were His disciples, Peter, James and John, and His friends, Mary, Martha and Lazarus. In the same way, Abraham's faith brought Him into God's "inner circle". Just imagine being called a "friend of God" by GOD HIMSELF! That's why it's so important to know that whenever you find yourself caught in a difficult situation or circumstance, I'd like to encourage you to follow Abraham's example and **TRUST GOD.** You may be going through a difficult time in your finances, your health, your relationships, even, your employment (or unemployment), but, don't you dare give up your faith in God! I've come to encourage someone reading this devotional to "act" on your faith and trust God! That means banking on God's Word even when there is nothing visible to demonstrate that what He says is going to come true. That's called, "living in the confidence of faith"! It is the "assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." (Hebrews 11:1) A pastor friend put it this way, "FAITH is acting like it is SO, even, when it's not SO, in order for it to be SO, simply because God said SO." Rest assured that when you trust God, He can handle any situation you're going through and His power will always keep you secure.



Secondly, **GET PAST YOUR CONTRADICTIONS AND YOUR DOUBTS.** When God told Abraham that he needed to take his son and sacrifice him up at the mountain, Abraham did not hesitate. In fact, the Bible describes his diligence and conviction. Genesis 22:3 says, "Early the next morning, Abraham got up and saddled his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son, Isaac. When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God had told him about." In this passage there are seven key words that I don't want you to miss on "faith"! Did you see it? Here it is: "Early the next morning, Abraham got up....." In other words, Abraham did not have to think "twice" about the situation of sacrificing his son, Isaac. He trusted God and though he didn't fully understand the ways of God, Abraham knew that God had the power to do anything. You see, living the life of faith means trusting God, even though, it doesn't make any "natural" sense, but, I anticipate receiving in the "supernatural" what God promised whether or not I ever experience that fulfillment or not. The Bible says, when God tested Abraham, faith led him to offer his son Isaac. Abraham, the one who received the promises from God, was willing to offer his only son as a sacrifice. God had said to him, "Through Isaac your descendants will carry on your name." Abraham believed that God could bring Isaac back from the dead. Abraham did receive Isaac back

from the dead in a figurative sense.” (Hebrews 11:17-19) You see, Abraham’s faith believed that God is “able”, so, even though Isaac’s life would end, God would come through and do something about it. **THAT’S FAITH!** We need to remember that God is God, so, let God be God! Why? Because sometimes, we have a tendency to want to “box” God in or “trim” Him down to our level and ideas. But, God is all-knowing, all-powerful and all-present, so, the sooner we understand that God can never be figured out, the faster we’ll get to His perfect response. If this is you, perhaps, today is the day for you to discover God because He wants you to experience Him at a whole new level. What is it that you love most or value? What is your “Isaac”? Are you able to fully trust God with it or is it a difficult decision?



Finally, **LEAN ON GOD**. I am always amazed at tree trimmers and, especially, how they could climb tall coconut trees. Some of the tree trunks are small and sway in the wind, while others are large and tall. I discovered that each climber uses shoes with spikes and they are able to rest their entire weight on the belt that is fastened around the trunk. Likewise, trusting God with total obedience is like leaning on that “belt” by putting all of our confidence and trust in Him. If you are experiencing any contradictions on whether or not to worship, believe or follow God, you will never see God act in a significant way in your life. So, I want to urge you to step out of your fears! Step out of your doubts and step into the promises of God! Whatever your “Isaac’s” may be, let it go and diligently trust God with it. You see, after Abraham put the knife down and God provided the ram in the bush, Abraham became a “friend” of God by faith.

Our God is a God who not only raises the dead and makes good on His promises, but, a God who longs to call you His “friend”.