

Chosen Family: Abraham's Promise

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.

Abraham's Story

- A Divided Planet (Genesis 11:6-8)
 - God graciously divided humanity to restrain our ability to sin
 - Having divided humanity into groups and families, God chose one family...
- A Chosen Family (Genesis 11:26-32)
 - Abraham and Sarah are from a city called Ur of the Chaldeans
 - In biblical stories, geography always matters!
 - We know a lot about Ur
 - Located in modern-day Iraq
 - At the time, population of ~360,000 (HUGE by ancient standards)
 - Ur was very prosperous and very pagan!
 - This family lived in an idolatrous city and had a serious problem: 11:30
 - Abraham and Sarah are both past childbearing age (infertile)
 - Sons were essential for security and significance
 - Infertility viewed as a curse from God
 - We begin with a chosen family, a pagan city, and a devastating problem. That family receives from God...
- A Challenging Command (Genesis 12:1)
 - The command comes in 4 parts
 - 1) Leave your country
 - Leave those who are like you and speak your language
 - Leave your house and land and everything you know
 - 2) Leave your relatives (extended family)
 - 3) Leave your father's house (immediate family)
 - 4) Go to the land I will show you
 - "Go...somewhere. I'll tell you when you get there!"
 - So like God! He wants us to trust Him and walk in faith
 - Incredibly hard for us... much harder for Abraham
 - Travel was difficult, slow, and dangerous
 - Abraham never returns to his country and relatives
 - No phones, no internet. Abraham leaving means he completely cuts off contact forever
 - God begins with an incredibly hard command, but follows it with an incredibly gracious promise...

- A Gracious Promise (Genesis 12:2-3)
 - 7-fold blessing: 7 = number of perfection or completion
 - These blessings can be summarized in 3 words:
 - 1) Land
 - God doesn't define that land till ch. 15 (read 15:18)
 - Promised Land - Nile to Euphrates
 - 2) Seed = Descendants (12:2a)
 - Abraham is promised to be the Father of the nation of Israel
 - This promise is why the Jews still exist today
 - 3) Blessing – 5-part blessing
 - **I will bless you**
 - To bless someone... *“signifies the bestowal of all good, protection from all evil, the granting of grace, and enduring happiness and peace.” –Umberto Cassuto*
 - **I will make your name great**
 - This is what the builders at Babel wanted but didn't get
 - Abraham trusted God to make a name and we know his name 4000 years later!
 - **You shall be a blessing**
 - Command: “Be an example of blessing to the world”
 - **I will bless those who bless you & curse those who curse you**
 - Victory over adversaries and peace with allies
 - **In you all the families of the earth will be blessed**
 - Foundation for the rest of the Bible!
 - Basis for everything good in your life (Galatians 3:8)
 - We (Gentiles) have been saved because of this promise to Abraham
- A Growing Faith
 - Acts 7: God's command actually came while Abraham lived in Ur; yet when we meet him in Genesis 11, he lives in Haran; he only made it half way
 - Haran was comfortable and similar to Ur
 - **But God didn't give up on him** – the command and promise remained in effect
 - Abraham finally grew to the point where he was willing to obey (Genesis 12:4-8)
 - That took **great faith!** Hebrews 11:8
 - In faith Abraham goes, and once he arrives he worships - builds an altar

Lessons Learned from Abraham

- 1) God chooses the unworthy
 - Ur is steeped in idolatry – everyone worshipped idols there... including Abraham!
 - Joshua 24:2
 - Yet this is the family God chooses to receive this incredible promise!

- Not because God didn't have better options - Genesis 14:18-20
 - Melchizedek – king of Jerusalem; priest of the One True God
 - If God wanted to choose someone “worthy”, He would have chosen Melchizedek
 - God chooses Abraham because *that's what God always does!* **He loves to choose those who aren't worthy!**
 - Ephesians 2:8-9
 - **When you feel unworthy and unqualified, be encouraged! So was Abraham, Moses, Paul, and every other person God has ever chosen**
- 2) God chooses the unworthy so he can make them worthy
- **God chooses the unworthy, but he doesn't leave them there**
 - When God chose you for salvation, His goal was NOT merely to get you to heaven
 - The goal of grace is to grow you into a person “worthy” to be called a follower of Christ
 - Ephesians 4:1; Philippians 1:27; 1 Thessalonians 2:12
 - **When you feel unworthy and unqualified**
 - Rejoice in the fact that God chooses and loves and uses the unworthy
 - **But then then pray and ask God to make you worthy**

Genesis

Sermon Reflection Questions

Sermon 13. Abraham's Promise

Genesis 11:26-12:9

These questions are designed to help individuals, families, and small groups dig deeper into our Genesis Sermon Series. Leaders: don't limit yourself to these questions or feel that you need to answer all of them. Pick and choose and create your own based on the needs of your group.

Observe & interpret the passages:

Read Genesis 11:26-32 and Joshua 24:2. What do we know about Abraham's (Abram's) life before God called him? Was he worthy to receive these incredible promises?

According to Genesis 12:1-3, 13:14-16, and 15:5,18 what did God promise to do for Abraham?

Why did God choose Abraham? What was God's goal in blessing Abraham? (see Gen 12:3, 18:17-19)

Apply it to your life:

When feelings of unworthiness weigh you down, how should you respond? To answer this question, consider Abraham's example as well as 1 Corinthians 1:26-31, Ephesians 2:8-9, and 1 Timothy 1:15-17.

While we will never be “worthy” of God’s grace, we can become worthy of being called followers of Christ (Eph 4:1). In what areas of your life are you struggling to live worthy of God’s call? List these struggles and then pray for God’s help to grow in victory.

Memorize: Ephesians 2:8-9

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Additional Questions:

In what ways does Abraham demonstrate faith in 12:1-9? See also Hebrews 11:8-9.