

ABRAHAM'S FAITH JOURNEY Part One

We have already seen that Jesus is the author and perfecter of our faith, but there are many examples of persons of faith throughout the Bible. Abraham is a prime example of how God chose one person to be the father of our faith. In the coming messages we will examine the various ways used by God to initiate and develop Abraham's trust in God. We call these various companions as **'faith's friends'** which we will label with **FF#**. In a previous message we already looked at the **Word of God FF#1** and **God of the Word FF#2**. Abraham's journey begins in the land of Ur, a place filled with pagan false gods. This is where God first spoke to Abraham.

Now the LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, from your kindred and from your father's house, to a land I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." So Abram departed as the LORD had spoken to him.

- Genesis 12:1-4 NKJV

FF#3 / Hearing - God spoke a **rhema word** to Abram, which was a specific word to him for a specific assignment. Throughout the Bible we see how God chooses and elects persons for specific tasks and service. God speaks in various ways to people and desires that we **listen** carefully and respond to Him. Throughout the Bible we see how God wants to interact and operate with mankind. **God initiates and man cooperates**. There is a false belief that sees faith as a work. Man's response to God's grace is part of God's sovereign plan to honor mankind's free will to choose whether to obey God or not. It all starts with God speaking and mankind listening. The following scriptures clearly show that faith is not a work by man. - Romans 3:27-28, Galatians 2:15-16; 3:2-3,11-14.

'If faith is to be produced in our hearts, we must hear the Word of God as a man listens to a will being read, or as the accused waits to hear the sentence of the judge. What is being said will effect us for eternity, for this is the eternal God speaking and imparting something of the atmosphere of his eternity into our limited sphere of 'now'. Careless listening will produce frailty, not divine faith.

- Judson Cornwall / Unfeigned Faith

Can you imagine the disciples sitting at the feet of Jesus, listening to his instructions? What a privilege they had! Nevertheless, we are blessed to be able to read these messages and ponder them deeply, for they are also words of life to us. Jesus listened carefully to the Word of the Father and we should listen carefully to him - John 5:30. Jesus often had to remind his disciples; **'He that has ears to hear, let him hear'**. His sheep hear his voice and must be quick to listen and slow to speak. We need to be meek and teachable learners - John 10:27, James 1:19-21

'Preaching God sends; if heard attentively, faith will be produced. If they believe the report, the arm of the Lord will be revealed in their salvation.'

Adam Clarke Commentary - John 12:37-38

Now the Lord had said to Abram: 'Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house, to a land I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed. - Genesis 12:1-3 NKJV

Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying 'In you all the nations shall be blessed'. So then all those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham. - Galatians 3:7-9 NKJV

Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, 'And to seeds', as of many, but as of one, 'And to your Seed, who is Christ' - Galatians 3:16 NKJV

There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male or female, for you are all one in Christ, then you are Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise. - Galatians 3:27-28 NIV

There is a common misconception that Genesis 12:2-3 applies to how we treat Israel or the Jews, but the above scripture refers to the Seed of Abraham, who is Jesus; all those who are in Christ are the true Israel of God whether they are ethnic Jew or Gentile - Galatians 6:15-16, Romans 2:28-29

FF#4 / Obedience

So Abram departed as the Lord had spoken to him. - Genesis 12:4

Abram left Ur of the Chaldees and then after his father died in Haran, he left with Lot to Canaan. He did not even know at first where he was supposed to go, but just started out in faith and trust in God. - Hebrews 11:8

Several years ago during a transition time in my life, I asked the Lord why he did not show me more clearly about my future. At the time I was driving my car up a fog covered hill where I could only see a little more than a car length ahead of me. It was then that God impressed on my thoughts that even though I could barely see ahead of me; if I kept driving, I could still see just enough to keep going forward in the fog. That is how much of life is in this walk of faith. God shows us enough to keep us following Him one step at a time. God wants us to trust Him and not go merely by what we see, think or feel.

Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. - Galatians 5:25 NIV

There is a common misconception in our culture of what it means to believe. It is seen simply as believing in certain truths or facts. For example, the majority of persons believe in God, that he exists. However, the Bible teaches that belief is much more than that. It must be accompanied by corresponding action and obedience. **We are not only to believe in God, but to believe God.**

'Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.' - James 2:17 NIV

The Hebrews 11 saints were each obedient in different ways: Abel offered, Noah built, Abraham went, lived like a stranger and he offered, Isaac and Jacob blessed, Moses' parents hid him, Rahab welcomed spies, those tortured refused to be released. These are a small sample of Bible characters who walked in obedient faith. Some escaped and others endured trials. In the Old Testament, the words trust and obedience are comparable to the New Testament word believe. Jesus fully obeyed God - John 8:29

Blessings of Obedience:

- Pleases God and brings rewards - Hebrews 11:6
- Brings further revelation - John 7:17
- Proves our love for God - John 14:21
- Increases intimacy with God and attracts His love - John 14:21-23; John 15:10,14
- Proves we fear God - Genesis 22:12,15-18

How pleased a master is when his dog hears and obeys his voice. How much more is God pleased when we do the same. God is more likely to speak to us when he knows we have a willingness to obey. In the Old Testament, the word 'obey' is expressed by the verb form 'to hear' - Psalm 18:44. True faith obeys - Romans 16:26, 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10.