

Abraham and Sarah: A Life of Faith

Hebrews 11:8-19

"By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. 9 By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: 10 for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

11 Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised.

12 Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable.

13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. 14 For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. 15 And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned.

16 But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.

17 By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only

begotten son. 18 Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: 19 accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure."

INTRODUCTION:

- **God Cannot be Pleased Apart From Faith**

Hebrews 11:6—“*But without faith it is impossible to please him*”

- **And not just any faith**

- **Not a faith in self**
 - **A faith in feelings**
 - **Or a faith in a person**

- **It is a faith in God's Word**

Romans 10:17—“*So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*”

- **God is faithful to keep His Word**
 - **And He wants people to trust that He will keep His Word**

- **It was the lack of this kind of faith—that was keeping the Hebrews from entering into the New Covenant**

- **And thus, God was NOT PLEASED with all their religious behaviors**

- They were still clinging on to the Old Covenant that could never save them or make them right with God—as Paul has continually pointed out throughout the book of Hebrews
- And yet, because they fear men—rather than God—they have not made that critical step of faith—that would grant them entrance into this new covenant (salvation, forgiveness of sins, new life)—
- and that first step of faith would start them down a life of faith

Hebrews 10:38—“Now the just shall live by faith”

2 Corinthians 5:17—“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new”

- One of the greatest evidences of a person’s salvation—is that they are actively living out a life of faith
 - Faith like Abel
 - Faith like Enoch
 - Faith like Noah
 - Faith like Abraham and Sarah
 - Faith like Moses
 - And the list goes on and on
- Paul’s next person that he chooses to set as an example of a life of faith—is Abraham

- Abraham was a very important person in Israel’s history
- He is the father of Israel—literally
 - He fathered Isaac
 - And Isaac fathered Jacob
 - And Jacob (whose name was later changed to Israel) fathered the 12 sons of Israel (which became the 12 tribes of Israel)
- And as Paul points out in Romans—as well as this passage—he would be the Father of all them that Believe (Romans 4:11)
 - God said to him that he would not only be a father to one nation of people
 - But a father to many nations of people (who would believe like he did)
- His faith—that we are going to look at this morning—was a faith that God was pleased by—and in which God chose to reward

CIT: How Did Abraham and Sarah Demonstrate the Kind of Faith That Pleases God?

I. Abraham Demonstrated This Faith with a Willingness to Blindly Obey (vs. 8)—“By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.”

A. Abraham's History

1. The genealogy of Noah's 3 sons
2. Abraham the pagan
 - a. Abraham—before God called him—was steeped in the world of paganism
 - b. He worshipped other gods—that were not the ONE TRUE GOD

Joshua 24:2—“And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods.”

- i. Abraham came from a town called UR
 - It was located in Mesopotamia
 - It was considered a fairly wealthy and powerful city
 - With architecture that was highly developed
 - Factories that manufactured woolen cloth
 - The education was highly advanced (reading, writing, and advanced math)
 - They were big into art (using clay, precious metals, and costly materials)

- And they were highly religious
- Though they worshipped many gods—their chief god was one call Nannar—the moon god
- They erected a ziggurat (or huge tower) in dedication to this god
- This is the city in which Abraham grew up in
- And it was the city in which God—the ONE TRUE GOD—called Abraham to follow Him by faith

B. God's Call Upon Abraham—“By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place”

1. The call to leave

- a. This is the first step of faith—that God expected Abraham to do
 - b. It was a call to leave everything that he was accustomed to—and follow this unknown God—who claimed to be the ONLY TRUE GOD
- i. He was to leave his home
 - ii. He was to leave his family
 - iii. He was to leave his friends
 - iv. He was to leave his gods (whom he worshipped)

Genesis 12:1-3—“Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will shew thee: 2 and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: 3 and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.”

NOTE: This is the kind of faith that Paul was calling these Hebrews to embrace—to follow in the footsteps of their Father Abraham—who left all to follow God.

Jesus said the same thing.

Mark 8:34-37—“*Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. 35 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel’s, the same shall save it. 36 For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? 37 Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*”

Luke 14:26-27—“*If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. 27 And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.*”

2. The call to go to a foreign land—“he went out, **not knowing** whither he went.”

Genesis 12:1—“Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, **unto a land that I will shew thee**”

- a. The lack of information in the call
 - i. The indication of the call—is that God just told Abraham to follow Him—to a land that He would later reveal to him
 - ii. He didn’t tell him all the details of the land that he would be living in
 - iii. He didn’t tell him about the people he would encounter
 - iv. He didn’t tell him about the difficulties he would go through
 - v. He just told him to follow Him—and trust Him
- b. Abraham knew nothing about the land in which God was calling him to
 - i. He didn’t know what the future held for him in that land
 - ii. Paul tells us in the text that he would—through his whole life—be a **stranger** and a **pilgrim** wandering through the land
 - iii. There would never come a time in his life in which he would belong in the culture in which God was calling him to live in

iv. He would never see the fulfillment of the promises in his lifetime

3. The promise of inheritance—“*By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance*”

Genesis 12:2—“*and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing*”

Genesis 12:7—“*And the Lord appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land*”

Genesis 13:14-15—“*And the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: 15 for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever.*”

a. God promised to Abraham that He would give to him and his seed (Christ—and all those in Christ) the land forever

Galatians 3:16—“*Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.*”

b. Two problems with that:

i. Abraham has never been able to have children with his wife Sarah (she is barren)

ii. And secondly—they were getting to the point that it would become an impossibility to have a child (because of their age)

- He was 75 and she was 65

C. Abraham’s Faith—“*By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.*”

1. “*When he was called*”... “*he obeyed*”

- a.** It is a present participle
- b.** Which means that **while** God was calling him to go into the land—Abraham was **beginning** to obey
- c.** Abraham didn’t drag his feet in obedience—he just obeyed
- d.** There was an instant obedience—a readiness to obey
- e.** He stepped out by faith

- i.** Forsaking everything
- ii.** To follow a God that he did not know
- iii.** Who had made a promise to him—that was (humanly speaking) impossible

- iv. To a land that he did not know

Genesis 12:4-5—“*So Abram departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran. 5 And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother’s son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.*”

- 2. That’s the kind of faith that Paul expected these unbelieving Hebrews to enter into
- 3. It’s the only kind of faith that can please God

NOTE: Do you have such a heart—that you are instantly ready to obey God when He speaks? Or are you the type that has to reason everything out—before you will even decide to obey?

Abraham was the type that was willing to let it all go—to follow a God whom he did not know, to a land he had never been to, while hanging on to a promise that was humanly impossible to be fulfilled.

That’s what God wanted those Hebrews to do—that’s what He wants us to do.

I. Abraham Demonstrated This Faith with a Willingness to Blindly Obey

II. Abraham Demonstrated This Faith by Patiently Enduring (vs. 9-10)

—“*By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: 10 for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.*”

A. The Land of Promise Not a Land of Possession

- 1. Part of Abraham’s call—was a promise to inherit the land he would be going to
 - a. That he and his seed would be heirs to land of Canaan
- 2. And yet—throughout his whole time there—he never became an heir to the land
 - a. He never owned anything—except one plot of land—Macpelah—in which he buried his wife Sarah
 - b. Which later he was buried in—and his son Isaac was buried in
 - c. He was a sojourner
 - i. The word *sojourn* means to be **foreign**
 - ii. To dwell beside those who are residents to the land
 - iii. Abraham was a foreigner in a foreign land
 - iv. Though, technically, God promised it to him

- He was to be the heir of the land
- And his seed (Christ—and all those in Christ) would possess it

3. The difficulty of living by faith as a sojourner

a. In some sense—Abraham had been rooted up out of his homeland—in which he belonged—and was told to go to a land—in which he and his seed would one day possess—but he **never saw that promise fulfilled in his lifetime**

b. We can even see in the Scripture that Abraham struggled with seeing that promise coming to pass

i. He had trouble believing God's promise in the face of being childless with his wife Sarah

Genesis 15:2-3—“*And Abram said, Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus? 3 And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir.*”

Genesis 17:15-18—“*And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be. 16 And I will bless her, and give thee a*

son also of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her. 17 Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear? 18 And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee!”

ii. He went off and married Hagar

- And had a child through her—which became a source of contention in his relationship with Sarah
- And that child would continually be in opposition to the people of the promise

iii. Twice he had trouble believing that God would protect him and his wife—from a foreign king who could have him killed

iv. In some ways, everything hinged on Sarah having a child—and that child becoming the heir

c. Abraham lived 25 years in the land before he ever saw the first part of the promise come to pass

i. Abraham was 100 and his wife 90—before their son Isaac was born

- ii. Miracle of miracle—to see a child that was born to parents that were so old
- iii. And yet—even though Isaac is born—in Abraham’s lifetime—they never saw the fulfillment of the promise
- iv. Add this to it—Isaac never saw the fulfillment
- v. Jacob—who came after Isaac, never saw the promise fulfilled

NOTE: And even to this very day—that promise has not been completely fulfilled. We are still waiting.

That promise completely hinges on the person of Jesus Christ. When He comes again to establish His kingdom on the earth—**then that promise will find its fulfillment.** And it won’t be for one group of people. It will be for all those who are in Christ—which is what God continually told Abraham throughout his lifetime—that he would be a father of MANY NATIONS.

B. Abraham’s Motivation to Stay—“*By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: 10 for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.*”

1. At first, the physical land, might have been the motivation for Abraham to stay in this land

- a. He had forsaken all to follow God who had promised him great promises
- b. And yet those promises were not coming to pass in the time frame Abraham must have expected
- c. He must have been continually tempted to go back home
- d. But he didn’t

2. It seems that somewhere in the middle of journeying there—that his focused was changed

- a. It wasn’t the physical land—there that God was promising to Abraham and his seed
- b. It was a city—with foundations—whose builder and maker was God
- i. It was that city we see a glimpse of in Revelation—in which all people from every nation and tribe will be brought into—to live forever

Revelation 21:9-27—“*And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb’s wife. 10 And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, 11 having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; 12 and*

had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: 13 on the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. 14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

15 And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. 16 And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. 17 And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel.

18 And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. 19 And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; 20 the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolyte; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst.

21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls: every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.

22 And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. 23 And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. 24 And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and

honour into it. 25 And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. 26 And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. 27 And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."

3. He labored for what he could not see

- a. He could not physically behold it**
- b. But he believed God—and that is what motivated him—to patiently abide as a stranger in a foreign land**

NOTE: That should be our motivation to endure by faith—the promises of God—that cannot be seen with our eyes.

Hebrews 11:1—*"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."*

I. Abraham Demonstrated This Faith with a Willingness to Blindly Obey

II. Abraham Demonstrated This Faith by Patiently Enduring

III. Sarah Demonstrated This Faith by Trusting God's Power in the Midst of Her Weakness (vs. 11-12)—

"Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised. 12 Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as

dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable.”

A. Sarah’s Barrenness

1. One of the very first things we are told about the person Sarah is that she was barren

Genesis 11:27-30—“Now these are the generations of Terah: Terah begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran begat Lot. 28 And Haran died before his father Terah in the land of his nativity, in Ur of the Chaldees. 29 And Abram and Nahor took them wives: the name of Abram’s wife was Sarai; and the name of Nahor’s wife, Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah, and the father of Iscah. 30 **But Sarai was barren; she had no child.**”

- a. She, physically, was unable to have children
- b. And the time that God calls Abraham to go to the land of Canaan—he is 75 and Sarah is 65
 - i. So the age is becoming an issue as well
 - ii. She is getting to the point that she is beyond the age to bear children

vs. 11—“she was past age”

iii. In Romans, Paul makes the point that they were both beyond the ability to have children

Romans 4:19—“he [Abraham] considered not his own body **now dead**, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the **deadness of Sarah’s womb**”

2. Sarah condition (humanly speaking) was a major obstacle for both Abraham and her faith
 - a. She was barren—yet God told him that she would have a child
 - b. She was getting beyond the age to bear a child—yet God made them wait for 25 years
 - c. Everything about this—said that this could not happen
 - d. Which is why Abraham and Sarah had to embrace God’s promise by faith

B. Sarah’s Absence of Faith

1. One of the things that is continually missing in the life of Sarah—was faith
 - a. You never see her stepping out by faith—and trusting God’s promise that God would give them a child
 - b. In fact, she was the one who convinced Abraham to take another wife (Hagar) and raise up a child through her (that Sarah would later adopt as her own)

- c. When God approached Abraham in a physical form—Abraham told Sarah to go and prepare them a meal for them
- d. While Sarah was in the tent—she overheard God promising Abraham that they would have a child
- e. She responding by laughing at God
- f. God rebuked her for her unbelief

Genesis 18:10-15—“*And he said, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah heard it in the tent door, which was behind him. 11 Now Abraham and Sarah were old and well stricken in age; and it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. 12 Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?*

13 And the Lord said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old? 14 Is any thing too hard for the Lord? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.”

NOTE: It is interesting that though her life seemed to be plagued with doubt—God commended her faith. Somewhere in her life—she finally got to the point that she would believe God—that *nothing is too hard for the Lord.*

- 2. Despite her unbelief—she chose to believe—“*she judged him faithful who had promised*”

- a. She came to the realization—that everything depended upon God—and not herself
- b. God is the One who is FAITHFUL to keep His Word

NOTE: And really, that’s what faith is. It’s judging that God is faithful to keep His promise—despite the circumstances that surround it.

Do you believe what God says—He will do? Then we need to be willing to step out and act on it.

C. Faith Provided Supernatural Strength—

“Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised.”

- 1. At the age of 90—Sarah’s faith gave her the strength to become pregnant—and bring forth the child the God so long ago had promised

- a. It was her faith in God’s faithfulness—that God used to give her strength to do what was humanly impossible
- b. Her faith aligned up with God’s will—and thus God provided a **substance in which she could firmly stand upon**—and see God’s promise come to pass

NOTE: We need to understand—that it was always God's will that Sarah and Abraham have the child Isaac. And it had always been God's timing that this child be born—when it was physically impossible for either of them to have a child.

But in some sense, even though it was God's will and timing, **it was Sarah and Abraham's faith that brought the power of God into reality.**

Someone said that faith is like the wire hidden behind the wall that connects the outlet to the power source. The outlet cannot contain that power unless it is **connected** to the power source by the wire.

Many times—we lack God's power in our lives because we **choose not to believe**. God wants to do great things in our lives—but it's our **lack of faith that keeps Him from putting His power on display**.

Matthew 13:58—“*And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.*”

Hebrews 11:29-35—“*By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned. 30 By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days.*

31 By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace. 32 And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: 33 who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought

righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, 34 quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. 35 Women received their dead raised to life again”

2. Abraham, though considered dead—brought forth a great nation—“*Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable.*”

a. God used both Abraham and Sarah's faith—to bring forth a multitude of people

- i.** Bringing the nation of Israel into existence
- ii.** Through Israel, the Messiah came
- iii.** Who would bring many—from all nations—into the blessing of Abraham

I. Abraham Demonstrated This Faith with a Willingness to Blindly Obey

II. Abraham Demonstrated This Faith by Patiently Enduring

III. Sarah Demonstrated This Faith by Trusting God's Power in the Midst of Her Weakness

IV. They (The Patriarchs) Demonstrated This Faith by Faithfully Embracing the Unseen Promises of God to the End (vs. 13-16)

—“These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. 14 For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. 15 And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. 16 But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.”

A. Abraham and Sarah were the Father and Mother of the Faithful

1. They set the example for others to follow

- a.** It was Abraham’s faith that caused them to abandon their pagan country
- b.** It was Abraham’s faith—that helped him to faithfully endure as a stranger in a foreign land
- c.** And it was both Abraham and Sarah’s faith—that God used to bring his power upon their lives

- i.** Both being dead—beyond the ability to have children
- ii.** And yet in that deadness—God brought Isaac into the world—who was the heir of promise

2. Paul steps back and refers to the “ALL”

- a.** The “ALL” refer to **Abraham and Sarah** as well as Isaac, and Jacob
- b.** And all of them—“*died in faith, not have received the promises*”

i. All of them died without seeing the promises come to pass

- The promises of inheriting the land
- The promises of being a blessing to all nations
- The promises concerning the Messiah

ii. All of these promises are fulfilled in the person of Christ

NOTE: Paul is not giving us something to lament over. He is pointing to the success of their faith.

3. A description of their faith

a. They saw the promises afar off

- i.** They looked ahead by faith—and saw the promises afar off

- b.** They were “*persuaded*” of the reality of those promises

- c. They “*embraced*” the promises
- d. They testified that they DID NOT BELONG HERE

- i. They were “*strangers and pilgrims*”
- ii. They were not holding so tightly to this earth
- iii. They were NOT focused on their country—but another country

“But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly”

- iv. They, like Abraham, had their focus in the right place
 - It wasn’t the earthly world that had their attention
 - It was the heavenly
 - And though they would never see it fulfilled in their lifetime—they were alright with living a pilgrims and strangers in a home that was not theirs

B. God’s Claim Upon Them—“wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.”

- 1. All the way through the OT you hear God saying about these men—that He is their God

- a. He is the God of Abraham
- b. He is the God of Isaac
- c. He is the God of Jacob
- d. He is the God of Israel

- 2. It was their faith in the promises of God—that brought God’s favor upon them

B. The Parallel Between the Forefathers and the Hebrews of Paul’s Day

- 1. Paul is calling his audience to step out by faith like Abraham did—turning his back on country of his nativity—and embracing a better country whose builder and maker is God
- 2. He is telling them to be like their forefathers—who did not cling so tightly to a physical country—but looked to a heavenly one
- 3. He is telling them to put their faith in God—like Sarah and Abraham did—and see the power of God manifested in their lives
- 4. He was telling them to step out into the line of the faithful—into the line of their forefathers

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III. Sarah Demonstrated This Faith by Trusting God’s Power in the Midst of Her Weakness

IV. They (The Patriarchs) Demonstrated This Faith by Faithfully Embracing the Unseen Promises of God to the End

V. Abraham Demonstrated This Faith by Trusting God Would Keep His Promise Concerning His Son (vs. 17-19)

19—“*By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son. 18 Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: 19 accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.*”

A. God’s Test of Abraham’s Faith

1. Abraham waited for 25 years—to see the first step of God’s promise fulfilled

- a.** And it was because Abraham and Sarah trusted God—that God fulfilled His Word in them
- b.** But God was not finished testing Abraham’s faith in God promise

2. As already mentioned, everything rested in this child

- a.** He was to be the father of this great nation—that would bring blessing upon all the nations of the world
- b.** The inheritance that God continually promised Abraham was conditioned in this child’s survival to father a nation

3. But one day God came to Abraham and said...

Genesis 22:2—“*Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.*”

- a.** This didn’t make sense
- b.** God had never asked someone to do something like this before
- i.** God’s not interested in human sacrifices
- ii.** And in fact, God had told Noah—that if someone sheds the blood of man—then that person’s blood should be shed
- iii.** This doesn’t make sense—with the character of God
- c.** And besides that—all the promises of God—rest in this child

vs. 18—“*Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called*”

4. Abraham’s Faith to Obey

- a.** He went to the place God told him to go—and was prepared to offer up his son

b. He was willing to obey God completely—because he knew in his heart—that this wasn’t the end for Isaac

- i. God had overwhelmingly proved Himself to be faithful
- ii. God would keep His promise—even though what He was asking Abraham to do didn’t make sense

c. Abraham believed that God was so faithful to keep his promises—that if he had to slay his son—God would raise him from the dead

Genesis 22:5—“*And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.*”

Vs. 19—“*accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead*”

d. Just as Abraham was about to slay his son—God stopped Abraham—and showed him a ram caught by his horns in the thicket

- i. That was the animal God provided in the stead of Abraham’s son
- ii. God, once again, showed Himself faithful

B. The Two Sides of Faith

1. This event really points to second side of faith

- a. Not only does God call us to step out by faith and be saved
- b. But He calls us to enter into a life of faith

- i. That continually trusts God—no matter how difficult the circumstances are
- ii. We need to be persuaded that God will keep His Word—concerning the promises around Christ

CONCLUSION:

I. Abraham Demonstrated This Faith with a Willingness to Blindly Obey

II. Abraham Demonstrated This Faith by Patiently Enduring

III. Sarah Demonstrated This Faith by Trusting God’s Power in the Midst of Her Weakness

IV. They (The Patriarchs) Demonstrated This Faith by Faithfully Embracing the Unseen Promises of God to the End

V. Abraham Demonstrated This Faith by Trusting God Would Keep His Promise Concerning His Son