



The Jesus Way: The Way of Faith

We are in a discipleship conversation about following Jesus, who is the Way. In John 14.6, Jesus brings this into focus, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life." It is when the Jesus truth is organically joined to the Jesus way do we experience the Jesus life. The way of Jesus was anticipated by 1800 years of men and women who endeavored to live in the ways of God. This week we look to Abraham as our guide. The faith of Abraham is definitive for us to get a feel for how to live in an active relationship with God.

Throughout Scripture Abraham becomes the touchstone life for the way of faith. His journey is summarized in Hebrews 11.8-19 and can be explored in further depth in Genesis 12-25. Abraham's story is the first extended story in Scripture that brings us into a lifetime of living faith in God. It is significant that the word used to define this kind of living is friendship with God (James 2:23). Abraham was not called the friend of God because he was singled out to live a charmed life. His journey was full of struggle, failure, tension and turbulence. He was called the friend of God because he experienced God and responded to God's initiative in his life. He believed that God was on his side and he learned to live like it. In its essence, faith is friendship with God, responding to and living towards the active work of God in us and around us.

God's friendship with Abraham led him to leave behind a secure and settled life for a long and uncertain journey into a new land of promise. Along the desert roads Abraham fought the undercurrents of fear and uncertainty in order to step into God's purposes for his life. Abraham reveals to us that the way of faith calls us to move from a well-known past and into a future which is only opening up.

Abraham's faith was also tested at every turn. God made Abraham a startlingly beautiful promise. He asked his friend to "look up" and see the bright stars lighting up the black desert sky, and then, as if speaking to Abraham's greatest place of personal doubt, God told him that his offspring would be more numerous than the stars. Though charged with prophetically imaginative energy Abraham asked, "How is this possible?". He was now in his 90's and his wife had been unable to conceive. God was testing Abraham. Calling him to trust him with something he knew was not humanly possible. The tests in our life will always tell us if what we are carrying is authentic faith or simply wishful thinking or religious cliché. James once again becomes a valued conversation partner, reminding us in James 1.2-5, it is by the testing of our faith that God makes us mature and complete, so that we are not lacking anything. God tests us, not to take something away from us, but to give to us that which we could never possess if we did not walk through the test.

The greatest test Abraham endured also provides us with a strikingly beautiful portrait of the goodness and mercy of God. After all the waiting, the failed attempts to take matters into his own hands, and against all hope, Abraham and Sarah had a boy. Isaac was their treasure and a living emblem of God's faithfulness. The words of God fell like a falling anvil when He told Abraham to go up the mountain and offer his one and only son as a sacrifice. In this extreme moment, as Abraham was poised to do the unthinkable God intervenes and provides a way out. Abraham worshipped God with his son and renamed the very mountain he stood upon "The Lord will Provide". This is the living heartbeat of a life of faith. The settled belief that God is good, and that He will always provide a way. The life of Jesus brings this story to completion. On the cross, God did not spare his son, but freely gave him for us so that we could experience His love and know His forgiveness for eternity. Let this give us confidence to believe that even when the future seems impossible God will make a way. As Paul writes in Romans, "He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all--how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?"

Here is a link to Sunday's Message – <https://vimeo.com/360675040>

Discipleship Questions:

- 1) How does Abraham's story speak to you about the "Way of Faith"?
- 2) What changes might God be calling you to make in your thinking and in your living in order to follow Jesus in the "Way of Faith"? How is God testing your faith? What is the test telling you?
- 3) Where do you most need God's transforming work in your life in order to live by faith? After reflecting on Abraham's story, how might God change you if you lived with greater faith in Him?
- 4) How would your decision to follow Jesus in the "Way of Faith" lead to life and renewal for those around you? How can you specifically encourage someone else this week to live in the "Way of Faith"?