

The Life of Abraham: A Journey of Faith – Part 2

Faith and Fear – Genesis 12:10- 13:4

Crosspoint – Dave Spooner – Jan. 16th, 2022

Intro:

- This morning we continue to walk with Abraham in our journey of faith. If you have your Bible with you, open up to Genesis, chapter twelve, where we continue the story in verse ten. We were introduced to this man Abram last week as God spoke to him in one of the major crossroads of his life. God directed him to leave his country, his people, and his family and go to a land that God would show him. God promised to make him into a great nation, to bless him and make his name great so that he would be a blessing to the world. God promised that He would bless those that blessed him, and those that dishonored him He would curse, and that through him, all the families of the earth would be blessed.
- These were some incredible promises, and Abram took the Lord up on His word and followed God's command. He moved forward in his journey of faith. Last week we learned that faith produces obedience, faith produces worship, faith produces prayer, and faith produces perseverance. We also, like Abram, are holding on to the promises of God as we journey forward in our life of faith as we **Trust God's promises by living a life of faith.**
- God's promises were repeated time and time and time again to Abram as they were focused on and fulfilled as he went along his journey. And through his journey, and perhaps in ours as well, there were times when he veered away from and walked off course from the path that God had set for him.
- From our passage for this morning, we will learn what gets us off track and how we can get back on track in following the Lord in our journey of faith. We will be instructed from God's Word, which will give us hope and encouragement as we wait patiently for all of God's promises to be fulfilled (Rom. 15:4).

Know that hardships can keep you from trusting God's promises

Genesis 12:10 NIV

Now there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to live there for a while because the famine was severe.

- Hardships, trials, and difficulties come to all people. No one is exempt, even people of faith. Sometimes, the hardships are severe. People lose their jobs, and people get sick, funding dries up, accidents happen, people in our lives die, friends move away, we are mistreated. Things happen in our lives that are difficult and sometimes severely so. So what will you do then, who and what will you turn to, and who and what will you trust? Will you continue to turn to God and trust in Him and His promises and provision and providence to see you through, or are you going to turn to your own wisdom and your own gods to see you through?
- Lapses in faith often come from hardships in life. It is easy to trust God's Word when things are going well, but the true test of faith is what we trust when things go badly.
- Even Abram, who had walked with God, followed His word, and worshiped and prayed to Him, decided to go to a place God never called him to go. God never told him to go to Egypt; He told him to trust Him and follow Him, and He would show him where to go. When Abram arrived in Canaan, God told Abram that this is the place that I will give to you and your offspring.
- While Abram was there, a severe hardship came in the form of a famine. Abram could have chosen to stay in the land of promise, he could have gone to the sea of Galilee, or he could have

gone to the Jordan river valley, but no, he chose to leave the land of promise and go to “de-nial” and find his shelter there instead of trusting in God’s word. Instead of trusting in God’s provision, he turned to his own wisdom and other sources of help.

- Often we turn and trust in our own wisdom instead of God’s word when we are in difficult times. Another place we often turn is to other “gods.”

Genesis 12:11-13 NIV

As he was about to enter Egypt, he said to his wife Sarai, “I know what a beautiful woman you are. 12 When the Egyptians see you, they will say, ‘This is his wife.’ Then they will kill me but will let you live. 13 Say you are my sister, so that I will be treated well for your sake and my life will be spared because of you.”

- Do you notice in this passage who Abram turns to? He puts his trust in his wife Sarai, “my life will be spared because of you or they will kill me because of you.” So, now is Sarai, his wife, in charge of where he lives or dies? Often in times of crisis, we put other people in the place of God; we look to them for our protection or salvation or help instead of turning to the real God who is sovereign over our lives. We do this with family members, and we do this with employers. We do this with governments. Our misplaced faith and trust will always get us into more trouble and lead us farther off the path of true faith. Never put another in the place of the Lord.
- So they went down there, playing their roles and acting their trick.

Genesis 12:14-16 NIV

When Abram came to Egypt, the Egyptians saw that Sarai was a very beautiful woman. 15 And when Pharaoh’s officials saw her, they praised her to Pharaoh, and she was taken into his palace. 16 He treated Abram well for her sake, and Abram acquired sheep and cattle, male and female donkeys, male and female servants, and camels.

- Things went kind of according to the plan. The Egyptians did notice that she was beautiful, and they did treat him well because of her. However, some things happened that they did not anticipate, that Pharaoh himself took her to be his wife. Now they were in a very difficult situation. Not following God’s plan, even though it initially seems to make things better, in the end, will turn out for the worse. It is much better if we trust that God will be faithful to His word.

Trust that God will be faithful to His word

Genesis 12:17-20 NIV

But the Lord inflicted serious diseases on Pharaoh and his household because of Abram’s wife Sarai. 18 So Pharaoh summoned Abram. “What have you done to me?” he said. “Why didn’t you tell me she was your wife? 19 Why did you say, ‘She is my sister,’ so that I took her to be my wife? Now then, here is your wife. Take her and go!” 20 Then Pharaoh gave orders about Abram to his men, and they sent him on his way, with his wife and everything he had.

- If I was Pharaoh, I would have killed Abram right then. Pharaoh and his entire household suffered serious diseases because of a lie that Abram and Sarai told. I would have kept Abram’s “sister” as my wife, taken back everything I gave Abram, taken Abram’s life, and then taken everything else he had as payment for all things that were suffered. Pharaoh had the power to do all of that, but he did not. Why? Because of the sovereign God who is true to His word.

- God told Abram that He would make him a great nation. Do you think he would let him die like this? He told Abram that He would bless those who bless him, and those that dishonor him, He would curse. This is exactly what He did. He spared both Abram and Sarai's life, he cursed Pharaoh for separating them, even though He did not know he did so, and He caused Pharaoh to keep them together, keep all their stuff and let them go. God is faithful to His word even when we fail, falter, and fall. **"If we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself" (2 Tim 2:13 NIV)**. God will fulfill His word all by Himself. He does not need our help to do so. All He asks us to do is to trust and follow Him.
- Even when you fail, God will keep the door open to you to return in following Him in the place of blessing.

Return to the place of blessing

Gen 13:1-4 NIV

So Abram went up from Egypt to the Negev, with his wife and everything he had, and Lot went with him. 2 Abram had become very wealthy in livestock and in silver and gold.

3 From the Negev he went from place to place until he came to Bethel, to the place between Bethel and Ai where his tent had been earlier 4 and where he had first built an altar. There Abram called on the name of the Lord.

- Aren't you grateful that God offers us a way back? "A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out" (Matt 12:20 NIV). He offers us a way back.
- Perhaps you are in a position today of "losing your first love" like those in the church of Ephesus did. Jesus's counsel to them is the same as it is to us, remember the height from which you have fallen, repent, and return to do the things that you did at first (Rev. 2:5).

Conclusion

- Encouragement for those to keep trusting God's promises by living a life of faith and an opportunity for those who are going through hardships and difficult times and to those who are coming back on track in their faith to come up for a special time of prayer.
- Closing song(s) and prayer.