

AS THE LORD HAD SPOKEN

GENESIS 12

Text: Genesis 12:4

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⁴So 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.

Introduction:

The Christian life is a pilgrimage, 1 Pet. 2:11.

(1 Pet 2:11) "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;"

Every one of us that is saved is a pilgrim for the Lord. We are on a journey that began the day we received Jesus into our hearts and that will continue until the day we arrive in Heaven. This pilgrimage is, at times, a wonderful thing. At other times, it is difficult at best. Yet all the time it is a pilgrimage that is to be lived out through faith in the Lord.

Abraham was the first one to leave everything behind to walk with the Lord by faith. His pilgrimage was not easy, though there were blessings along the way for

Abraham. However, in his pilgrimage, Abraham sets the example for you and me. He shows us how to live out our lives in absolute faith in and total commitment to the Lord God Almighty.

Abraham sets the example for all of God's children down through the ages. He teaches us a lesson in The Commitment to a Life of Faith. There are three sides to Abraham's Commitment to a Life of Faith.

1. ABRAM'S OBEDIENCE (V. 4-5)

(Gen 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."

It took a while, but Abraham finally came to the place of total obedience to the Lord. That is the same place He wishes to bring us to.

(1 Sam 15:22-23) "And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. {23} For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and

stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king."

A. Involved His Separation

- Abraham was called upon to separate himself from the place of familiarity, friends and family.

(Gen 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 show thee:"

- Abraham was called upon to separate himself from everything that would hinder the progress of his walk of faith and prevent him from going to place that God wanted him!

(Heb 12:1-2) "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, {2} Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

- In times like those, the will of the Lord must be given the priority!

B. Involved His Substance

(Gen 12:5) "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."

- When the Lord got Abraham, the Lord got everything he had! He took it all and went after God.

Illustration:

You can gauge the level of a person's commitment to the Lord by how much of that person's "stuff" has been dedicated to the Lord! We get hung up on the tithe. And, I believe that a person ought to tithe. But, what you do with the other 90% is just as important to the Lord as what you do with His 10%.

How much of your stuff does the Lord have? Or, do you have "your pile" and "God's pile"?

By the way, if you have a problem with your tithes and offerings, you really don't have a problem with your tithes and offerings. You have a problem with your heart!

- He wants all of our stuff to be dedicated to Him. He might want to use your house or your car. He just wants you to surrender all to Him so He can do with it what He will!

C. Involved His Surrender

- The Bible tells us that Abraham did "as the Lord had spoken to him." Abraham learned early on that the secret to pleasing God is simply doing what He says, to the letter! Even though the Lord's call upon his life would be difficult, it was the only course of action that made sense. You see, faith builds no barriers! It simply does what it is told and trusts God to take care of the rest!

2. ABRAM'S OPPOSITION V. 4-6

There would be difficulties in his pilgrimage, just as there will be in ours. Let's notice a few obstacles that Abraham faced as he journeyed.

A. The Days Opposed Him v. 4

(Gen 12:4) "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."

- Abram was 75 years old when he left on his pilgrimage.

Illustration:

There will never come a day when you can turn in your traveling shoes and you're walking staff for a rocking chair? There may come a day when you can't teach anymore. There may come a time when you can't preach anymore. There may come a day when you won't even be able to attend church anymore. But, until we go home to glory, there will never be a day when we will have the liberty to sit down on the Lord and quit! Don't let your age, whether you are young or old, stop you from serving the Lord.

(1 Tim 4:12) "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity."

(Titus 2:2-3) "That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. {3} The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things;"

B. The Darkness Opposed Him V. 6

(Gen 12:6) "And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land."

1. That statement reveals much about the country that Abram was moving into.

2. The Canaanites were a godless people, trapped in a system of religion that involved the worship of many gods.

3. They practiced human sacrifice, various fertility rites, and had no regard for morality and decency.

- A life of total commitment demands that we stand faithfully in the face of all opposition.

(1 Cor 15:58) "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

(Eph 6:10-18) "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. {11} Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. {12} For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. {13} Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. {14} Stand therefore,

having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; {15} And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; {16} Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. {17} And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: {18} Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;"

C. The Distance Opposed Him V. 5-6

(Gen 12:5-6) "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. {6} And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land."

- From Haran to Beersheba, in the south of Canaan was about 500 miles.
- With flocks, herds, servants, household goods and all the other things they had with them, this was quite a journey.

- It surely would have been tempting for Abram to stop short of going to the land God had sent him. But these verses tell us that he didn't stop. In fact, he just kept on going.

(Gen 12:9) "And Abram journeyed, going on still toward the south."

D. The Duties Opposed Him V. 5

1. Abram was a man with many responsibilities.

- He had his wife Sarah and his nephew Lot to look after.
- He had servants, flocks, herds and all that came along with them to look after.

When you get right down to it, you and I only have one requirement as pilgrims for the Lord: trust Him and leave all the details to God.

3. ABRAM'S OPPORTUNITIES V. 7-9

(Gen 12:7-9) "And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him. {8} And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, having

Bethel on the west, and Hai on the east: and there he builded an altar unto the LORD, and called upon the name of the LORD. {9} And Abram journeyed, going on still toward the south."

A. To Experience God's Promises (v. 7)

B. To Enjoy God's Presence (7-8)

As he journeyed, Abraham had a companion that excelled all others. God walked with him every step of the way!

- In His Worship

It seems that whenever Abraham pitched his tent he also built an altar.

He took the time to worship as he journeyed.

- In His Wanderings

Notice that as he journeyed, Abraham and God enjoyed sweet communion and fellowship. God spoke to him and he worshiped the Lord. It seems that Abraham was determined to include God in his pilgrimage.

- In His Ways

Verse 8 tells us that Abraham pitched his tent between Bethel and Hai. The word Bethel means "House of God." It was at Bethel that the patriarch Jacob would later meet God one lonely night, Gen. 28.

The name Hai or Ai means "A Heap of Ruins". It was here that Israel would later learn a valuable lesson about faith, obedience and the destructive power of sin. I find it interesting that as Abraham journeyed, he seems to be moving away from "A Heap of Ruins" toward the "House of God".

C. To Enter God's Place

- This passage closes with Abraham journeying on with the Lord. He was headed somewhere. He may have pitched his tent at many addresses in Canaan, but in his heart, Abraham was already living in a far away country. He had already looked away by sight and had entered a land called Heaven.

(Heb 11:8-16) "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."

- He lived in Heaven while his feet walked on the earth.
- He had plenty of things, but his things didn't have him.

Close:

Abraham sets the example of a man who was totally committed to a life of faith. Can you say the same thing about your journey? In which country are you more

firmly planted, earth or Heaven? God is still looking for those He can call to a life of faith and use them to astound the world. Are you willing? Are you that one God can use at this time to touch the world for His glory?