

ProPresenter Notes:

Everything Highlighted has a corresponding slide.

Yellow Highlights are Scripture

Green Highlights are Notes

Bring Pads in during Closing/Invitation (RED TEXT)

July 26 2020
Voices in the Storm
Genesis 12-14
FBC Fernandina Beach

Intro: We are no strangers to natural disasters here in Northeast Florida. Whether its a hurricane, wildfire, flooding, or the occasional global pandemic, we've seen it all and then some! Another thing we are very familiar with are people's opinions in the midst of those disasters. Hurricane is coming...do you stay? Do you go? Will they close the bridge? Covid-19 hits...close businesses or not? Mask or no mask? Schools reopening... send the kids or keep them home? Online virtual or homeschool?

When I was growing up we had a phrase that went like this...

"Opinions are like bellybuttons, we've all got 'em, but keep 'em to yourself!"

Nowadays, we treat our opinions as if they were National Treasure! My opinion, by definition cannot be taken as fact, but I treat them as though they were gold!

If opinions were valued as stock, I could have bought them as pennies when I was a kid and be retired three times over by now!

When these storms come into our area, the noise grows and who we listen to becomes of the utmost importance.

In Genesis chapter 12, we are introduced to a historical figure whose success in life was based strictly on how well he listened to the voice of God. When he listened well, things turned out well. When he did not take time to listen, the effects were disastrous. The man's name is Abram, later on he becomes known as Abraham. This morning I want to take a few minutes and focus in on a section of Abram's story where he is faced with a storm. The decisions he makes and the extent to which he listens to the Lord's voice will have a long-lasting impact!

But before we go to Abram, we need to look into another voice. This is the voice that often times seems louder than all others. Today we will call it the "Voice of the Storm". You and I are familiar with this voice. We hear it when life gets hard and when things don't seem to be working in our favor. This voice tells us that things would just be easier if we didn't fight the current of this world and just gave in to the different pulls we feel our our lives each day. This voice tells us that things will only work out for us, if we take control and make the decisions. This voice has a familiar presence behind it and is one that we would do well to recognize. Scripture tells us who this voice is in Ephesians 2:1-2

Read Ephesians 2:1-2

And you were dead in the trespasses and sins **2** in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience

Abram had heard of this Deceiver before. It was the same voice that had once deceived Adam and Eve into thinking that their knowledge was equal to God's and that same lie would soon be knocking on Abram's doorstep as well. And friends...it's knocking on yours and mine today. The Prince of the Air, or Voice of the Storm as we will call him today, has not changed his methods. As my grandpa used to say... "If it ain't broke, don't fix it!" He also used to say... "If it's all ya got, that's what ya use!"

Let's pick it up in Genesis 12:1

Read Verses 1-3

Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. ² And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

God tells Abram "Go!" And I will do three things.

1. **Make a Great Nation** - Important because Abraham is 75 years old and still does not have a son
2. **Make Your Name Great** - Reflected on the previous generations who attempted to make themselves a great name at Babel or Babylon
3. **Bless Abram** - Reflects the promise of God's at creation to bless the entire world

Why bless Abram? So that God can bless all other nations through him.

Keep in mind that there is no evidence of Abram ever hearing God's voice previously, so this is quite a step of faith to follow and trust a mystic voice that you don't recognize. However, I think we are safe in saying that the things God promised Abram lined up with the language of the stories he had heard passed down through the generations. Stories of Adam and Eve, Noah and the Ark, and even stories of warning such as the scattering of the people at Babel.

Abram followed God's voice and landed in Canaan.

Read Verses 4-9

⁴ So Abram went, as the Lord had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. ⁵ And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people that they had acquired in Haran, and they set out to go to the land of Canaan. When they came to the land of Canaan, ⁶ Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem,

to the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. ⁷ Then the Lord appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built there an altar to the Lord, who had appeared to him. ⁸ From there he moved to the hill country on the east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. And there he built an altar to the Lord and called upon the name of the Lord. ⁹ And Abram journeyed on, still going toward the Negeb.

Abram took a survey of the land and after God confirmed that this in fact was the place, he built an altar and worshiped. Everything was going great! That is until verse 10

Read Verse 10

¹⁰ Now there was a famine in the land. So Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there, for the famine was severe in the land.

Things were going great! Abram was in the Promised Land waiting on the Lord to provide a way for him to possess the land and then boom...storm comes! A famine, which for a farmer like Abram was one of the worst types of storms you could encounter. There is no record of him seeking the Lord for help or guidance. In other parts of scripture we see God's people offer sacrifices of worship to seek deliverance from these types of things, but not Abram. He makes a decision that will haunt him for the rest of his life. He heads to Egypt.

Read Verses 11-16

¹¹ When he was about to enter Egypt, he said to Sarai his wife, "I know that you are a woman beautiful in appearance, ¹² and when the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife.' Then they will kill me, but they will let you live. ¹³ Say you are my sister, that it may go well with me because of you, and that my life may be spared for your sake." ¹⁴ When Abram entered Egypt, the Egyptians saw that the woman was very beautiful. ¹⁵ And when the princes of Pharaoh saw her, they praised her to Pharaoh. And the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house. ¹⁶ And for her sake he dealt well with Abram; and he had sheep, oxen, male donkeys, male servants, female servants, female donkeys, and camels.

Abram was stepping outside of where God was leading.

The Voice of the Storm

*****The voice of the storm questions God's goodness*****

-The Promised Land no longer felt like Promised Land and so Abram traded it in for the world's version

-When He got there he realized that he was in enemy territory and needed protection

-Abram feared for his life. He felt as though he was in danger and so he came up with a deceitful plan

*****The voice of the storm says if it seems good, it must be good*****

Abram told his wife to go along with this horrible plan so that it would all work out for HIM! And it did! He was safe and was given sheep, oxen, servants, donkeys, and camels!

*****The voice of the storm brings short term gratification to blind you from long term devastation*****

*****Satan does not keep his word*****

Abram decided to go to Egypt to have an easier life, but life got harder.

Abram told Sarai “Do this so it may go well with me, but in the end he was shamed”

Pharaoh figures out what’s going on and kicks Abraham and his posse out of Egypt

Abram is now faced with a decision. The drought isn’t over, but he can’t stay in Egypt. Is he going to return to God and seek His blessing or will he continue to try and fix his own problems.

Read Genesis 13:1-4

So Abram went up from Egypt, he and his wife and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the Negeb.

² Now Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold. ³ And he journeyed on from the Negeb as far as Bethel to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai, ⁴ to the place where he had made an altar at the first. And there Abram called upon the name of the Lord.

Abram made a wise choice and decided to head back to the place where he had last heard from God. He returned to his home camp between Bethel and Ai where he had built an altar. When he got there, him and Lot found themselves in a predicament. They had acquired so much wealth that there wasn’t enough land in the famine stricken area to support both of them. On top of that, their workers had started fighting with each other as well. Sadly they had to split up. Abram gave Lot first choice of land.

Read Verses 8-13

Then Abram said to Lot, “Let there be no strife between you and me, and between your herdsmen and my herdsmen, for we are kinsmen. ⁹ Is not the whole land before you? Separate yourself from me. If you take the left hand, then I will go to the right, or if you take the right hand, then I will go to the left.” ¹⁰ And Lot lifted up his eyes and saw that the Jordan Valley was well watered everywhere like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, in the direction of Zoar. (This was before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.) ¹¹ So Lot chose for himself all the Jordan Valley, and Lot journeyed east. Thus they separated from each other. ¹² Abram settled in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled among the cities of the valley and moved his tent as far as Sodom. ¹³ Now the men of Sodom were wicked, great sinners against the Lord.

Did you catch that? He picked the land that reminded him of Egypt. Parents, lets stop and chat for a second...

1. If you think your sin stops with you, you are badly mistaken.
2. If you think experiencing victory over sin in your life will keep your children from repeating the same sin, you are badly mistaken.
3. Your consistency in spiritual disciplines is your greatest weapon in raising the next generation.

4. A child who grows up watching both parents read the Word, Pray to God, and consistently follow Him has a far greater chance at living out that same lifestyle.
5. A child who grows up watching their parents try to figure things out for themselves and do what feels best at the moment has a far greater chance at living out that same lifestyle as well!

Successful parenting has far less to do with your methods than it has to do with your discipline in Christ.

Finally, we see the Lord is good to those who follow him!

Read Verses 14-18

The Lord said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, "Lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward, ¹⁵ for all the land that you see I will give to you and to your offspring forever. ¹⁶ I will make your offspring as the dust of the earth, so that if one can count the dust of the earth, your offspring also can be counted. ¹⁷ Arise, walk through the length and the breadth of the land, for I will give it to you." ¹⁸ So Abram moved his tent and came and settled by the oaks of Mamre, which are at Hebron, and there he built an altar to the Lord.

Abram was far from perfect, but he knew what to do when he messed up. He sought out the Lord and re-applied himself to following the Lord's leading. The Lord in return restored and reaffirmed Abram and the blessing on his life.

Closing/Invitation: The same is true for you and for me. All of us here today can identify with Abram's journey on some level.

1. Some of us are in the middle of a storm. We know God has a purpose but we just can't see it. Are you calling out to him to lead you? Are you listening for his voice and trusting his goodness?
2. Some of us quite honestly have grown tired of waiting on God and have decided to set out on our own path. Somehow we've gotten our eyes off of him and now find ourselves in our own version of Egypt, living and reaping the consequences of sin. It's time to turn back. God is calling you to come home. Come back to the place where you once heard his voice and felt his blessing.
3. Maybe you have recently found your way back home and you're looking for that next step. Don't be like Lot and allow something shiny and attractive to lure you back to a life separated from God. Instead continue seeking him and he will lead you to that next step. Perhaps that step is baptism, joining a small group, serving in a ministry, or joining this church in membership.
4. I also believe there is one other type of person here today. You relate mostly to Abram before he ever left home with his family. You feel a tug on your heart unlike any other you've ever felt before. A tug to follow this divine presence who wants to introduce himself to you, not as a judge and jury, but as your Creator and your Savior. Perhaps for the first time you will accept his invitation to call him Lord and Father. You see the blessing given to Abram was not merited by His deeds. It was a promise that through him, God would one day bless all nations and all people, included you and I through a man named Jesus who was also the Son of God. Jesus would go on to live a sinless life and be crucified on the cross for you and for me, so that we could trust in him and follow him. Not follow him into death, but into

life. You see three days later he got up out of that grave and led the greatest comeback in all of History, conquering sin, death and hell itself! Now he offers that victory to each of us today. If you would like to have it, Scripture says all you need is to ask and he will give generously to all who believe!