

Title: Lessons From Abraham's Faith
Text: Hebrews 11: 8-10
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We are born into this world like squirrels. A squirrel is as happy upside down as he is right side up. But all of God's elect must, and shall be, born of the Word and the Spirit of God. With that new birth comes the gift of *faith: faith is the gift of God*. When God gives us life and faith in Christ, God turns us right side up. I set forth to you the gospel in hopes that God might give you faith to believe and that he might strengthen faith in you who do.

Our subject is: **Lessons from Abraham's Faith.**

Proposition: Faith has a sure effect on every aspect of a believer's life.

Divisions: Faith determines: 1) **what we leave behind**--v8 *By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed;* 2) **Faith determines how we live in this world**—v8: *...and he went out, not knowing whither he went;* 9 *By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise;*; 3) **Faith determines what we look forward to**--v10 *For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.*

I. FAITH LEAVES SOME THINGS BEHIND--Hebrews 11: 8: By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out,...

What did God call Abraham to leave behind?

Joshua 24: 2: And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, *even* Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods. 3: And I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood...

God called Abraham to leave behind ungodly vain confidence and hope. By faith Abraham obeyed. All God's children do. God calls his children effectually so that we leave our former vain, religion behind, even if it means severing the closest ties. Most all our family and friends either worship something or have some kind of hope. A great many in so-called Christianity.

If you care anything at all about the glory of God in Christ Jesus—please hear what I am about to say: the less offensive the message is to the sinner, the more it makes Christ to have failed on the cross. Just listen to what mean preach and you will hear it. The lukewarm, watered-down, message that takes the offense out of the cross, also takes the effect out of the cross. By offense I mean—man has not part in salvation period. By effect of the cross I mean—Christ finished redeeming all the elect given him of God and they must and shall be called, given faith, kept and brought to glory. The worst thieves are those who teach robbery while maintaining an appearance of honesty and godliness. This gospel causes a division only between those who do not believe and those who do.

Matthew 10: 34: Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword....36: And a man's foes *shall be* they of his own household....

Any earthly relationship that causes us to compromise on the full atonement Christ accomplished for his elect has taken preeminence in our heart over Christ.

Matthew 10: 38: And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. 39: He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

Repentance is turning from false gods and following Christ by faith. _Abraham lost his life in Ur, but he found eternal life in Christ. He never went back. Faith determines what we leave behind.

Is that too much to demand of the servant when that is exactly what our Lord suffered for us who believe? It was his own family who rejected Christ, it was fundamental conservative religious God-haters, together with liberal religious God-haters, who demanded Christ Jesus be crucified and a murderer set free. That is what men say by their gospel every day—crucify Christ and give us murderers our will—that message is blasphemy! Pious men and women rejected Christ for the law of Moses; zealous men and women rejected Christ for their many wonderful, benevolent works; sincere men and women rejected Christ for something they had done to bring themselves and others to God; respected leaders rejected Christ in order to make a profit off of souls on their way to hell. **THAT IS EXACTLY WHAT MEN DOING TODAY WHO WILL NOT DECLARE THE ELECTING, REDEEMING, REGENERATING, KEEPING GRACE OF GOD, WHO WILL NOT TELL ALL SINNERS PLAINLY THAT WE ARE HELPLESS TO SAVE OURSELVES—A to Z.**

Shall Christ suffer at the hands of such idolaters and God’s children be permitted to lock arms with them? God told Abraham this:

2 Corinthians 6: 17: Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you, 18: And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my children.

Abraham had the promise of God and went out. That was the beginning for Abraham. This is the beginning of the life of faith—with faith comes repentance—we leave behind our former gods. If we haven’t repented, we haven’t even begun: no repentance, no faith.

Illustration: *Sinking Concordia*—“The reason they did not jump overboard but stayed below in the long line was that they had so many valuables in their suitcase.” You and I are on a sinking ship. You have one of two options. Hang on to your suitcase and go to the bottom or lose it all for Christ and save your life.

II. FAITH DETERMINES HOW WE LIVE IN THIS LIFE

First, the believer is moved only by the promise of God, not by any kind of earthly gain--**Hebrews 11: 8: By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed;...**

It was not the promise of immediate inheritance that moved Abraham to go. God did provide all temporal provision for Abraham when he believed God and went out. God did promise Abraham this land for an inheritance—it was all his. Yet it was *a place which he should AFTER receive for an inheritance....* God provided for him, but except for his tomb, Abraham never owned any of that land.

It was so of our Redeemer. Glory was promised our Redeemer by God the Father after he suffered to glorify God and redeem his people. He left heavens glory—shall we not leave our former land. He took upon the form of a servant—shall we not do so? He walked this earth to minister, not to be ministered to, not to heap upon himself but to provide righteousness for us—shall not we put Christ first and his people first? It meant sorrow, not pleasure; it meant despising and rejection, not acceptance; it meant not having a place to lay his head.

Matthew 8: 19: And a certain scribe came, and said unto him, Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. 20: And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay *his* head.

Yet, God promised Christ an inheritance *after* his humiliation and suffering for his people. Should our Savior do the same for us and shall we not be content to wait till after this light affliction for our inheritance? According to God's promise it is all ours.

1 Cor 3: 22-23: "...the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's"...*but after shall ye receive...*

But do we want our inheritance in temporal possessions so we can waste our substance in riotous living as the prodigal?

Regard everything in this world to be yours, yet live as if the only thing here that is yours is a space large enough to hold your dead body. And we will find that believing God is the secret to true happiness.

Secondly, faith lives and walks not by sight, but by believing the word of God—**Hebrews 11: 8:...and he went out, not knowing whither he went.**

Genesis 12: 1: Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:

God did not show him the land first. By faith, Abraham did not ask to go spy out the land first: "let me go look it over and decide if I think I can make a living there, make ends meet, pay the bills and so on." That would not have been faith.

Illustration: What if I said, "I am ready to believe on Christ, I have saved up enough righteousness and holiness so I have sufficiency to believe on Christ." Or what if I said, "I am waiting because I have not quiet saved up enough righteousness and holiness yet so as to believe on Christ." Neither one—coming after we saved up enough or delaying until we have—neither one would be faith. It would be trusting our own wisdom, our own righteousness, our own holiness, looking to ourselves to deliver us—rather than Christ being All. How better to teach us that God will never leave us nor forsake us in eternal matters than for God to make us walk in this world awhile, not knowing what lies ahead, to show us God makes good on his promises. His making good on the lesser promises in this life teach us he has made good on the greater promises of the life to come.

Better than a foresight of what the future held--Abraham had the word of God—he had God's word on it. Abraham believed God. Faith knows—God said it, it is so. Christ put away my sin, my sin is put away. God says I am complete in Christ, I am complete. I do not see with the carnal eye, but I believe by the gospel of Christ.

Thirdly, faith does not conform to this world--**Hebrews 11: 9: By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country**, Believer, be a stranger in this world. Paul said, by "the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ,...the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." (Gal 6: 14). It didn't bother Abraham when the citizens of Canaan regarded him as a stranger, a foreigner, an alien—one that never belonged. But it would have bothered him greatly if they thought he did belong to Canaan. That includes this worlds' religion, this worlds' ideal of what a successful life is, along with all this worlds' fads. All the things this world regards as needful changes as constantly as the evil heart in man.

My gospel is not contemporary. It is as old as God. My gospel is as out of fashion and unpopular as my God is. But the world can have everything in it, I do not intend to change my gospel for this world. Why would I concern myself about the particulars going on in another country but my own?

Philippians 3: 20: *For our conversation (citizenship) is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: 21: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.*

Fourthly, faith lives in constant awareness that this world is passing away and only God changes not—**Hebrews 11: 9:...dwelling in tabernacles (tents)...**We don't have to live in a tent in this life but know that all your possessions and dearest ties are as weak as a tent and apt to change as quickly as a tent can be removed.

- We get a piece of land—think we are on solid ground
- We get a little money—think we are safe
- We get a job—think we have job-security
- We will either bury our children or they will bury us.

The more we are attached to the things of this world the more distraction from believing God. The less attached we are to this world, the less we will be vexed with the things that worry the men of this world. Hold on loosely. The only sure thing is our God. Our only rest, our only righteousness, is Christ. Our only trust is God who is faithful.

Fifthly, by faith God gives us precious, new company--**Hebrews 11: 9: By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:**

Abraham left Ur, left family and friends, but God gave him sweet new company. Isaac--a son of God's promise. Abraham dwelt with Isaac around seventy-five years. Isaac had Abraham's grandson, Jacob, who according to the purpose of election God said, "Jacob have I loved". He dwelt with Jacob about fifteen years. These were not only children, but brethren given common faith, of like-mind with Abraham. Abraham dwelt in tents but he did so among princes—Isaac and Jacob

- Men saved by the same grace
- Men who worshipped the same God
- Men who lived for the same end,
- Men who were co-heirs with him of the promised land.

You could gather together all the intellectual powerful men of this world: all the spineless-wife-slaves; the shackled money-slaves; the insecure little honor-slaves of this world—I would trade them all *to dwell in tabernacles with my dear brethren who are, the heirs with me of the same promise.* Their race doesn't matter, whether they are rich or poor, educated or uneducated—we are washed in the blood, perfect in the Lamb, heirs together of the grace of God. I know men who pronounce their words a little off but their message is the golden riches of Christ Jesus. I'll take the company of the brother who speaks food for my heart over a man who tries to dazzle my head any day of the week;

This same blessing given to Abraham: we are experiencing together. I see God joining our hearts together around our Redeemer. We talk to each other, cry with each other, laugh with each other, depend upon each other—God makes us of one heart by his grace through the gospel.

III. FAITH DETERMINES WHAT WE LOOK FORWARD TO—Hebrews 11: 10: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. We will be brief here. Let every believer here live in this life looking...

1. *“looking for a city”* --New Jerusalem—the city of God, the place of fellowship with a multitude that no man can number, with walls that never can be attacked, and streets with no adversary.

2. *which hath foundations*--Every city, like everything here, has no foundation—it will one day be burned up, but there we will not dwell in tents but in an abiding, everlasting home. Eternal love, endless bliss, immortal glory,

3. *Whose builder and maker is God*—this little borough of Rocky Hill—how many people did it take to build this place? We couldn't name them all. Nothing here will remain. But only one built that city that shall remain forever—God! Father, Son and Spirit—through the blood and righteousness of Christ Jesus our Lord.

God holds up Abraham as a witness of faith: by faith he left behind his former religion, by faith he lived upon God's promise, as a stranger, in a tent, with his brethren, by faith he looked for that eternal city made by God, eternal in the heavens. What a legacy—he lived by faith.

Amen!