
The Call, Life and Faith of Abraham Part 2
Abraham's Journey – A Testimony of God's Grace
Genesis 12

As we continue to look at the life of Abraham we came to realize a couple of things about Abraham last week. First, Abraham was nobody special. He wasn't a mighty man of God before God called him to become the father of the nation of Israel. In fact, Abraham was probably an idol worshipper until God made Himself known to Abraham.

God choose Abraham not because of who he was but because God wanted to use him specifically. The same is true of your life. God has called you to this place and time not because of who you are but because He has a plan for your life and you heard it and you are here this morning. You showed up.

Secondly, once Abraham heard the call from the Lord he wasn't immediately obedient. He delayed following God. God called for Abraham to come out from the land he was living in and away from his family. Instead of following God though, Abraham followed his earthly father on a journey and it was only after his father died that he decided to follow God's call on his life.

Like Abraham, some of you might be delaying the call of God on your life. There may be some things you are still holding onto, not ready to surrender. While full surrender to God is the ultimate goal God understands and He has a lot of patience with you. He knows in time that you will surrender and you follow His call on your life.

In the meantime I believe He is protecting you. Keeping you from straying too far away from him. Protecting you from getting into too much trouble. I know that was the case with Abraham and the case with me.

In my life there were times when God could have allowed dire circumstances to come into my life. I was in places, around people who were doing things that had I joined and went down that road, well, lets just say I probably wouldn't be here this morning. I might have landed in a place that provided three squares and a cot if you know what I mean.

But God delivered me before things in my life got to that point. The same is true of Abraham. Let's look. Remember, to keep things from being confusing I am using the name God gave Abraham later. His original name is Abram but God renamed him Abraham several years later.

Genesis 12:4-5, 7, "So *Abraham* went forth as the Lord had spoken to him; and Lot went with him. No *Abraham* was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. *Abraham* took Sarai his wife and Lot his nephew, and all their possessions which they had accumulated, and the persons which they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan; thus they came to the land of Canaan. The Lord appeared to *Abraham* and said, 'To your descendants I will give this land.' So he built an altar there to the Lord who had appeared to him."

Here we read that Abraham finally answered God's call upon his life. If you remember from last week verse 1 God's call...

Genesis 12:1, "...Now go forth from your country, and from your relatives, and from your father's house, to the land which I will show you."

Abraham was finally obedient and when he left Haran, he journeyed somewhere between 400-600 miles. An incredible distance by foot and camel. Especially if you can imagine a caravan of people, family, servants, supplies and livestock.

But as Abraham was obedient, God appeared to him again in the land of Canaan.

This is what happens when we are obedient to God and the journey He places out in front of us.

1. In our obedience God meets us and strengthens us with His presence

Abraham needed this encouragement from the Lord didn't he? Look at **Hebrews 11:8, "By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going."**

Abraham had to develop faith in God because he was asked by God to go into a place that was unfamiliar to him. He had left the comfort of his family, his familiar surroundings, the way of life and now he was a nomad, a wanderer, following God to who knows where.

Picture of the boy on the roller coaster. – Markoe, please place the above point above the picture on the same slide. Thanks

I like this picture. Some of you might have seen it. My brother has it posted on his refrigerator. God has a plan for your life but it can be challenging because it is so uncertain. When God calls us, He usually doesn't give us the full picture but as we walk with Him things become more and more clear. God reveals Himself and His plan for us on our journey with Him. I think this is the case with Abraham and in some ways, the case for you and me.

2. As we walk with the Lord, God reveals Himself and parts of His plan for us on along our journey

The first time God appeared to Abraham it was a call to follow Him. The second time God appeared to Abraham God said I will give your descendants the land where you are standing. As Abraham moved on with God, God revealed more of His plan.

What we can learn from this is,

3. Responding to God's call can be challenging. Sometimes, most times there is an element of uncertainty.

This is a good place to put in a few other scriptures about faith.

Romans 10:17, "So then faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God."

In Abraham's case, he heard the word of the Lord didn't he. Not once but twice now on his journey. God had appeared to him in such a way that he knew it was God. He had no doubt it was the Creator of the universe. Why else would he uproot himself, his family and everything else that he had?

I wonder if that is more of what we need in our lives today. We need to hear from the Lord. We have spent a lot of time trying to figure things out on our own, making our plans, living our lives but without hearing from the Lord.

Dear God, we as your people need to hear from You! We want to hear from You.

After Abraham heard from God a second time his life was changed. He knew God was real, he knew God had a plan for His life, he knew it was going to be challenging so what did he do?

Hebrews 12:8, “Then he (Abraham) proceeded from there to the mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and there he built an altar to the Lord and called upon the name of the Lord.”

Abraham builds an altar and instead of waiting to hear from God he takes the initiative and calls upon the name of the Lord. His faith begins to build and God is no longer the pursuer but the one who is being pursued. The pursuee, if that is a word begins to become the pursuer. This is what God hopes will happen in our journey with Him.

In His great grace and mercy God initiates a relationship with us and it is His great hope that we will not only respond, enter into a relationship with Him through His Son Jesus Christ but we will begin to pursue Him.

4. God hopes we will pursue Him

Look with me at one of the familiar Psalms David wrote.

Psalm 42:1, “As the deer pants for the water brooks, so my soul pants for You, O God.”

We love this verse. We sing this verse, as the deer pants for water so my soul longs for you. But is it true? Does your soul pant thirstily for the Lord?

In Abraham’s life it seems to. He not only builds one altar but in the course of his journey with God he builds eight altars to the Lord. Eight divine meetings he has with the Lord. You can follow Abraham’s journey by following his altars. The same can be true of our lives.

Every time God intervenes, every time we call out to Him in desperation or desire it can be a time where we have built an altar to the Lord. We have come and worshipped Him. We have honored Him. We have sought Him and the direction He has for our lives. We have sought Him for the strength we need to follow that direction.

We see Abraham build eight altars but o my, don't we need to have multiple altars, multiple times we can look back upon our lives and say, that is where I met God. I journeyed with Him and He met me there, I called out to Him and it was here He met me and on and on it goes.

This is God's hope for our lives.

But let me end up this morning on this note. God is faithful even when we are not.

Markoe, Please create a slide that says the following:

If you think you've blown God's plan for your life, rest in this. You, my beautiful friend, are not that powerful.

This was one of my points last week. Even when we are weak God is strong and will continue to carry out His plan for our lives.

Back to Abraham's life. After experiencing the great presence of the Lord, after building two altars, worshipping the Lord, calling upon the name of the Lord, we read the following happens.

Genesis 12:10-13, "10 Now there was a famine in the land; so Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there, for the famine was severe in the land. 11 It came about when he came near to Egypt, that he said to Sarai his wife, "See now, I know that you are a beautiful woman; 12 and when the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife'; and they will kill me, but they will let you live. 13 Please say that you are my sister so that it may go well with me because of you, and that I may live on account of you."

At this point Abraham's faith in the Lord is not too strong is it? This doesn't happen just once but twice. As Abraham journeys to the land of the Negev, he does practically the same thing. Claims Sarai is his sister.

Again I say, after experiencing the great presence of the Lord, after building two altars, worshipping the Lord, calling upon the name of the Lord, Abraham messes up big time. His faith in the Lord to protect him is non-existent. He shows no care for Sarai only himself.

But God, in His faithfulness and grace protects and even blesses Abraham.

Once Sarai is taken into Pharaoh's house, Pharaoh and his house is stricken with a plague of some kind and God reveals Abraham's sin to Pharaoh. Naturally Pharaoh freaks out, gives Sarai back and sends Abraham away.

You can read about all of this in chapter twelve of Genesis.

Then again in chapter 20 the king who Abraham lied to about his wife, he too freaks out, restores Sarai, gives Abraham sheep, oxen, slaves and 1000 pieces of silver plus tells Abraham he can settle wherever in his kingdom he wants.

The fear of God is put into each of these leaders for Abraham's sake.

I find this amazing. That even in the midst of Abraham's lies and lack of faith God protects him and Sarai.

I want to tell you this morning this is our God. Your journey of faith may not have brought you yet to a great place where you have surrendered your all to God but if you have come into a relationship with Him through His Son then you are His son and daughter.

It wasn't God's desire that Abraham messed up so badly. It isn't God's hope that you mess up and are wrestling with surrendering your life to Him but guess what? He gets it. He knows. He knows this life is messy and He is patient and merciful.

God protected and delivered Abraham from some crazy stuff. God protected and delivered me from some crazy stuff and I bet God has protected and delivered you from crazy stuff as well.

That is our God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. My God and your God. **Abraham's journey, my journey, your journey is a journey of God's grace, love and mercy. God's hand is always on your life whether you realize it or not.**

And for this we give Him our praise.

Amen?