

Abraham's Call Genesis 11:26-12:9

God does not call the qualified; He qualifies the called. Abraham was not worthy of God's favor, and yet God chose him to become an example of faith and the source of salvation for all humanity.

Feelings of inadequacy? Unworthy? Wonder why God loves you? How he could use you?

- Every person God chooses and uses is unworthy and unqualified.
- God calls the unqualified, and He qualifies the called

This is the story of Abraham. Not qualified to be chosen by God. But next to Jesus Christ, he becomes the most important person in biblical history.

- Set the stage for the story of Abraham – Gen 11:7-8
- Lesson: when humanity unites, it always leads to greater sin
 - God graciously divides humanity to restrain their sin
- Implements a new plan: choose one through whom He will bring salvation to all

Family Background – Gen 11:26-32

- **Grew up in Ur of the Chaldeans.**
 - population at time of Abraham: 360,000
 - A center of religion and industry. Highly advanced culture
 - Completely pagan culture → worshiped many false gods.
 - city built around the worship of moon god.
- **Abram had a problem: 11:30**
 - Abraham is 75, Sarah is 65. No kids. Family is everything

Hard Call – 12:1

- **Go...somewhere. Hebrews 11:8**
 - Ex – kids wanted to know in advance where, when, why, what
- **Leave everything**
 - “Go forth from...”
 - Lit. “go to you” = go alone.
 - Leave your home, friends, culture. Land of different culture, language
 - Leave your comfort. 75 years old, wealthy, settled
 - Ex – finished college; drove to Dallas for seminary. Everything I owned fit in the car. Think about moving now?!
 - Logistical, emotional nightmare
 - Leave your relatives (extended family); father’s house (close family)
 - Always hard. Difficult and dangerous in Abram’s day
 - Travel by camel, donkey or foot. Little water. Bandits. >800miles
 - No email, cell phones; connection to previous life. Never returned

Gracious Promise – 12:1-3

- **7-fold blessing**
 - 7 statements of blessing
 - 7 statements when repeated to Isaac and Jacob = perfect blessing

- **Promise can be summarized in 3 words:**

1) Land – 12:1

- God doesn't define that land until Genesis 15:18
 - this is what we call "The Promised Land"
 - Eastern-most branch of Nile to Euphrates
- Same land called "Eden" back in ch2 - the land of God - the land at the center of scripture from Gen - Rev!

2) Seed = descendants

- of the 3 promises, this was the most important to Abe
 - not just an heir, but a son?
 - becomes primary plot of Abe's story - will he have a son?
 - Gen 15:4b
- Not just a son, but a great nation. Son will have sons.
 - Gen 17:6 – Israel; also Arab peoples
 - Isaac had yet to be born. Abe only had a promise
 - Why does Israel still exist today as a distinct people in spite of persecution, pogroms and the Holocaust? PROMISE of GOD

3) Blessing – 12:2b, c

3 components to this blessing:

- Individual
 - "Bless you"
 - "...blessing signifies the bestowal of all good, protection from all evil, the granting of grace, and enduring happiness and peace." Umberto Cassuto
 - "make your name great"
 - Most valuable asset that a person possesses. Character, and the reputation that flows from that character. Most important legacy a person leaves on the earth.
- Imperative – 12:2d
 - Become a paradigm/model for how mankind should relate to God, along with the wonderful results of that relationship
 - Become THE role model for all of humanity
- Universal – 12:3
 - God's salvation not FOR the Jews only; FROM the Jews to all
 - Gal 3:8-9
 - Did Abe fully understand? No. But he trusted God.

How did Abraham respond?

Growing faith – Gen 12:4-5

- Abe went – 12:4-5
 - So many reasons not to go – age, attachments, difficulty
 - MAP: went in stages
 - Acts 7. Call came first in Ur. Brought his family
 - Came again in Haran. Brought his nephew Lot.
 - Twice gave up his wife to another man.
 - End of his life, willing to give his son of promise back to God.
- Abe wandered – 12:6-9
 - Heb 11:9-10
 - Phil 3:20 – citizenship is in heaven
- Abe worshipped – 12:7-8
 - He didn't build a city. He didn't build a tower. He built an altar. The only architecture left on the land by Abraham was altars.

- Symbolically claimed it for the Lord
 - Trace journey from north to south
- In the midst of hostility – 12:6
 - Canaanite in the land
 - Oak of Moreh (teacher, oracle giver). This is where Canaanites gathered “to hear the oracles that soothsayers received from the rustling of the leaves.” (Hughes)
 - Bethel. Home to Canaanite sanctuary to the god El, head of the pagan pantheon
- Preached the good news of the LORD
 - Large entourage. Public event
 - Proclaimed God’s attributes; possibly God’s promises?
 - God promised to make Abe’s name great. Abe does not proclaim his own name, but the name of the Lord.
- Abraham waited
 - Seed of Abraham, Jesus Christ has come
 - Seed of Abraham, Israel, has been preserved
 - Covenant not yet fulfilled. God’s Messiah ruling from the Land, blessing
 - How should we live as we wait?

Application

God calls the unqualified

- Idolater – Joshua 24:2
- Shaky faith. Partial obedience
- Abrahamic Covenant is a “Grant Covenant.” Normally given as a reward for faithfulness. Given before faithfulness; retained in spite of failure.
- Makes sense if Abe was the best/only option available
 - Melchizedek
- This is grace!
 - Eph 2:8-9

God qualifies the called

- Eph 4:1
- Blessed to be a blessing

Meditate on all that Christ has done for you

Have you answered His call?

- Believe in Him

Follow Him; leave everything and serve Him with your whole life