

DATE: September 14, 2008

TEXT: Genesis 12:1-4, 10-13

TITLE: "Genesis X: The Call of Abraham"



After a summer hiatus we are returning to our study of Genesis. We will begin our study this Fall in the 12<sup>th</sup> chapter of Genesis and look at the Patriarchs. Let me begin by providing a very brief summery of the first 11 chapters of Genesis because this is a necessary foundation of our study of the patriarchs.

At the beginning of our study we saw the magnificent actions of God. God, desired to share His love with humanity. He did not need to... he already had a relationship of love within the Trinity.. But he wanted to express His love to his creation. Day after day he created and pronounced that it was "Good." He created Adam and Eve and established an intimate relationship with them in the Garden of Eden. This account took the first two chapters of Genesis. Beginning in chapter 3 and continuing to chapter 11 we saw the step by step rejection of God's love by humanity. It began in the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve decided they would not settle for intimate relationship with God... they wanted to be "like God." They

rejected the love of God. It continued with the murder of Abel by his brother Cain. It continued with the total societal breakdown before the flood and again God showing His love for humanity with the rescue of Noah. The rejection of God continues with Ham, the son of Noah choosing a path of sin and finally we saw in Chapter 11 once again humanity desiring to be “like God’ by building the Tower of Babel and God scattering the nations. The Title of the first 11 chapter fo Genesis could be “God loves humanity... humanity rejects God.” We now begin our study of Abraham. I will share three lesson on the early life of Abraham. Again let me say... this is not like or study of Ephesians where we could go verse by verse. That would take decades.. We are looking at chunks of Genesis every week.

**Lesson # 1** See the purpose of God in the call of Abraham. *Genesis 12: 1-3*

**1 The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you.**

**2 "I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing.**

**3 I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."**

Here is the amazing truth... God’s love is greater than humanities rejection! God did not give up on His creation. God chose another method of revealing his love to humanity. God

would reveal his love for humanity by pouring his love into a family... this families descendants ... and eventually to the entire world. Notice text says... **“and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”** All people. That includes you and me. Abraham is the beginning of the lineage to Jesus Christ.

Notice the wonderful promises of God to Abraham. God will make Abraham the father of a great nation. God will provide to Abraham the land on which he lives. And Abraham will be the seed that will bring salvation to the world. Remember this... Moses was writing this account of Abraham while the Israelites were wondering in the wilderness. Possible one of these promises were realized. The people were a nation of slaves and societal rejects. But they had no land.. They did not even foresee the possibility of a seen for redemption. All they had was the promise of God. And the fulfillment of Abraham as the seed of blessing for the entire world took 2000 years to be fulfilled in the life and death of Jesus Christ.

The point is this... God has a plan and a purpose for all of history... and God has a plan and a purpose for each and every one of our lives. We are children of Abraham.... spiritual

children. Part of the fulfillment of Gods plan.

**Lesson # 2** Notice the obedience of Abraham. *Genesis 12:4 states...*

**So Abram left, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Haran.**

For a second I want us to see the journeys of Abraham. [Put up map](#) you can see

Abraham and his father Terah began in Ur. Ur is today southern Iraq. He traveled up the Tigris river to Nineveh... cut over to Haran. There he stayed for a while until his father died. Then he traveled south to the Negev. Then he went to Egypt and then back to Hebron.

This is over 1000 miles. He began his journey with no final destination. The Lord said go and he went. Abraham trusted his Lord and acted in obedience.

Why did God choose Abraham. We don't know. It is likely that the family of Abraham were worshipers of a moon god named Naana. But then the "God of Glory" (said Stephen in his trial before the Sanhedrin) appeared to Abraham. Abraham chose to reject all the previous false gods and the follow the one true God.

Here is the theme we will hear again and again and again in Scripture. God touches

humanity and a man or a woman chooses to act in obedience and as a result of the act of obedience God's loving hand is revealed to humanity. Mary said "I am a maidservant of the Lord" The disciples "left all and followed" Christ.

Here is our challenge... are we willing to leave all and follow our Lord where He calls?

Our Lord Jesus gave this command in *Matthew 10:37*

**37"Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; 38and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.**

One of the great Christian writers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Bonhoeffer was a Lutheran minister in Germany in the 1930's. He was one of the few Christian leaders who spoke out against Hitler. He was arrested and spent much of WWII in prisons and eventually in concentration camps in Germany. On April 9<sup>th</sup> 1945, two days before the liberation of Buchenwald concentration camp, Himmler personally ordered the execution of Bonhoeffer. One of the great books he wrote was The Cost of Discipleship. In this book he contrast cheap grace with costly grace. Allow me to quote Bonhoeffer

**Cheap grace is grace without price; grace without cost! The essence of grace, we**

suppose, is that the account has been paid in advance; and, because it has been paid, everything can be had for nothing. Cheap grace means the justification of sin without justification of the sinner. Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, communion without confession, absolution without personal confession, cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate

Costly grace is the treasure hidden in the field; for the sake of it a man will gladly go and sell all that he has. It is the pearl of great price to buy which the merchant will sell all his goods. It is the kingly rule of Christ for whose sake a man will pluck out the eye which causes him to stumble.

Costly grace is the gospel which must be sought again and again, the gift that must be asked for, the door at which a man must knock.

Such grace is costly because it calls us to follow Jesus Christ. It is costly because it costs a man his life, and it is grace because it gives man the only true life. It is costly because it condemns sin and grace because it justifies the sinner. Above all, it is costly because it cost God the life of His dear son and it is grace because God did not reckon His Son too dear a price to pay for our life, but delivered Him up for us.

Here is the point... act in obedience. Abraham acted in obedience and it was indeed very costly. It uprooted his entire family. It caused great pain and great suffering. But it resulted in the love of God being revealed to the world. It ultimately resulted in Jesus Christ being born in this world. Choose obedience. Choose grace. Not cheap grace. Not easy believism which is the gospel of the world. No chose obedience and walk in obedience to the world.

**Lesson # 3** Notice the great disobedience of Abraham. *Genesis 12: 10-13*

Now there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to live there for a while because the famine was severe. 11 As he was about to enter Egypt, he said to his wife Sarai, "I know what a beautiful woman you are. 12 When the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife.' Then they will kill me but will let you live. 13 Say you are my sister, so that I will be treated well for your sake and my life will be spared because of you."

We see in this text a multitude of sins of Abraham. First, he left the promised land and went to Egypt. This was a sin. Abraham refused to trust God to provide.. Even in the time of famine. Because of this sin Abraham felt he had to compound his sin by saying his wife was his sister. This caused great pain to Abraham and to Sarah.

A couple of thoughts. Scripture only has one hero... that is God Himself. Abraham is a man of God... but he is a man. He still, at times, chose a path of sin and this path caused great pain. He compromised his faith. He compromised his wife.

This story ends with God intervening. God speaks through the Pharaoh of Egypt. Sarah is saved and Abraham is ordered to leave Egypt and return to the Promised Land. Again, God saves his children.

Abraham had to retrace his path. The exact same path that took him to Egypt took him back to Hebron. We too often have to retrace our paths in order to chose a righteous path. We too need to choose a path of obedience. Are you running away from God? Are you on a path that does not lead to Christian growth. Return to the narrow path. Return to Sunday School.

Return to Bible Study. Return to ministry. Return to daily devotions. Return to prayer as and individual and as married couples. Retrace your steps.

Jesus is saying “Leave all the encumbers you and come and follow me.”

We are children of the promise. We have been given a people.... We are part of the Church of Jesus Christ. We have been given a seed. Jesus Christ is our Lord and Savior. And we have been given a land.... an eternal home in the Kingdom of God. Praise be to God we are the people of God

Amen