

The Life of Faith | Abraham

Hebrews 11:8-10

Reality Carp o2.o1.o9

Read Hebrews 11:8-10 and Genesis 12:1-8

Abraham's **life of faith** exemplifies **faith that is willing**

- **Abel** was faith **worshiping**
- **Enoch** was faith **walking**
- **Noah** was faith **working**
- **Abraham** is faith **willing**... willing to respond to God

When God spoke to him—he listened

When God promised—he trusted

When God commanded—he obeyed

Faith that **worships** walks, faith that **walks** works, faith that worships, walks, and **works** is **willing**

- Cf. Life adjustments from last weeks teaching

Faith does this because faith is **trust**—trust is willing

There are 3 things Abraham was **willing to do by faith**:

1. **He was willing to go**
2. **He was willing to forgo**
3. **He was willing to worship & witness**

1. He was **willing to go** without knowing where he was going

Hebrews 11:8

Faith that is willing

- Willing to go
- Because God said "**I will**" (5 times in 1 sentence)
 - Genesis 12:1-3
- What made Abraham's decision a faith decision was **the vagueness of God's order**
 - Abraham was not told that Canaan was the land God was talking about until after he went
 - This uncertainty forced him to rely strictly on God's word
 - Abraham was forced to believe **the bare word of God**
 - What Calvin called the *verbum nudum*
 - **The naked word of the Lord**
 - This would force Abraham to give himself wholly to the Lord
 - **Story: Starting Reality Carpinteria and signing the lease**

The call of the Gospel is to rest all of our hope on and in the word and work of Christ and nothing else—**Faith that is willing**

Matthew 10:37^a

Whoever loves his mother and father more than Me is not worthy of Me

Mark 8:35

For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it.

Our need to control—And the myth of security

- Allows us to take daily risks for ourselves, but paralyzes us from risking for God
- **Abraham didn't need all the info or all the answers to obey**
 - That is trust!
 - God will deal with our need to control
 - Abraham didn't get any answers until he obeyed!
 - Jeremiah 29:11-13

11 'For I know the plans that I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope.

12 'Then you will call upon **Me** and come and pray to **Me**, and I will listen to you.

13 'You will seek **Me** and find **Me** when you search for **Me** with all your heart.

 - God is the goal! (Cf. The "I wills" in Genesis 12:1-3)
 - The first and greatest commandment
 - He is not your genie in a bottle
- **We spend an exorbitant amount of time asking why, where, when**
 - We are often more demanding of God than trusting in God
 - A **childlike faith** is needed
 - Not a **childish faith** (like the kids in the backseat)
 - God wants you to enjoy the ride
 - He is the goal!

- Cf. The call on the Disciples (**Follow Me**)

Abraham was **willing to go** without knowing where he was going

2. He was willing to forgo according to what he did know

Faith that is willing

- Willing to forgo (go without permanency in and of this world)
- Because he was living for what was lasting
 - He knew there was more with God
- Heb. 11:10 refers to the new, heavenly eternal Jerusalem
 - **for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.**
 - Living for more than this life has to offer
- Heb. 11:9 pictures Abraham as a pilgrim
 - **By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise**
- Abraham dwelled in a tent
 - A tent is the dwelling place of someone who is just passing through
- The picture of a pilgrim
 - A pilgrim is not a drifter but rather has a set and certain goal

Too many have all their set and certain goals wrapped up in the here and now

- Too many are concerned with building **mansions** here on earth (Cf. John 14:1-3)
- Mark 10:28-32

28 Peter began to say to Him, "Behold, we have left everything and followed You."

29 Jesus said, "Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms, for My sake and for the gospel's sake,

30 but that he will receive a hundred times as much now in the present age, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms, along with persecutions; and in the age to come, eternal life.

31 "But many who are first will be last, and the last, first."

- Cnt: He who dies with the most toys wins
- Cf. The Bema Seat

So the pilgrim keeps the lightest touch on this world—has a certain and set goal

There is another kind of pilgrimage Christians make that is congruent:

- When any person come to Christ, God demands of Him **a pilgrimage from their old pattern of living into a new kind of life**
- Giving up the old way of life is one of the greatest obstacles to **faithful living**

Many of our **lives of faith** are impeded by worldliness¹:

¹ The following section is adapted from John MacArthur, Jr., *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Hebrews)* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1983), 328-9.

- Worldliness is the force that makes us want to hold on to the old life
- Worldliness is an attitude—not necessarily an act
 - It is wanting to do things that are sinful or selfish or worthless—whether we actually do them or not
 - It is wanting fame, praise, recognition, reputation, stuff—whether we ever get them or not
 - It is holding to high standards of conduct outwardly—but inwardly longing to live like the rest of the world
- “Worldliness is not so much what we do, but what we want to do”²
 - It is an issue of the heart
 - What keeps us from the acts may be:
 - Fear of consequences, what others think, self-righteousness, etc
 - **All the while we still have a strong desire for the wrong**
 - A heart issue
 - Jesus dealt with this in The Sermon on the Mount

The Christian who is really walking with God does whatever He wants to do!

- Mark of spiritual maturity—The difference is in what one wants to do!
- I found out that I am more worldly than I thought!

The inner strong desire is the root from which we need to cut ourselves off

- **The only way to do that is to connect with someone more desirable!**
 - Cf. Peter and the enemies fire (Cf. Luke 22:54-55)
 - James 4:4

4 You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.
 - 1 John 2:15

15 Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.

17 The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.
- **When we change the object of our love and desire we will vanquish worldliness**

Abraham was willing to go without knowing where he was going
 Abraham was willing to forgo according to what he did know

3. He was willing to worship and to witness

Faith that is willing

- Willing to go, forgo, and exalt God (in worship and witness)

² MacArthur, 329.

- **The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy him forever³**
- **God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him⁴**
 - We see these in Abraham's **life of faith** that was willing
- Abraham's **trust of God** made him willing to confront both:
 1. Popular culture (with worship)
 2. False gods (with witness)
- **Genesis 12:6-8**
 - Abraham confronting culture by worshiping and witnessing at strategic places
 - **Now the Canaanite was then in the land** (v. 6^b)
 - Indicates that opposition was going to be a reality as Abraham continued in **the life of faith**
- Abraham went to Shechem (vv. 6-7)
- It was in the geographical center of the promised land (**MAP**)
- **The oak of Moreh** (v. 6)
 - Moreh means **teacher, oracle giver**
 - The oak of Moreh was where the Canaanites assembled to hear the oracles that soothsayers received from the rustling leaves⁵ (soothsayer = someone that is supposed to be able to see the future)
- It is interesting that throughout time and until now their has always been the desire among people to know the future without knowing God (Big Business)
 - **Madam Rosinka coming to Carpinteria**

Abraham had already surrendered the future

- He confronted popular culture and worshiped God at the **oak of Moreh**
- **The Lord appeared to Abram...**
- This is the first time the Lord **appears to Abraham**
 - Instead of seeking the hand of God—Abraham sought his face
 - This is confronting culture (even Christian culture)
 - **Cf. The Avocado Festival and 5 Year Anniversary (The previous vision)**

Why did the Lord appear to Abraham there? (A couple suggestions)

1. When we worship God, God shows up (Cf. Psalm 22:3; John 4:23)
2. God was already there
 - God was on mission at Moreh (Challenging the false gods and prophets)
 - God had invited Abraham into His mission
 - And when Abraham worshiped in the midst of opposition He realized God at work there!
 - Your life!

³ The Westminster Catechism

⁴ John Piper

⁵ R. Kent Hughes, *Preaching the Word: Hebrews*, Vol. 2 (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1993), 186.

Not only did Abraham confront culture with **worship**—He confronted it with **witness**

Bethel (v. 8) (About 21 miles to the south) (MAP)

- Bethel was home to an important Canaanite sanctuary for their chief god (El)
- Abraham built an altar to the Lord right there
 - **And he called upon the name of the Lord**
 - In Moses' writings **call upon** regularly means **proclaimed**⁶
 - **His entourage was large and this would have been a very public event**
 - **The locals knew what was happening**
- Being faithful to God in culture
 - **Abraham spent his time making Yahweh famous in Canaan!**
- Being faithful in the little things means we will be entrusted with more
- But even when we do blow it, we know that God is the God of second chances
 - The Tony Story
 - **How can you proclaim in your context?** Are you even willing?

Abraham exemplifies for us **faith that is willing:**

- Willing to go—without all the answers
- Willing to forgo—and live for something lasting
- Willing to worship & witness—in and to a culture that is lost and confused

⁶ Ibid., 115.