

The Journey of Faith

August 23, 2009 Pastor Bill Bump

Our subject: Abraham

God himself encountered Abraham and made him a most extraordinary promise.

Genesis 12:1-3 (NLT) Then the Lord told Abram, “Leave your country, your relatives, and your father’s house, and go to the land that I will show you. I will cause you to become the father of a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and I will make you a blessing to others. I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you. All the families of the earth will be blessed through you.”

Four words became the foundation of this promise given to Abraham: The Lord will provide

THREE LESSONS WE LEARN FROM ABRAHAM’S JOURNEY

1. God’s kind of security is dynamic, not static

If there is one word that sums up Abraham’s experience with God, it is the word movement.

Genesis 12:1 (NLT) Then the Lord told Abram, “Leave your country, your relatives, and your father’s house, and go to the land that I will show you.”

Change and movement are not enemies to be resisted, but rather are ways God does his work and calls us to fulfillment.

2. Perfection is not a prerequisite for God to begin his work in our lives.

God is willing to take us where we are and patiently move us toward where he wants us to be.

Abraham was as capable of mistrust and fearfulness as he was of faith and courage, and several times we see him falling and failing, even after the process of receiving the promise had begun.

Genesis 20:1-7 (NLT) Now Abraham moved south to the Negev and settled for a while in between Kadesh and Shur at a place called Gerar. Abraham told people there that his wife, Sarah, was his sister. So King Abimelech sent for her and had her brought to him at his palace. But one night God came to Abimelech in a dream and told him, “You are a dead man, for that woman you took is married.” But Abimelech had not slept with her yet, so he said, “Lord, will you kill an innocent man? Abraham told me, ‘She is my sister,’ and she herself said, ‘Yes, he is my brother.’ I acted in complete innocence!” “Yes, I know you are innocent,” God replied. “That is why I kept you from sinning against me; I did not let you touch her. Now return her to her husband...”

There is no insight that could free and liberate us more fully than the recognition that God is patient with us while we are growing spiritually.

3. Life is to be regarded as a gift.

Abraham had done nothing to earn the promise of land, descendants, and the opportunity to bless all following generations.

Abraham shows he understands this truth:

Genesis 22:1,2,6-14 (NLT) Later on God tested Abraham's faith and obedience. "Abraham!" God called. "Yes," he replied. "Here I am." "Take your son, your only son—yes, Isaac, whom you love so much—and go to the land of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains which I will point out to you."... Abraham placed the wood for the burnt offering on Isaac's shoulders, while he himself carried the knife and the fire. As the two of them went on together, Isaac said, "Father?" "Yes, my son," Abraham replied. "We have the wood and the fire," said the boy, "but where is the lamb for the sacrifice?" "God will provide a lamb, my son," Abraham answered. And they both went on together. When they arrived at the place where God had told Abraham to go, he built an altar and placed the wood on it. Then he tied Isaac up and laid him on the altar over the wood. And Abraham took the knife and lifted it up to kill his son as a sacrifice to the Lord. At that moment the angel of the Lord shouted to him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!" "Yes," he answered. "I'm listening." "Lay down the knife," the angel said. "Do not hurt the boy in any way, for now I know that you truly fear God. You have not withheld even your beloved son from me." Then Abraham looked up and saw a ram caught by its horns in a bush. So he took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering on the altar in place of his son. Abraham named the place "The Lord Will Provide"...

Abraham understood the most basic concept of all—that life in all its manifestations is an unmerited gift.