

The Life of Abraham: A Journey of Faith – Part 14

The Rest of The Story – Genesis 22-24, Hebrews 11:8-10

Crosspoint – Dave Spooner – April 10th, 2022

Intro:

- This morning is the last installment of our series on the life of Abraham. I hope that looking at Abraham's and Sarah's journey of faith has been helpful in providing hope, encouragement, and perspective in your journey of faith as well. Today we will look at "the rest of the story" and focus on a text from the New Testament that draws conclusions from the life of Abraham and tells us how we are to live a life of faith.
- If you remember, the theme for our entire series is this: ***Trust God's promises by living a life of faith.*** This is the "what is true and what to do." It is the "knowing and the going." What we believe, completed by what we do.
- The life story of Abraham and Sarah fits into THE story of the Bible: Creation – Fall – Redemption – Restoration. Every Christian's story ends with "they lived happily ever after."
- In the lives of Abraham and Sarah, we have seen God calling them and giving them great and precious promises.
 - That God would make them into a great nation, with their descendants being as numerous as the stars in the sky or the sand in the desert.
 - That Abraham would be blessed and his name would be great so that he would be a blessing.
 - That those who blessed him would be blessed, and those who dishonor him will be cursed.
 - That in Abraham and Sarah all the families on the earth would be blessed (Gen. 12:1-3).
- We have seen them walk with God and mature in their faith through their victories and their failures. We have seen them learn their lessons along the way, culminating in passing the "final exam" by loving God more than anything and anyone (Gen. 22).
- After all these things, we read:
 - Sarah dies (127) and is buried in Hebron (Gen. 23).
 - Abraham secures a wife for Isaac (Gen. 24).
 - Abraham marries Keturah and has other children (Gen. 25:1-6).
 - Abraham dies (175), buried by Isaac and Ishmael next to Sarah, his wife (Gen. 25:7-10).
 - Abraham – Isaac – Jacob (Israel) – 12 sons (tribes) (Gen. 25:19 – 50).
- The writer of the book of Hebrews in the New Testament distills down and summarizes the life of Abraham in a few short verses. From these verses, we gain our main points as to what living a life of faith means.

Hebrews 11:8 NIV

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.

Living a life of faith means obeying your calling

- First, we are called to Jesus, and then we are called through Jesus to follow Him and become like Him.

- Your form determines your function (Eph. 2:10). To understand what you are to do, you must first understand who you are.
- **Your gifts and your call are irrevocable (Rom. 11:29).** No one and no thing can take these away from you. You choose if and how you are to use your gifts and fulfill your call.
- You will not know all the details of the journey, but you must move forward in faith and faithfulness.
- Living a life of faith means obeying your calling. **If you love Me, you will obey what I command (John 14:15).** Obedience to Christ is not optional for those who love Christ.
- Let's look at our second main point as to how we are to live a life of faith from the life of Abraham.

Hebrews 11:9 NIV

By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise.

Living a life of faith means living like a stranger

- Your identity, your values, your thoughts, your actions, and your activities come from your family of faith.
- You are now an ambassador from a different country living in a foreign land. **We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us (2 Cor 5:20).** This means everywhere you go, you represent your home country. Where you live, where you walk, is now the country where you are from as a diplomat from that country, like our embassies. The place where the church gathers is to represent the kingdom and the values of where we are from.
- We are to be **in the world, but not of the world (John 17:14-16).** We are to be in contact with the world but not be like the world. We are to be light in the darkness, and to slow its decay.
- We are **not to conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind (Rom. 12:2).**
- We are to live as strangers and aliens in this world. To make a difference, we have to be different, and we can do so by the call and grace of God. Living a life of faith means living like a stranger in this life.
- Let's look at our third main point as to how we are to live a life of faith from the life of Abraham.

Hebrews 11:10 NIV

For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

Living a life of faith means looking forward to The City

- This world is not our true home, and we are just a "passing through." So don't get too attached to this place (like living in a tent). We are like grass, like flowers, (1 Peter 1:24), here for such a short time.
- We know in our hearts we and the world are not what they should be, and we long for a new nation, a new city, a better one (Heb. 11:16). This world is broken, flawed, and corrupted.
- The city that Abraham looked forward to is the same city we are to look forward to. This "city with foundations":

Revelation 21:10-14 NIV

And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. **11** It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. **12** It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. **13** There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west. **14** The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

- This is an eternal city, built on twelve foundations, the witness of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. With the Twelve Sons of Israel as the gates. You enter as a family member of God, built on the gospel that was proclaimed by the apostles with Jesus as the "chief cornerstone." This is the city you are from, and this is the place of your family and your people and your God.
- This is the final gathering place for the fulfillment of the promises given to Abraham.

Rev 7:9-10

After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. **10** And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."

- This is the place where all the children of Abraham are gathered, a "great multitude" from all of the nations of the world. This is the city of the Lamb which God provided in Christ to redeem us by his love seen through His sacrifice for us. He has given us His righteousness as "white robes," and we will be holding palm branches in our hands, saying, "Hosanna, blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord!" What they celebrated in the triumphal entry (John 12:13) and what we celebrate this day on Palm Sunday is a foreshadow of when we do this in eternity. The palm branch is a symbol of victory, triumph, peace, and eternal life.

Conclusion

- ***Trust God's promises by living a life of faith.*** Do so by obeying your calling, living like a stranger, and looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.
- In your journey of faith, remember the life of Abraham and Sarah, hold onto hope, be encouraged, and continue walking in faith. *Abraham and Sarah serve as a profound model of faith for us not because they were perfect, but because they were persistent.*
- Prayer People and prayer