

ABRAHAM: A MAN WHO TRUSTED GOD

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Hebrews 10:39, But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls. **[11:1]** Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. **[2]** For by it the people of old received their commendation.

► Abel, Enoch, Noah, and now...**Abraham**

Abraham:

- After Noah's flood, Abraham descended from Shem (Noah's son) and became the progenitor of the Israelite nation.
- **Hebrews 11**, Abraham receives more verses than any other person.
- **Genesis 12-25**, chronicles Abraham's story.
- **Romans 4:11**, says about Abraham, "the father of all who believe."

1. FAITH IS OBEDIENT TO GOD'S CALL

Hebrews 11:8, By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.

Genesis 12:1, Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you."

- Before God called Abram, he lived in **Ur of the Chaldees**, in what today is **Iraq**. He descended from **a line of idolaters** (Josh. 24:2). He was **about 70** when God called him.

Challenges:

- Left his father's house and relatives (a close-knit community)
 - **Martin Luther remarked:** It was hard to leave his native land, which it is natural for us to love. Indeed, love for the fatherland is numbered among the greatest virtues of the heathen.
- Left not knowing where he was going. [What a 5-year plan!]
- No permanent house. Living in tents [kept moving throughout his life]..

- Left to a foreign land with his beautiful wife (a great risk)
 - In **Genesis 12:10ff**, Pharaoh took Abraham's wife because she was beautiful. And he cautioned Sarah not to tell the Egyptians that he was her husband.
 - It was a life and death issue to live as a stranger in a foreign land.
- But Abraham obeyed God's call. Personal security did not impede him.

Application One: God's call to salvation and facing consequences from it.

- ❖ **1 Peter 4:16** Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name.

Application Two: God's commission to preach the gospel.

- ❖ **Acts 5:40-41**, And when they [Jewish opponents] had called in the apostles, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name.

Application Three: God's leading to serve as a pastor or somewhere in missions.

- ❖ **Acts 26:19** "Therefore, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision...21 For this reason the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me.

9Marks: Pastoral ministry is spiritually demanding. It's emotionally demanding. It's physically demanding. It subjects a man and his family to extraordinary burdens and pressures. So, a man should have a sober and informed commitment to the work of ministry before he seeks to pastor a church.¹

When William Carey obeyed God's call and came to India in 1793:

- He buried two of his four young children before his second anniversary.
- His distraught wife, Dorothy, lived the remainder of her days behind a locked door. She suffered delusions, accusing Carey of adultery and threatening him with a knife.

¹ <https://www.9marks.org/answer/does-pastor-have-be-called-god/>

- Many supporting churches discontinued their offerings, forcing Carey to work in an indigo factory to sustain his family.
- His early translations went up in smoke as a fire destroyed his print shop.
- William Carey finally became the father of modern missions whose impact on Christianity and society is incalculable.

Reward: God will honor and richly reward your obedience to God's call. HE NEVER LET US DOWN. Don't let personal/family security and suffering scare you away from obeying God's call.

2. FAITH BELIEVES IN GOD'S PROMISES

Initial struggle:

- ❖ **Genesis 17:17**, Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed and said to himself, "Shall a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?"
- ❖ **Genesis 18:12** So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "After I am worn out, and my lord is old, shall I have pleasure?" 13 The LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?' 14 Is anything too hard for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, about this time next year, and Sarah shall have a son."

Later:

- ❖ **Hebrews 11:11**, By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since **she considered him faithful who had promised**. 12 Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as many as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore.
- ❖ **Romans 4:18**, In hope he (Abraham) believed against hope (the hope of having no children), that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, "So shall your offspring be." 19 **He did not weaken in faith** when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. 20 No unbelief made him

waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, 21 **fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised.**

- Faith is being fully convinced that God is able to do what he has promised.

Furthermore, even when it came to sacrificing his only son, Isaac, Abraham believed that God would raise him from the dead to fulfil His promise through Isaac:

- ❖ **Hebrews 11:17**, By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and **he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son, 18 of whom it was said, “Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.”** 19 He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back.

Point: Abraham had tremendous faith in God and in His promises.

George Mueller: “Faith does not operate in the realm of the possible. There is no glory for God in that which is humanly possible. Faith begins where man's power ends.”

Applications: DO WE BELIEVE IN GOD'S PROMISES AND LIVE ACCORDINGLY?

- ❖ **Hebrews 4:15-16**, For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.
- ❖ **Hebrews 13:5**, Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”
- ❖ **Hebrews 10:35** Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. 36 For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised.

3. FAITH FOCUSSES ON ETERNITY

Hebrews 11: 1, Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

Hebrews 11:9, By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise.

- In Abraham's lifetime, the only thing he possessed was a Cave of Machpelah, which he had to buy at full cost to bury his wife.
- After more than 400 years, the offspring of Abraham finally possessed the land that God promised to Abraham.
- After 2000 years, the promise that Abraham will become the father of many nations has begun in Christ Jesus.

Hebrews 11:9 By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. **10**, For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God.

Looking forward: Intensive in force. "To expect with absolute confidence" (Spicq, 2:347).

Hebrews 11:10, For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations **[in contrast to tents]**, whose designer and builder is God.

Point: Although God promised the land [Canaan] to Abraham, his ultimate focus was on the city of God.

Hebrews 11:13 These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having **acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.** 14 For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. 15 If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. **16 But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.**

Applications:

- Like Abraham, we are called to walk by faith with eternal perspective.
- Like Abraham, we are called to live as strangers and sojourners in this world.
- Like Abraham, we are called to endure challenges in this earthly life by trusting in God's promises.
- Like Abraham, we are called to await our final inheritance. FAITH TREADS ON EARTH WITH EYE ON HEAVEN.

Kent Hughes: It is a dangerous thing when a Christian begins to feel permanently settled in this world.

Philippians 3:20 But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

Sue Bohlin: Years ago, my view of living with an eternal perspective was shaped by a lady who decided to start college in her 70s. When they asked her why she would do such a thing when her life was basically over, she said, "Oh no! It's not over! I'm preparing for the next part of my life in heaven! The more equipped I can get on earth, the more ready I'll be for what the Lord has for me on the other side!"

Joni Eareckson Tada, *Heaven: Your Real Home [Accident 17yrs, Now 73 yrs]*: I still can hardly believe it. I, with shriveled, bent fingers, atrophied muscles, gnarled knees, and no feeling from the shoulders down, will one day have a new body, light, bright, and clothed in righteousness—powerful and dazzling. Can you imagine the hope this gives someone spinal-cord injured like me? Or someone who is cerebral palsied, brain- injured, or who has multiple sclerosis? Imagine the hope this gives someone who is manic-depressive. **No other religion, no other philosophy promises new bodies, hearts, and minds. Only in the Gospel of Christ do hurting people find such incredible hope.**

Summary:

- Faith is obedient to God's Call.
- Faith believes in God's Promises.
- Faith focuses on Eternity.