

- I. Introduction – The Sermon I will Never Forget / Blueprint Defined
 - a. The Tightrope That Imprisons
 - i. I can't watch tight rope artists. The risk is too great. What is meant for enjoyment becomes paralyzing for me.
 - ii. We are tempted to walk through life as if God has marked out a tightrope for each one of us. And if we aren't careful, we will make the wrong step and just fall.
 - 1. We see this in youth especially. What electives should I take? Where should I go to college? What major should I select? Which job should I pick? Is this person the one I am supposed to marry?
 - 2. Later in life, I find we are less likely to be afraid of such big decisions. Maybe because we've grown wiser. Maybe because we know that at any given time, we've made so many missteps that if this life is a tightrope, we fell off a long time ago.
 - b. The Sermon I heard in College – "God Doesn't Care!"
 - i. It was my second senior year at UT-Austin at the beginning of the Fall semester. David Daniels preaching to save some time with everyone asking the same question, "What is God's will for my life?"
 - ii. His answer to the question, "What does God want me to do?": "He doesn't care."
 - iii. What do you mean He doesn't care?
 - 1. This is the God who loves me. I am intricately and wonderfully made. Before I was created in my mother's womb, He knew me. He knows how many hairs are on my head. He sent His son to die for my sin. He authored my faith. He is perfecting my faith. How does He not care about me?
 - 2. He DOES care about me. But He doesn't care about which direction I take. If He does, He'll say so.
 - c. Blueprint Defined
 - i. Before that sermon, I had believed that God had planned out everything in my life. I perceived God as an architect and my life was a highly detailed blueprint.
 - ii. By blueprint, I mean we can believe that God has outlined every single measurement of our lives like an architect does with a building. And with a fully completed blueprint, any contractor can pick it up, follow its lead, and build the building as the architect envisioned, assuming they follow its instructions to a T.
 - iii. I think the reason I believed this is there are certain times in life where sense God distinctly pointing us to a certain direction. There are times when we believe that God says "yes" or "no" to a specific option. But we take those times that are relatively few, and begin to believe that God has an opinion on EVERYTHING we do, no matter how big or how small.
- II. Heresy or Hearsay?

- a. Three Problems with this View
 - i. Problem 1: Confuses Omniscience with Divine Will
 - 1. In other words, the blueprint mentality confuses the fact that God knows everything (even the future, how many hairs are on your head at this very moment, He knows every breath you take, every move you make, every bond you break, every step you take), this outlook confuses His omniscience with what He wants you to do at any given moment.
 - 2. Just because He knows where your steps will lead does not mean that He has eliminated any freedom you have in taking them.
 - ii. Problem 2: There is no solution for what happens when someone rebels against God's plan.
 - 1. For example. Let's say there's this guy. We'll call him "Ross." And in blueprint world, where God is the architect, God designed Ross to end up with this specific woman. Let's call her . . . uhhh . . . Rachel. So in God's detailed blueprints, Ross and Rachel are supposed to be together. But what happens if Ross decides to rebel against God and instead to pursue someone else? Let's say . . . Phoebe. And if Ross and Phoebe decide to get married, what happens to Rachel? And we haven't even mentioned Paul Rudd.
 - 2. If we believe that there are specific blueprints for everyone to follow, we can't account for sin and rebellion.
 - iii. Problem 3: The blueprint mentality isn't Biblical.
 - 1. The number of instances where you see God get REALLY specific with people in scripture is relatively very small. In the Old Testament, we see God get specific with Jonah when it's time to minister to the people of Nineveh. We see God get specific with Hosea when it's time to marry Gomer. In the New Testament, we read where God gets Joseph, Mary, and Jesus to Egypt. And in Acts, we read that Paul steers clear of a town or two based on the leadership of the Spirit. But for the most part, we don't see God micromanaging the decisions of His followers.
 - 2. A Prime Example of this is what we find in Genesis 12, when God calls Abram to what we would say was his God-given purpose

III. Genesis 12:1-3 – Blessed to be a Blessing

a. Context

i. As you turn, let me briefly summarize the context:

1. Genesis 1-2 – Creation

- a. Man is created in the image of God, body and soul. Adam and Eve are in the Garden and God's creation is *good*. We aren't sure scientifically *how* the universe is created, we just know that God created.

2. Genesis 3 – the Fall

- a. Despite living in perfection, Adam and Eve sin, introducing the curse of the Fall. Because of Adam, we are all born into sin and its curse.

3. Genesis 4-6

- a. The ramifications of sin are realized. After Adam and Eve are expelled from the Garden, we see evil demonstrated in the murder of Abel by His brother Cain. And evil continues to increase to the point where God decides to destroy all of humanity through a flood with the exception of Noah and his family.

4. Genesis 7-10

- a. Noah's family is saved through the flood, yet evil continues to increase.

5. Genesis 11

- a. We see this exemplified in Genesis 11, as a people gather because they desire to "make a name for themselves" and because they believe in doing so, they will be able to live in this city with its beautiful tower forever. In other words, they don't ever want to leave. This DIRECTLY contradicts God's command to be fruitful and multiply over all the earth.
 - i. So they build a tower and a city. God isn't pleased that they had decided to live for their own glory. He had every right to wipe them off the face of the earth, but in His mercy, He simply confuses their language making it impossible to understand one another. They are dispersed over the face of the earth.

- b. At the end of Chapter 11, we see a small account of a man named Terah and his family. Terah has a son named Abram. And that brings us to Genesis 12:

Genesis 12:1-3

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. 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. 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."

b. Abram must Go

It is difficult to overstate how important these verses are to the rest of scripture. As I mentioned earlier, they are the underpinning of God's will for our lives as followers of Christ. So let's look a little more closely to this passage:

i. Two clear commands:

1. Command 1: In verse 1, God commands Abram to Go.

(Literally, it can be translated to "get yourself up and go" or in today's terms, "get out." So the first command we see here is simply "go.")

a. This verse demonstrates to us that God seeks to be in relationship with all of humanity. Out of His love, He pursues us and seeks to be present with us.

b. God's command to Abram carries huge implications for Abram and his family's life. To leave His country means to leave everything. Abram is leaving behind security and identity. It's not like today where we carry around passports that grant us certain rights and privileges. To leave his native land is to leave everything behind with the exception of his family and some of his possessions, which he takes with him.

c. Notice something very interesting about this verse. God does not give Abram the destination. He just says that it's time to leave. Abram must step out on faith in hearing from God.

d. The ramifications of obedience (vv. 1-2)

i. Blessing One – I will make you a great nation

1. The implication here from the Hebrew is that God will make Him a political nation. That's the first blessing.

ii. Blessing Two – I will bless you!

1. Abram, himself, will be blessed. This means that God will spiritually enrich Abram's life. This is the second blessing.
2. To be blessed means to have the presence of God with Him wherever he goes.
3. Contrast this with our "#Blessed" culture.
4. You are blessed when you carry the presence of God with you. For believers today, this is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

iii. Blessing Three – I will make your name great.

1. This is easily the greatest blessing of the three. Notice this phrase relative to the problem in Genesis 11. In Genesis 11, the people want to make a name for

themselves and to make it so they never have to leave. In this case, obedience to God by going out from the homeland means that God will make Abram's name great. Names rise and fall on the power of God. These are the three blessings should Abram be obedient to the first command.

- e. This example extends into the New Testament:
 - i. Follow me and I will make you
 - ii. Great Commission
- f. Notice something very interesting about this verse. God does not give Abram the destination. He just says that it's time to leave. Abram must step out on faith in hearing from God.
 - i. The paradigm God sets up with Abraham here follows throughout Scripture. God's presence is assured when we submit everything to Him.
 - 1. For us, this is demonstrated by the Holy Spirit's presence in the lives of those who have trusted Christ.
 - ii. From now on, as long as Abram is stepping out on faith, God will continue to show Himself, to reveal Himself, to Abram.
- 2. Command 2: Be a blessing
(The second command happens at the end of verse two, and can be tricky, given our English translations. It looks like at the end of the second verse we see another ramification of Abram's obedience, but it's actually the second command of this passage: God's second command to Abram is "be a blessing.")
 - a. Abram cannot be a blessing to others until he leaves his homeland and goes out into the world.
 - b. So we have "Go/get out" and "Be a blessing"
 - c. By "be a blessing" God is telling Abram to spiritually enrich the lives of all he meets as well.
 - i. When others bless Abram, when they agree with the truth about God, they will be blessed by God (in order to be a blessing). In other words, His presence would be made known to them.
 - 1. The same happens when we evangelize the people in our influence and they accept Christ.
 - ii. If they reject the truth about God, if they curse Abram, they will be cursed.
 - 1. God's presence does not fall upon them and they are not blessed.

- iii. And notice the ramifications of obedience here:
when Abram blesses others, it will multiply and
every family will be blessed!
 - 1. So, salvation will come through the line of
Abram:

Galatians 3:7-9-

Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "In you shall all the nations be blessed." So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

- c. So, we see that blessing comes initially through Abram, but is meant to
extenuate throughout all followers of God, which is how we understand the
final part of verse three. "all the families of the earth will be blessed."
 - i. We are meant to take part in Abram's mission in Genesis 12. We are
meant to forsake our security and identity for the sake of blessing
others. This is why White Rock undertakes serving at schools,
apartments, and in the neighborhoods. By saying we are "for White
Rock" we are saying we seek to bless the people of White Rock.
- d. And how did Abram respond? We see in verse 4:

Genesis 12:4-

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.

- i. *So Abram went*

IV. Our Game Plan

- a. Game Plan defined
 - i. Instead if a blueprint, think of life as a Game Plan
 - 1. There are set rules and boundaries
 - 2. There is are values that must be lived out as part of a team
whose coach is Jesus Christ
 - 3. But we have to pivot and adjust, based on what the adversary
throws at us
 - ii. Instead of being paralyzed by a decision that you think will doom your
spiritual life, remember the life of Abraham:
- b. Receive God's Presence
 - i. If God is calling you to something specific, do that. Otherwise, be
willing to leave your security and identity behind to go on behalf of
God, as His ambassador whether at home, in the workplace, or
somewhere else.
- c. Reflect God's Presence
 - i. No matter your situation, you are called to love God and love others.
Always seek to reflect the love of God and His presence to those
around you in the hopes that they trust Christ and the Spirit of God
can indwell them, as well.
- d. Relax in God's Presence

- i. This message should be freeing. If you've been worried or anxious about a fork in the road or some other major decision, you can rest easy. If you seek to love God and love others, you cannot make a bad decision. As long as you seek to glorify God with your life, you will be okay.

V. Randy's Story

- a. How I've seen this play out in my life, recently...