

SERIES: STORIES OF FAITH

SERMON: FAITH THAT LOOKS FORWARD TO A HEAVENLY HOME

7-7-24

OPENER:

Hebrews 11:8-12 (NKJV) 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.

God told Abraham to leave his home and go to a place that He would show him. By faith Abraham obeyed. The end of verse 8 says, “.....And he went out, not knowing where he was going.”

The Greek word used here for "knowing" is "epistamai" which means: "to put one's attention on, to fix one's thoughts on

What the Bible is saying here is that Abraham's faith was so great, that he was not even concerned where he was going. We could translate this verse like this....

"He went out, not even putting his thoughts on where he was going."

How could he do that? He trusted God, and he didn't need details. Abraham set out in faith, but he also set out in hope, hope for the promise of an eternal inheritance.

Abraham couldn't even tell his relatives where he was going, because he didn't know. The dialogue might have been like this..... "The family and I are leaving town." "Where are you going?" "I don't know." "You're leaving town and you don't even know where you're going? You're crazy!"

SIDE NOTE:

Abraham forsook his birthplace, his home, his estate; he severed family ties, he left loved ones. Why? Because God told him to.

**A WALK OF FAITH BEGINS WITH A SEPARATION FROM
OUR OLD LIFE.**

**ABRAHAM'S FAITH SEPARATED HIM FROM THAT WHICH WAS PAGAN.
SPIRITUAL GROWTH DEMANDS SEPARATION.
SEPARATION FROM THE WORLD IS THE BEGINNING OF A WALK OF
FAITH.**

2 Corinthians 6:14-18 (NKJV) Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? 15 And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? 16 And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people." 17 Therefore "Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you." 18 "I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty."

You might say, "But sin is so powerful, how do I break from it?" By faith! Abraham knew There is blessing for separation, so he obeyed. So should we, because faith pleases God.

As we grow in faith, we begin to lose our desire for worldly things. Do you know how often I want to go out and get drunk? I don't ever want to, I used to always want to. This is what spiritual maturity is all about. It's a process of growing to the place where you not only don't do it, you don't even want to do it. As we apply our faith, we grow. God has called us to be holy, that is separate from sin.

1. FAITH LIVES LIKE THIS WORLD IS TEMPORARY

Hebrews 11:9 (NKJV) 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;

...."By faith he dwelt in the land of promise"

The word "*dwelt*" is the Greek word "*paroikeo*". The word literally means: "to dwell beside or among." It speaks of a foreigner dwelling in a country along with others without rights of citizenship.

Abraham was a transient in the land of promise. He "*dwelt in tents*". He never had a permanent home only a temporary dwelling. This was also true of Isaac and Jacob who also were heirs of the same promise.

When Abraham got to the land of promise, he never got the promise? In all of Abraham's life in the land, he never owned it. God never gave it to him. Stephen, preaching about Abraham, said.....

Acts 7:5 (NKJV) "And God gave him no inheritance in it, not even enough to set his foot on. But even when Abraham had no child, He promised to give it to him for a possession, and to his descendants after him."

Abraham was so much a foreigner in the land of promise that when Sarah died he had to bargain with the Hittites just to purchase a burial plot for her.

ILLUSTRATION:

I have heard witnessed some things that people do before they pass this life. When we face death, we realize how temporary this life is and how quick it passes.

If you knew that the Lord was going to return in 6 months would you do some things differently? Would you change some things?

James 4:13-14 Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit";¹⁴ whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.

So, why did Abraham live as if he was in a foreign country when he was in fact in the land that God had promised to give him? Why didn't he move in, settle down, take possession? This brings me to my next point.....

2. FAITH THAT LIVES LIKE THE EARTH IS NOT YOUR HOME

Hebrews 11:13 (NKJV) 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.

By faith in God's promise of a heavenly city Abraham lived as a stranger on the earth. He knew the earth wasn't his home, so he never tried to make it his home.

ILLUSTRATION:

When you travel to a foreign country. You love the sites, but you feel like you are out of place. You don't speak the same language. You don't act like they do. You don't live like they do. The culture is different. You don't totally understand everyone else and they don't understand you. But it's okay because you are just visiting.

Do you see yourself as a stranger to this world?

Do you live as if you are in a foreign country?

**IT TAKES FAITH TO LIVE IN THIS WORLD LIKE A FOREIGNER.
WE ALL TEND TO SETTLE DOWN AND GET COMFORTABLE.
BUT AS CHRISTIANS, WE'RE ONLY HERE FOR A LITTLE WHILE, WE'RE
ON A JOURNEY TO A SPIRITUAL HOME IN HEAVEN.**

Paul said of believers.....

Philippians 3:20 (NKJV) For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,

Abraham is a good picture of the Christian. We are only passing through this earth, we're aliens, foreigners. So we shouldn't invest too much here. Look at how Jesus put it.....

Matthew 6:19-21 (NKJV) "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; 20 "but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

If you're only transient you shouldn't need much to get by on.

Illustration:

When you are getting ready to move to a new place. You start looking around and realize you don't really need all the things that you have accumulated. So you start getting rid of things. You start to get rid of things. Sarah and Nick moving...she cleaning out things.

Since you are not going to stay here, wouldn't it be better to spend your time and money advancing God's kingdom instead of building your own? We need to order our priorities and work for the real rewards, not for the ashes of the earth's decaying gold.

3. FAITH THAT LOOKS FORWARD TO A HEAVENLY HOME

Hebrews 11:10 (NKJV) for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

Abraham was looking for the heavenly city, the New Jerusalem spoken of in.....

Revelation 21:1-3 (NKJV) Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. 2 Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.

Notice that the New Jerusalem is in the new heaven and earth.

THE KEY TO SUCCESSFUL LIVING IN THE PRESENT IS A PROPER UNDERSTANDING OF THE FUTURE.

ABRAHAM HAD A PROPER UNDERSTANDING OF THE FUTURE.

HE SET HIS HEARTS ON HIS REWARD IN HEAVEN.

THAT'S WHY HE COULD SURVIVE THE DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES OF LIVING IN TENTS WITH NO SENSE OF REAL IDENTITY IN THE LAND AND THIS IS THE KEY FOR US TOO.

CLOSING:

2 Corinthians 4:18 (NKJV) while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

**WE NEED TO GET OUR EYES OFF OF THE TEMPORARY
AND ON THE ETERNAL.**

WE DON'T BELONG TO THIS WORLD.

WE'RE NOT SUPPOSE TO GET COMFORTABLE HERE.

2 Corinthians 5:1 (NKJV) For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.