



“The Faith of Abraham” (Hebrews 11:8-19)

Danny Hodges – NT3543

I. FAITH TO **LEAVE** (v.8)

A. What Abraham Left

1. A life of idolatry

- Joshua 24: 2 Joshua said to all the people, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'Long ago your forefathers, including Terah the father of Abraham and Nahor, lived beyond the River and worshiped other gods.'
- Gen.15: 7 He also said to him, "I am the LORD, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to take possession of it."
- Ur was located on the Euphrates River in what is today southern Iraq. It was already an ancient city in Abraham's time. It had an elaborate system of writing, sophisticated mathematical calculations, educational facilities, and extensive business and religious records. The city was dominated by a massive three stage Ziggurat built by Ur-Nammu during the beginning of the second millennium B.C. Each stage was colored distinctively, with the top level bearing the silver, one room shrine of Nammu, the moon god. The royal cemetery reveals that ritual burials were sealed with the horrors of human sacrifice. So Ur, advanced as it was, was nevertheless in the bonds of darkest paganism. (Hughes, p.96)

2. The comforts of Ur

3. Life-long relationships/family (Gen.12:1)

- See Matthew 10:37-39.

4. The “certainty” of seventy-five years of life (Gen.12:4)

- After seventy-five years of life, your path is pretty well set (occupation, IRA, kid's school, etc.).
- If anyone is to follow the call of God in life, there will always be a cost...

B. Others Who Followed The Call of God

- Matthew 4:18-22; 9:9; I Kings 19:19-21

C. The Cost Of Following The Call Of God

- Luke 14:25-33 (God wants us to consider the cost.)
- Matthew 8: 19 Then a teacher of the law came to him and said, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go." 20 Jesus replied, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head." 21 Another disciple said to him, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father." 22 But Jesus told him, "Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead."
- See Matthew 19:27-29

D. Those Not Willing To Pay The Price

- Matthew 19:16-26
- Matt.22: 14 For many are called, but few are chosen.

II. FAITH TO **LIVE** IN THE WORLD BUT NOT BE OF THE WORLD (vv.9-10, 13-16)

A. Abraham Did Not Fit In With The Culture Any Longer

- Abraham's faith was not anti-cultural, but rather counter-cultural. His values were different. His standards of morality were different...he would not fit in with any culture (on earth) now that he had begun to follow God.

B. Abraham's Head Was In The Clouds

- He lived like an alien and a stranger because he was looking for the city with foundations (See Rev.21:14, 19-21).
- See I Cor.7:29-31.

C. Abraham's Focus Was On A Heavenly Home

- I Cor.3:21...All things are yours, 22 whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future – all are yours...
- Romans 8: 17 Now if we are children, then we are heirs – heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ...

III. FAITH TO **LEAN** NOT ON HIS OWN UNDERSTANDING (vv.11-12; Prov. 3:5-6)

A. Examples

- Ex.14: 14 The LORD will fight for you; you need only to be still." (The most unnatural thing to do when an army is bearing down on you!)
- I Kings 17: 13 Elijah said to her, "Don't be afraid. Go home and do as you have said. But first make a small cake of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me, and then make something for yourself and your son. 14 For this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the LORD gives rain on the land.'"
- Luke 9: 14 (About five thousand men were there.) But he said to his disciples, "Have them sit down in groups of about fifty each." 15 The disciples did so, and everybody sat down. 16 Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke them. Then he gave them to the disciples to set before the people.
- Matthew 17: 27 "But so that we may not offend them, go to the lake and throw out your line. Take the first fish you catch; open its mouth and you will find a four-drachma coin. Take it and give it to them for my tax and yours."

B. Abraham

- Gen.12:4-9; 13:10-11, 14-18 (altar builder, man of faith); 14:18-23; 15:1-6 (Despite his spiritual maturity, he is challenged in his faith); 15:7-8, summarize vv.9-21; 16:1-4a, 15-16; 17:1-8, 17 (laughed in faith); 21:1-7.
- Note: Life is good for Abraham and Sarah at this point. Their past mistakes are forgiven and behind them, their years of being perplexed at God's mysterious ways are finally over...or so they thought. Suddenly, like a heavy clap of thunder from a clear beautiful sky, the ultimate test came. See Gen.22:1-18; Hebrews 11:19. We of course see clearly the picture God painted in the sacrifice of Isaac (the gospel). But for Abraham, I do not at all believe it was that clear. He simply had to trust God, and by faith lay his son on God's altar. Note: no one initially saw the wisdom of God in allowing Jesus to be crucified...Read Romans 8:28 again. Thursday funeral for Kellie Lynn Wheeler (49 years old) ---- Eccl.7:2. The story of Lazarus (John 11)...Aaron Morris. See Rom.8:36.

CONCLUSION

- I Cor.15: 19 If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men.
- Ultimately ALL our hopes are realized only in resurrection.

- “He is no fool to lose what he cannot keep in order to gain what he cannot lose.”
- Just after the turn of the century, pioneer missionary Henry C. Morrison was returning to New York after forty years in Africa. That same boat also had as a passenger the wildly popular president, Theodore Roosevelt. As they entered New York harbor, the President was greeted with a huge fanfare. Morrison felt rather dejected. After all, he had spent four decades in the Lord’s service. But then a small voice came to him, saying, “Henry, you’re not home yet.”
- Where are you today in this journey of faith? Need to leave something/someone behind in order to follow the call of God? Need to live in the world but not be of the world? Need to lean not on your own understanding?