

Abraham Part 2: Abraham's Identity

Hebrews 11:17-19

Men of Faith Series

8 By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. 9 By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; 10 for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

11 By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised. 12 Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born as many as the stars of the sky in multitude—innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore.

13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. 14 For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. 15 And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. 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 offered up his only begotten son, 18 of whom it was said, "In Isaac your seed shall be called," 19 concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.

Now we saw in our study last week that God called Abraham to leave his place of residence in Ur of the Chaldeans

A)Posh place - the Beverly Hills of the middle east at the time - many modern amenities

B)God called Abraham to take a step of faith and leave his family and homeland -

1)go to a land that God would show him

C)Remember we saw how God told Abraham - to go outside one night and look at the stars - count them

1)I will make your descendants like the stars -
Imagination

The Problem was Abraham was 75 yrs old at the time and his wife Sarah was 65 and they had no kids.

A)But Abraham believed in the promise of God - took the step of faith and went out - having no idea where he was going.

B)Paul tells us that act of faith was accounted to Abraham as righteousness -

1)trusting in the promise of God

C)He took on the identity of a Pilgrim - sojourner - obeying God

D)We saw that Abraham and Sarah wandered around the wilderness for the next 25 years -

1)Never settled - and never had a kid.

Do you think Abraham doubted if he really heard from God?

A)I would - I have many times - but there is a principle that we need to learn in the Christian life

B)The principle is this: There is often a gap of time between the promise and the performance of the promise.

C)God's timing is often different from ours - He tends to move a lot slower than we would like

D)Often times the gap of the time from the promise to the performance of the promise is to teach us this

1)Develop character within our hearts - to get us ready for when the promise is going to take place.

We noted last week that Abraham didn't always get that right

A)From the very start - he encounter a trial as soon as he ventured out in faith -

B)He hadn't been gone too long - famine struck the land -

1)Rather than trusting God Abraham went to Egypt - World For relief -

C)Lies about his wife - big mess - God rescues him -

1)they leave Egypt with more than they came with - flocks resources

D)And one other thing - a Servant girl named Hagar
Back on track again - then after many years go by -

Sarah and Abraham get impatient - no son

A)We need to help God out - Have sex with my
servant girl Hagar - and we can have a son through
her - Ishmael

B)Hebrews 6: Abraham patiently endured to obtain
the promise - what?

1)God's view from the other side of Calvary

C)But I want you to picture Abraham wandering in
the wilderness - he comes rolling into your village -

1)wife - hand maiden - Flocks herds and servants -
quite the entourage

D)Hey man who are you and what are you doing out
here?

Abe says - I am on a journey - My God called me to
leave my homeland and follow him -

A)Lead me to a new land - Make of me a great nation

Aa)he even told me that my descendants would be
like the stars -

B)Wow that is Amazing - How many kids do you
have now? - None - my wife is Barren

1)How old are you guys - I am 80 she is 70 - How
long have you been on the road - 5 yrs - 10 yrs - 15 -
20 yrs

C)Imagine the whispers - the Rumors floating around
about Abe - Crazy old dude!

1)Out of his mind - his poor wife

But then after 25 yrs a miracle happens - Sarah gets
pregnant and gives birth to a son - Isaac

A)This happens when Abe is 100 and Sarah was 90
yrs old

B)Suddenly everything that Abraham has been
saying for the past 25 yrs is validated in this miracle
child

C)Now when people meet Abraham and he tells them
his story -

1)he could point to Isaac and say - God is going to do
this through him

D)My son is the Miracle boy!!!

**In a very real sense - Abraham's identity gets
wrapped up in his son.**

A)His son represent the reality - that he did hear from
God - that he wasn't Crazy.

B)Question: Where do you find your identity?

1)Many men find their identity in their occupation -

C)We as men love to ask this question: What do you
do? What line of work are you in?

1)Many men find their identity worth in what they do
- or in how much money they make

D)When I was Younger my identity was in being
Athlete - Baseball player -

Letterman Jacket - College Scholarship

E)Then there was a time - where found my identity in
being a pastor

The Problem with that is when things are going good
in your profession you feel good about yourself

A)But when things are not going good - you start to
doubt - and wonder - should I be doing something
else

B)Some men find their identity in who they are
married to - being the Husband of so and so

C)Some men find their identity in their kids - live
vicariously through their children

When we become a follower of Jesus - the Lord
wants us to find our identity in Christ

A)In being a Child of God -

B)Realizing that our profession is merely the place
that God wants to be our mission field

C)Find our worth and purpose in our relationship
with Him

1)Front and center

In order to do that - God will often do with us what
he did with Abraham in V.17-19

A)That is to take the very thing that represented his
hopes and dreams and put them on the Altar. -

17 By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up
Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered
up his only begotten son,

B) Turn to Genesis 22

Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." 2 Then He said, "Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you."

C) God tested Abraham -

D) The word tested here in the Hebrew means the same thing as the Greek word tested in Heb. 11:17

1) It means to examine in order to prove.

Now it wasn't that God needed to find out what was in Abraham's heart

A) God knows all things - He knew what Abraham would do

B) Abraham needed to find out for himself - God was going to put Abraham through a test

1) to reveal his heart

C) To reveal the degree of faith and his priority and to reveal to Abraham the Character of his heart.

D) Abraham I want you to put this boy - young man - the promised Child -

1) who is the Validation of my promise to you
I want you to put Isaac on the Altar

Abraham was willing to do that and Hebrews 11 gives us some insight into why -

A) Hebrews 11 tells us something we don't see in Genesis

B) Put this on the Screen - Abraham was willing to sacrifice Isaac the promise child - 18 of whom it was said, "In Isaac your seed shall be called,"

C) In other words - Isaac is the fulfillment of the promise -

D) Abraham was willing to do that because he concluded V.19 that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.

Guys this is such a powerful passage

A) This is what it is saying to us - Abe is thinking - God I know that you are Faithful - proven that

B) You have made me this promise - you miraculously given me this son

C) And right now I have no idea why you are wanting me to do this - to sacrifice him -

1) makes no sense to me.

D) But if you have me - follow through on this -

E) I will do so believing that you are going to bring him back to life.

1) Because you said - through this boy - make a great nation

So Abraham was willing to put the very thing on the Altar that represented his Identity and his dream.

A) Because he trusted that God was faithful and that God would do another miracle if necessary.

B) I know what this is like to a certain degree. I became the Pastor here in 1996

1) When I got here the church was too big for this facility where we are - parking crowded - maxed out

C) Over the next 6 years the church grew - and our school grew - the school doubled in size.

Before Pastor Brian left - he told he thought God was going to use me to do something he couldn't do -

A) Find a New Building for the church

B) So knowing that we had already maxed out this facility in many areas -

1) I kept that in the back of my mind.

C) In 2002 the Lord opened the door for us to buy a 17 acre property in a prime location - Melrose / OCSD BLVD

1) Crazy how that came about

The Meeting in GH office -

A) Convince him Sell land at a deal - 1 million less - build for cost - Jeff Dorman -

D) I knew that Property would have the potential to be a game changer for our church and school

1) School - Biggest in NC - Ball field Gym -

E) Church would have had the opportunity to grow tremendously - Beautiful Campus - outdoor

1)amphitheater space - 800 parking places

I thought - Ok this is even beyond what I or Brian could have imagined

A)Six years to get approvals city - Finally in 2008 we were ready all we needed was \$500 to break ground

B)Put it out to the church and on the first week a ¼ of that came in

C)2 weeks later the economic Crash of 2008 happened -

1)Every Christian school in So Cal enrollment dropped in ½

D)Many people in our church lost their jobs - some lost their houses

1)Our tithes dropped - the bank - calculates how much they will loan you on the tithes

So our Shortfall of \$500K - jumped to over a million

A)For 2 whole years we tried everything to get over the hump - including even trying to sell 3 acres of the land - nothing worked

B)Jan of 2010 - I told the church - after 8 years we were stuck -

C)We were going to put the property on the Altar - and ask God to do one of three things -

#1 Give us the Money to build

#2 Bring a Buyer who would want to buy the property

#3 Give us the Grace to keep waiting

For 6 more months God had us wait -

A)Finally in June of 2010 - He brought two buyers - Sold the property made a profit -

B)paid off our building and put the rest in the bank

C)The result of putting the property on the Altar

Now we didn't put the property on the Altar believing that God was going to resurrect it ?

A)But we did - believing that he had something great in store for our church - that he wasn't done with us

B)He has been faithful - I still don't know exactly what those 8 years were all about - tough years

C)But it did teach me a lot about having my identity in Jesus - not in what we are doing for Jesus!

I wonder tonight if there are any of you here that God is saying - You need to lay your identity on the Altar.

A)Find your identity me - not in your Job - or who you are connected to

B)Or in what you are doing for me in Ministry

C)Your identity needs to be in me -MY SON - because when it is you can be content

1)and full of Joy - peace

D)No matter what season your life is in - You can believe that I have a plan -

1)I am working - I am faithful

Let's see how Abraham's story finishes

3 So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he split the wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. 4 Then on the third day Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the place afar off. 5 And Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you."

6 So Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son; {Not a little boy - at least a teen - maybe even in his 20's or early 30's - which means - Isaac is going to go along with this - trusting Abraham - who well over 100 at this time - so Isaac could have easily over powered his dad if he wanted to. and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife, and the two of them went together.

7 But Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son."

Then he said, "Look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?"

8 And Abraham said, "My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering." So the two of them went together.

9 Then they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there and placed the wood in order; and he bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, upon the wood. 10 And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.

11 But the Angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" So he said, "Here I am."

12 And He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me."

13 Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son.

14 And Abraham called the name of the place, The-Lord-Will-Provide; Jehovah Jireh -as it is said to this day, "In the Mount of the Lord it shall be provided."

Amazing story and exercise of faith on the part of Abraham

A)The Mt where this took place was called MT Moriah

B)A MT in Jerusalem and it is the same MT
1)that over 1800 years later God would provide Himself a Sacrifice

God was in Christ Reconciling the world to Himself
2 Corinthians 5:19

C)Abraham was just walking in obedience -

D)And he had no idea that what he was doing was playing into the Bigger picture of God's plan

That 1800 years later God would give his son as a Sacrifice for the sins of Humanity on that very mountain

A)And through Jesus' death and resurrection - the way for Sinful man to be reconciled to God would be born

B)And everyone who would embrace Jesus by faith -
1)would be declared righteous the same way that Abraham was - By faith

C)Abraham's descendants would literally become enumerable like the Stars because -

1)Everyone who believes in Jesus - Is spiritually a descendant of Abraham

Listen men - I will close with this: When you are walking in faith and trusting God

A)And being obedient to God even when it doesn't make sense -

B)You have no idea - that what you are doing might be playing into the greater plan of God and his purpose

C)Abraham wouldn't even know what that day on MT Moriah was all about until he got to heaven -
1)Then he understood - That was a Picture of what Jesus and God the father were going to do for Humanity

D)Even as My son Isaac was willing to trust me - believing God would bring him back to Life

E)Jesus went to the Cross and took the pain -
1)believing that God the father would bring him back to life as well.

Beautiful story of faith - Beautiful picture of Redemption

A)And a powerful illustration of how the Lord will sometimes call us to put the very thing that represents our identity on the altar

B)So that our faith can be reassured - that our identity is going to be found in him.