

Abraham - The Model For Faithfulness

Text : **Hebrews 11: 8-19**

INTRODUCTION :

- A. What would be your response if God told you to move to Waziristan ?**
1. Just leave everything and everyone behind and move to Waziristan.
 2. You can take whatever you can carry with you, but leave everything else.
 3. You are going to leave your house and live in a tent.
- B. This is exactly what Abraham was commanded to do.**
1. He was called to leave a secure and prosperous life.
 2. He was to go to a place which he did not know. (*strange language, customs, etc*)
 3. He could only assume that the inhabitants would be hostile toward him.
- C. Abraham's response to God's call established a very special relationship.**
1. He is the ONLY one in the scriptures called "the friend of God."
James 2: 23- The Scripture was fulfilled which says, "And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness," and he was called the friend of God. (cf. - **II Chron. 20: 7** .. *Your friend forever* ..)
 2. God Himself referred to Abraham as His friend.
Isa. 41: 8- But you, Israel, My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, Descendant of Abraham My friend,
 3. Abraham is referred to as the father of all who have faith. (**Rom. 4: 11 , 16**)
- D. As the "father" of the faithful, Abraham is held up as a model to be emulated.**
1. If we want to have the same relationship with God as Abraham, we must have the same kind of faith that Abraham had.
 2. If we want to be saved eternally, we must be faithful like Abraham.
 - a. **Gal. 3:9-** So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.
 - b. **Rev. 2: 10-** Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life. (*Salvation is always linked to staying faithful.*)
 3. What does it mean to be faithful ?
 - a. By examining the model of faithfulness that God set before us, we will learn.
 - b. By conforming our lives to the accepted pattern, **WE** will be accepted.

Let us observe some of the ways our faith should emulate that of Abraham.

1. Abraham's faith was based upon revelation.
2. It was a faith which separated him from the world.
3. He had an ever growing faith.
4. His faith was “reckoned” to him as righteousness.

I. Gen. 11: 31 – 12: 3 Abraham's faith was based upon revelation.

A. God appeared to Abram to :

1. Command things that were very difficult. (*Go wherever I direct you.*)
2. Promise things that were beyond his comprehension. (*All families blessed*)
3. Ask him to believe things that were impossible. (*Sarah will have a son.*)
4. Demand things he did not want to do. (*Offer only son as a sacrifice*)

*** Whatever God commanded Abraham obeyed.
Whatever God promised, Abraham believed.**

B. Like Abraham, our faith must be founded upon revelation.

1. **Rom. 10: 17-** So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.
2. **Gal. 1:12-** For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, (cf. – **Eph. 3:2-3** but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ. **I Cor. 15: 1-8**)
3. **I Cor. 14: 37-** If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment.
4. **I Thes. 2.15-** So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or by letter from us.

Remember : Luke 16: 29-31

II. Heb. 11: 8-9, 13 By faith Abraham lived in the world, but not of the world.

A. Abraham was taken out of the comfort of Ur / Haran to live in tents.

1. Ur was a prosperous city 2000 years before Abraham came on the scene.
 - a. Archeologists have found records going back 4000 yrs. BC
 - b. Abraham lived there about 2100 yrs. BC
2. Ur was a very prosperous area.
 - a. Located in the “fertile crescent.” (*Southern Turkey just north of Syria*)

- b. First area to develop large scale irrigation.
- c. It enjoyed far-reaching trade.

B. He was leaving the most highly developed area on earth to go live in tents.

1. It would be like leaving the U.S. to live in a 3rd world country.
2. They had a well-developed city with substantial houses.
 - a. Archeologists have found the remnants of 3 storey stone houses.
 - b. The houses had indoor restrooms and indoor kitchens.
 - c. It had a library with over 10,000 books.
3. It was one of the first places known to have a government beyond the tribal level.
(It was possibly the capital of the first empire.)

C. How would you feel about being told to drop all and go to Waziristan ?

1. You don't know where you are going.
2. You don't speak the language.
3. You have nothing to go to.
4. You have no support system there. *(family, friends, contacts, embassy)*
5. The people there may be hostile.

* **Abraham just went. ... No questions asked. ... No objections given.**

D. He was separated from the influence of his cultural religion.

1. Abraham was raised in a pagan environment.
2. Ur was a center of pagan worship.
 - a. They worship many gods ... including goddess Ninhursag
 - b. Ziggurat of Nanna was tallest structure. *(Like a pyramid)*
 - c. They are known to have practiced human sacrifice. *(especially at death of king)*

E. Our faith should have this exact effect on our lives. (II Cor. 6: 17 , Rev. 18:4)

1. In Christ one gets a completely new set of values and priorities.
**II Cor. 5: 15- Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature;
 the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.**
2. Those in Christ become resident aliens on the earth. *(loyalty goes w/ citizenship)*
 - a. Their citizenship is in the kingdom of God.
**Phil 3: 20- For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly
 wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ;**

- b. As non-citizens, Christians do not practice the wicked culture of earth.
I Pet. 2:11- Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul.
- c. Christians live on earth anticipating that eternal dwelling place above.
II Cor. 5:1- For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

III. Abraham's faith was constantly growing.

A. Abraham trusted God enough to go out, but when faced with force he wavered.

- 1. He feared Pharaoh would kill him, so he lied. **Gen. 12: 10f.**
- 2. He repeated his sin in Gerar to Abimelech. **Gen. 20: 2f**

B. After only 16 years he tried to fulfill God's promise with another wife.

- 1. **Gen. 16** ... He produced a son by another of his wives, Hagar. (**16: 3**)
- 2. He tried to persuade God to just fulfill the promise through Ishmael. (**17: 18**)
- 3. He laughed when God reassured him that Sarah would have a child. (**17: 17**)

C. Abraham's doubt never got in the way of his obedience.

- 1. He produced a son with Sarah as instructed.
- 2. When told to offer that son as a sacrifice, he did so. (*Human sacrifices in Ur*)
- 3. His faith set him apart from all others of the earth.

D. The Christians faith must be continually growing.

- 1. Faith is a dynamic thing.
 - a. It cannot be maintained static.
 - b. It is either growing or diminishing.
 - c. That's why God instructs us to monitor our faith. (**II Cor. 13:5**)
- 2. Christians are responsible to build up each other's faith.
 - a. **I Thes. 5: 11- Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing.**
 - b. Every office in the church exists to build up and equip its members.
Eph. 4: 12- for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;
 - c. Both of Peter's epistles emphasized the urgency of growing in the faith. **2:2 / 3:18**

IV. Abraham's faith lead to his being counted as righteous.

A. Abraham was NOT righteous (no one can be) but he was counted righteous.

1. **Gen. 15: 6-** Then he believed in the Lord; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.
2. This verse is quoted in **Romans 4: 3.**

B. In this same way Christians are made righteous by faith.

1. **Read ... Rom. 4: 2-8**
2. **Compare ... Eph. 2: 8-9** Justification is totally apart from works.

C. Only faith like that of Abraham will be reckoned as righteousness.

1. Abraham's faith was based upon revelation.
2. It was a faith which separated him from the world.
3. He had an ever growing faith.
4. His faith was "reckoned" to him as righteousness.

D. When our faith has the effect on us that Abraham's did on him, God will reckon it to us as righteousness.

1. **Gal. 3: 26-29** For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷ For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise.
2. **Rom. 1: 4-5** Who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord, ⁵ through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for His name's sake,
3. Faith takes over one's life.
 - a. It is not added to it.
 - b. It is not a "part" of anyone's life. *It is one's life or it is dead faith.*

CONCLUSION :

A. Are you on a journey with God ?

B. When you arrive home, where will you be ?

Lesson Text :**Hebrews 11: 8-19**

8 By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going. **9** By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign *land*, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise; **10** for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God. **11** By faith even Sarah herself received ability to conceive, even beyond the proper time of life, since she considered Him faithful who had promised. **12** Therefore there was born even of one man, and him as good as dead at that, *as many descendants AS THE STARS OF HEAVEN IN NUMBER, AND INNUMERABLE AS THE SAND WHICH IS BY THE SEASHORE.*

13 All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. **14** For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own. **15** And indeed if they had been thinking of that *country* from which they went 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 a city for them.

17 By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten *son*; **18** *it was he* to whom it was said, "IN ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS SHALL BE CALLED." **19** He considered that God is able to raise *people* even from the dead, from which he also received him back as a type.