

THE ULTIMATE EXAMPLE OF FAITH

Genesis 11:27-12:8

Suppose I were to call you this afternoon and tell you I need you to go on a mission. I want you to pack up everything you own—take your wife and kids, and all your possessions . . . Where are we going?

Don't worry! I'll show you in due time where to go.

What's it like there? Don't worry! It's a great place to live.

What will I do for a living?—I have to feed my family!

Don't worry! I'll provide everything you need!—Trust me! **Any volunteers?**

How you respond to invitation, would depend on how much you trust me, wouldn't it?

If you know me—if you and me go way back—you *might* trust me enough to take a chance.

It's a matter of trust—of FAITH!

If I were to ask you to identify 1 person as example of a "person of faith," *who would you choose?*

For most the choice would be clear.

The ultimate example of faith is Abraham.

Whenever God introduces models—to show what faith looks like—He *always* includes Abraham!

He holds prominent place among "heroes of faith" in Heb 11.

Abraham goes down in history, because of the well-known phrase,

"Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."

[1st place we discover . . .]

EVIDENCE OF ABRAHAM'S FAITH: Gen. 11:27-12:8

After confusion & scattering of Gen. 11, . . . [time passes]

Story of Terah and his family 11:27-32

Story of 3 brothers **11:27-30**

Haran Father of Nahor's wife, Milcah Iscah **Lot**

Dies while still in Ur

Nahor Remains behind in Ur --Some of his family join them later in Haran

Abram and his wife, together with Lot, went with Terah toward Canaan

Family settled in Haran **11:31**

Terah died in Haran **11:32**

Abram's departure from Ur appears to be Terah's decision.

Due to change in political/religious situation, consistent with history:

Ruling dynasty in Babylon changed

Decision to move *TO* Haran seems to be Terah's idea.

[Once they are settled in Haran, after Terah's death, . . .]

GOD CALLS ABRAM 12:1

1. To leave the comforts of home.

Leave your country. Leave your family.

Abraham was comfortable in Haran.

He was well-established there; Accumulation of goods was notable!

2. To follow Him to the place He would show him.

Abram believed God and followed Him, while his father's family still followed other gods! => Josh. 24:2-3

Abram wasn't following dad's faith—Abraham's *personal* faith in God.

When you look at Abraham's family in Haran, you don't find evidence *they* were following Yahweh

Abraham's children warned not to marry pagan, immoral, Canaanites—shows commitment to *basic morality*, but no evidence of faith in *Yahweh* among family

Abraham now had a family of his own to care for.

Talk about a hare-brained thing to do!

You don't just take off with a family and go to "who knows where"!!!

Imagine dialogue:

"Where are you going Abraham?" "I don't know!"

"What are you going to do there?" "How will you care for your family?"

"Right! Sure, Abram. God told you to go?!!!"

GOD PROMISES ABRAM THAT ...

1. God will bless him 12:2

I will make you a great nation I will bless you I will make your name great

2. God will make him a blessing to others 12:2b-3

Abram will BE a blessing!

I will bless those who bless you I will curse those who curse you

All peoples of the earth will be blessed through you [–reference to coming of Christ!]

ABRAHAM BELIEVES GOD AND FOLLOWS HIM 12:4-8

Abram packs up and moves to Canaan 12:4-6a

His vision attracted one other follower.

Lot wanted to be part of this. He wanted to be blessed too!

Abraham believed God.

He didn't know where he was going, or what he would do there.

**ALL HE KNEW WAS THAT GOD SAID GO,
AND HE WAS ON HIS WAY!**

He had *no contingency plan*—No Plan “B”!

He was committed to do what God said,

—whether anyone understood or not

—whether anyone else came along or not.

God promises to overcome an obstacle 12:6b-8

Canaanites are in the land! 12:6b

God promises to give Abram’s descendants the land 12:7a

2 Problems: Abram had no descendants!

Abram could never defeat the Canaanites!

He had to trust the lord to keep His Word!

Abram believes God

He worships God there 12:7b

He waits for God to fulfill His promise 12:8a

He doesn’t try to help God out—he sets up camp and waits!

He worships God again—God STILL hasn’t DONE anything—

Abram trusts Him and worships!

ABRAM BECOMES A MODEL OF THOSE WHO TRUST GOD

Heb. 11:8-10

God introduces him as a model of faith for US to imitate! **THE PATTERN:**

People of faith are called by God to follow Him --to unknown places

11:8a

People of faith obey God’s call and go wherever He leads. 11:8b

People of faith wait for God to fulfill His promise 11:9

People of faith look forward to a better place God has prepared for them

11:10

God is the architect AND builder.

How excited Larry Zuiderveen must be looking over a whole new city—built by perfect builder!!

ABRAM WAS DETERMINED TO TRUST GOD AND OBEY HIM.

Period!

Each time God said, “*Trust me!*” Abraham trusted God; resulted in blessing.

God was faithful to His trusting child.

That’s the way God works.

When we trust Him fully, He shows Himself to be wholly true.

He responds by blessing those who trust Him.

Do YOU know that feeling?

We've watched many— cut off from their roots—unsure where God might be leading them next.

Some have **lost job**.

Sometimes they wait months, even years, to find out what God has for them next.

Some have faced **early retirement**, at 50-55, and wondered, “where does God want us to go from here. We're too young to just “retire” and play golf for the next 30 years.

What does God want from us now?”

Sometimes it's young adults, like **Tim and Kay Meadows, or Chris Green**--in past year have sensed God leading them to follow Him—not knowing how He'd work out all the details.

Sometimes it's high school students who can't figure out where to go to **college**, or what **career** to pursue, or **what God wants to do with *their* lives**.

In each of these cases **God says**

“Trust me! Just be faithful in following me today wherever I lead you.

I'll show you all you need to know today.

Trust me & do what I want you to do today, I'll take care of tomorrow when it gets here!”

Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness.

Some people follow an **"open door" approach** to faith.

If God opens the door they will proceed.. If He doesn't, they stop.

FAITH isn't like that.

If God says go, walk up to the closed door and keep walking!

Sometimes God uses us to “take out” a misplaced door.

For years **Colombia** was a closed country.

A friend of ours believed God was calling her to serve Him in Colombia.

She couldn't get a visa.

Most people would have given up. The door was closed!

Betty believed God was calling her to serve Him there.

She went to school to get ready.

When she graduated from college she applied for a visa.

They weren't giving visas to Colombia.

So, she went to SIL, Wycliffe's linguistics training program.

Again she applied for a visa.

They weren't giving visas to Colombia!

Can't she take a clue? The door was closed! Give up! Look somewhere else.
Just one problem: Betty believed God was calling her to serve him in
Colombia! [Stubborn woman!]

So, she went to language school.

When she finished language school, she applied for a visa.

Guess what? They *still* weren't giving visas.

So, she packed and moved to Colombia, by the time she arrived, ready to enter,
God moved the closed door!

Because she believed God, when He said "Trust me," . . .

. . . **she was ready when He opened the door!**

Opened doors aren't the way to determine God's will.

Remember **Jonah**? All doors open for him to run—but God was calling him to
Nineveh!

Abraham had no "open doors"—but God was calling him to the land of closed doors!

What about **YOU**? Is God calling you to trust Him and go through a closed door?

God specializes in opening closed doors!

—when HE leads us to go through them!

*We just have to be sure to determine how God wants us to serve Him **today!***

That's what Abraham's faith was like.

He didn't know where he was going, but he obeyed God.

That's the way it works for us too!

God says, "Trust me!"

"You be willing to go wherever I lead you!

I'll take care of the doors!"

=> God Will Make a Way

Who's willing to go? Stand

Prayer of commitment— Strietzels—Lary, Cheryl, Stephanie (Jason)

Meadows—Tim and Kay, and boys

(Chris Green)