

HEROES OF FAITH #3: ABRAHAM: WALKING BY FAITH

(September 2011 – Beausejour Church – Pastor Chris Jordan)

INTRO TO TOPIC: Two weeks ago we began a series in the hall of faith in Hebrews 11.

Enoch walked with God. We learned that to walk by faith means to walk with God.

Noah built an ark. We learned that God wants us to build the kingdom.

This week, we're going to look at the faith of **Abraham**, the father of our faith (Rom. 4:16).

OPENING TEXT:

“But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He exists, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.” (Heb. 11:6).

THE BIG IDEA: God is calling us to walk by faith. Faith obeys the call, believes the promise, and sacrifices everything.

1. FAITH OBEYS THE CALL:

“By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.” (Heb. 11:8-10).

When God called Abraham to go, he obeyed, not knowing where he was going.

(You can read Abraham's story in Genesis 12-25 – it's a great story to read in your own Bibles).

PERSONAL TESTIMONY: When we were called to **Beausejour** five years ago.

Our journey is not always making a geographic journey like Abraham did.

The whole Christian life is a journey of walking by faith:

- To move from **exploring Christ**,
- to **growing in Christ**,
- to **being close to Christ**,
- to living a **Christ-centered life**.

Our goal is to know Jesus more and to become more like Him, totally surrendered to Him.

We want to see people's lives transformed by the living, loving Saviour, Jesus Christ!

How was Abraham able to obey God and trust Him completely?

“And he moved from there to the mountain east of Bethel, and he pitched his tent with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; there **he built an altar to the Lord** and called on the name of the Lord.” (Genesis 12:8).

- He built an altar to the Lord – he knew that worshipping God was his highest calling.
- He lived in tents – he knew life on planet earth was temporary, and eternity is forever.
- What is God calling YOU to do? Our highest calling = to know, love & serve Him!
- Obeying the call means obeying God's general will (what's written in the Bible), and also His specific will (what He's calling you to do personally).
- God called Abraham to leave Ur, a place that represented sin and unbelief.
- What “Ur” are you called to leave? The place of lying, gossip, unforgiveness? The place of lukewarmness or compromise? It's time to leave Ur and journey to the Promised Land!

2. FAITH BELIEVES THE PROMISE:

“By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because **she judged Him faithful who had promised**. Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born as many as the stars of the sky in multitude--innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore.” (Heb. 11:11-12).

- I'm glad Sarah was included in the hall of faith – women can be heroes for God, too!
- God had promised Abraham that he would be the father of many nations at the age of 75.
- At the age of 99, they still didn't have any children.
- Would you continue to believe God's promise after 24 years with no results?
- Don't give up or lose heart – keep believing the promise!
- Hebrews 6:12 says it is “through faith **and patience** that we inherit the promises.”

“And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb. He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but **was strengthened in faith**, giving glory to God, and being **fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform**.” (Romans 4:19-21).

- That's faith! Remember, faith doesn't just believe God exists.
- It also believes that He is good and faithful, and rewards those who diligently seek Him!
- Not only is faith about obeying the call and doing what God is calling *you* to do for *Him*, but it also trusts Him to do what *He* has promised to do for *YOU*!
- Abraham was strengthened in faith – His faith grew – and our faith can grow too:
- **“Faith comes by hearing the Word of God.”** (Romans 10:17).

GOD'S BLESSING TO ABRAHAM:

“Now the Lord had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; **I will bless you** And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” (Gen. 12:1-3).

WE ARE BLESSED WITH ABRAHAM:

“So then those who are of faith are **blessed with believing Abraham**... Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"), that **the blessing of Abraham** might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.” (Gal. 3:9,13-14).

- Because Abraham was blessed to be a blessing, so are we!
- What has God promised you? Don't let go of the promise – keep praying and believing!
- PERSONAL TESTIMONY: There are many times we persevere in prayer.
- EXAMPLE: This past week's sewer back-up and the \$1,000+ bill – God will provide!

3. FAITH SACRIFICES EVERYTHING:

“By faith Abraham, when he was tested, **offered up Isaac**, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, "In Isaac your seed shall be called," concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.” (Heb. 11:17-19).

- The final demonstration and ultimate proof of faith is its willingness to sacrifice.

“Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." Then He said, "Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you." **So Abraham rose early in the morning** and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he split the wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him.” (Gen. 22:1-3a).

- It’s easy to say you trust God and are walking by faith, but would you be willing to give up the most important thing in your life if God asked you to?
- QUOTE: “Hold everything in your hands lightly, otherwise it hurts when God pries your fingers open.” (Corrie Ten Boon, Dutch Christian holocaust survivor).
- The story of the rich young ruler is an example of one who loved money more than God.
- When Abraham was willing to give to God the most important thing in his life, God gave it right back to him.
- It’s like – when we honour God with our finances and tithe, we find we can do more with 90% of our income – and God’s blessing on it – than if we had all 100%.

THE LORD PROVIDES:

“**9** Then they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there and placed the wood in order; and he bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, upon the wood. **10** And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. **11** But the Angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" So he said, "Here I am." **12** And He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me." **13** Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son. **14** And Abraham called the name of the place, The-Lord-Will-Provide; as it is said to this day, "In the Mount of The Lord it shall be provided.” (Gen. 22:9-14).

- When we obey the call, believe the promise, and sacrifice everything, God will bless us!

Beausejour Community Church Website: www.beausejourchurch.ca
 Pastor Chris Jordan’s Blog: <http://thelandofpromise.blogspot.com/>