

Hebrews 11:8-19

Intro: There are only two ways to live in this world - 2Co 5:7. One can live by sight or the empirical way, by far the more common of the two. The other way is to live by faith. Basing one's life ultimately and primarily on what cannot or has not be seen, God, Jesus Christ, heaven, hell, or the Holy Spirit. We have never met the original writers of the Bible, or seen the original manuscripts, and yet we believe. The life of faith has specific ingredients reflected in the life of Abraham as seen in this passage. Being the father of the Jewish people (Joh 8:33, 56), he is presented to Jews as the example of faith.

The Rabbis had taught for some time that Abraham had done enough good works that he pleased God. In Acts 7, Stephen points out that Abraham had obediently trusted God by leaving his homeland and believing God's promises of blessing Acts 7:2-5. Paul also uses Abraham as a classic example of being justified by faith in Rom 4.

It was necessary, for any Jewish person to accept the truth of salvation is by faith alone, to see that this truth applied to Abraham. They knew that Abraham pleased God, but they needed to see that God was pleased not b/c of any good work, but b/c he trusted Him. Abraham is considered the father of all who trust like he did - Ga 3:7.

XXIX. Abraham: The Life of Faith - vs 8-19

A. The Pilgrimage of Faith - vs 8

1. Leaving Home

- a. Not Abraham's plan to leave Ur of the Chaldees
- b. When he left, he didn't know where he was going - vs 8b
- c. Abraham was from a pagan home in a pagan city - Jos 24:2 - and they served other gods.
- d. Ur of Chaldea, located about 140 mi from where Babylon would one day be located

2. He was called

- a. *kaleo* - to "call":--bid, call (forth), (whose, whose sur-)name (was (called)).
- b. present participle - while he was being called
 - i. Once he understood, he started packing
 - ii. Leaving may have taken time, but, without a doubt, he was going,
 - iii. Ne 9:7 says that God brought him out

3. Isaiah 51:1-2 refers to Abraham as "the rock from which you were hewn, And to the hole of the pit from which you were dug. Look to Abraham your father"

4. An Example of the change that happens in the believers life

- a. b/c they are a new creature - 2 Co 5:17
- b. the work of sanctification started by the Holy Spirit will be continued - Phil 1:6, until Glorification - 1 Jo 3:2
- c. we are to be active participants in this process - Jo 15:1-8; Eph 4:22-24; Col 3:8-18; Jas 1:2-27; 2Pe 1:5-8;

5. the attitude of the pilgrim

- a. starts with willingness to leave one's Ur - Ro 12:2;
 - i. when in Christ, given new values, interests, and desires
 - ii. Cannot see blessings of being in Christ until we trust Him
- b. leaving the old life is one of the greatest deterrents
 - i. of coming to Christ,
 - ii. To faithful living once in Christ
- c. force that wants to hold onto the old - Worldliness

- i. usually defined as an act
- ii. Primarily an attitude wanting to do things that are sinful or selfish
 - **1 Jo 2:15-17**
 - more of what we want to do than what we do
- iii. growing spiritually, we see a change in desires that brings about less worldliness
- iv. Highest mark of spirituality is being able to do what we want to do - see Ro 7:14-19 compared with Heb 11:24-26

B. The Patience of Faith - vs 9-10

1. Willing to leave home to dwell in tents
 - a. the life of a traveler or nomad
 - i. tents not considered permanent residence
 - ii. Became way of life for Isaac and Jacob also as the heirs with him of the same promise;
 - b. they were in the land that God promised, but never settled down
 - i. dwelt in the land of promise
 - ii. dwelt as in a foreign country
 - c. He waited in patience to receive the promises believing God is faithful
 - i. he waited 25 years to get the son of promise
 - ii. he waited 100 years to get the land, but never received it
2. What would it look like if we knew Christ was returning in one month
 - a. would we give more attention to prayer, Bible study, serving, and evangelizing
 - b. what would it take to have that same attitude without the knowledge?
 - c. **Jas 5:7-8**
3. Discouragement while waiting
 - a. Things that discourage
 - i. praying for a loved one for years with no sign of an answer
 - ii. serving the church for years without signs of spiritual growth
 - b. overcoming discouragement
 - i. seeing the promised results by faith
 - Noah's 100 years to build the ark with no spiritual fruit
 - saved his family
 - ii. Understanding the promises from God's perspective
 - Abraham seemed to understand that possession of the land was not the ultimate fulfillment of the promise
 - for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.
 - c. Heavenly Mindedness
 - i. impossible to be any earthly good if you are earthly minded
 - we live and die with every little thing that goes wrong here
 - things seem to take to long or seem unsuccessful
 - ii. Paul tells us to set our minds on things above - Col 3:1-4
 - helps change the person - Col 3:5-18; 1Jo 3:3
 - 2Ti 2:4 No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.
4. Waiting for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.
 - a. Waiting in faith
 - i. Eze 48:35b the name of the city from that day shall be: THE LORD IS THERE."

ii. 1Jo 3:3 And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

b. Example - Moses 40 years in the backside of the desert - Heb 11:27

C. The Power of Faith - vs 11-12

1. Faith was active in Isaacs birth

a. from a human stand point, Abraham and Sarah were destined to be childless

i. Ro 4:19 And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb.

ii. Ge 18:11 Now Abraham and Sarah were old, well advanced in age; and Sarah had passed the age of childbearing.

iii. when she was past the age, - vs 11c; Ge 21:2

b. Genesis account doesn't seem to show much faith

i. Laughing at God

- Ge 17:17 Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart, "Shall a child be born to a man who is one hundred years old? And shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?"

- Ge 18:12 Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, "After I have grown old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?"

ii. Offering other options

- Ge 16:2 So Sarai said to Abram, "See now, the LORD has restrained me from bearing children. Please, go in to my maid; perhaps I shall obtain children by her." And Abram heeded the voice of Sarai.

- Ge 17:18 And Abraham said to God, "Oh, that Ishmael might live before You!"

c. Heb 11 shows how God will see His saints after the judgment seat

i. By faith ,Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed

- ***Katabole*** - a deposition, founding; conception:--conceive, foundation.

- ***sperma*** - something sown, seed (including the male "sperm"); offspring; a remnant, as if kept over for planting):--issue.

- The phrase includes Abraham, as subject of the sentence, being enabled to lay down seed, (get her pregnant)

ii. She also is involved in faith for this to happen - she judged Him faithful who had promised.

2. Descendant of Abraham after being beyond age

a. Isaac, the son of promise

b. six children of Keturah - Ge 25:1-4

c. all the children of Israel - vs 12

i. from one man, and him as good as dead,

ii. were born as many as the stars of the sky in multitude

iii. innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore.

D. The Positiveness of Faith - vs 13-16

1. These all died in faith, not having received the promises,

a. Israel doesn't take the land for another 500 years

b. but having seen them afar off

i. were assured of them - all they had to go on was God's word

ii. embraced them - that was sufficient

iii. confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth - Ge 23:4;

47:9; 1Ch 29:15; Ps 39:12; 119:19; Jo 8:56; Heb 11:27,39; 1Pe 1:17; 2:11

- *Xenos* - foreign, alien, a guest or entertainer:--host, strange(-r).
 - foreigners were treated poorly, with suspicion, and contempt
 - they had few rights
- *parepidemos* - an alien alongside, a resident foreigner:--pilgrim, stranger, refugees.

c. knowing who you are “in Christ” is more important in daily life than what you do for a living or your role in life

- i. I am who I am, b/c God has declared it to be so,
- ii. not b/c I have figured out how to practice it perfectly

2. For those who say such things (see above) declare plainly that they seek a homeland.

a. And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return.

- i. the children of Israel wanted to return to Egypt
- ii. Would you really want to go back to what God saved you from?

b. But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. - Heb 13:14

- i. the longer we walk with Christ, the more we understand the vanity of life in a sin cursed world
- ii. We look forward to what is to come, without having seen what we are looking forward to

3. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them. - Ex 3:6,15; Mt 22:32; Ac 7:32; Php 3:20

a. or those who honor Me I will honor - 1 Sam 2:30

b. Honoring God is believing in what He says about Himself, you, etc. - Ro 1:21

E. The Proof of Faith - vs 17-19

1. Proof of Abraham’s faith, willingness to give back all that God had given him - vs 17-18; Ge 22:1-9; Jas 2:21

a. when he was tested - Jas 1:2, 13; 1Pe 1:7

b. offered up Isaac - and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son

- i. after waiting so long to get what was promised - 25 years
- ii. Before Isaac had a full life God asked for him back - probably a teenager

c. Abraham knew that the Covenant was unconditional and God doesn’t lie

i. of whom it was said, "In Isaac your seed shall be called," - Ge 21:12; Ro 9:7

ii. In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began; Tit 1:2

2. Conclusions from Promises

a. concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead,

- i. faith is not blind or a leap of thoughtless ignorance
- ii. Faith is based on knowledge of God and His word
 - facts are useful
 - intimate knowledge of Him is essential - Ro 4:21 and being fully

convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.

b. from which he also received him in a figurative sense.

- i. resurrection was not a revealed doctrine yet
- ii. knowing the promise had to come through Isaac, Abraham concluded that God would have to raise him from the dead

c. His willingness to sacrifice was the proof of faith - Mt 16:24; Ro 12:1