

The Beauty of God's Call

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 16 June 2024

Preacher: Kelvin Shen

[0 : 00] Today's Bible reading, it's Genesis chapter 11, starting at verse 27, and then we'll keep going to chapter 12 and verse 9. Now these are the generations of Terah.

Terah fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran, and Haran fathered Lot. Haran died in the presence of his father Terah in the land of his kindred, in Ur of the Chaldeans.

And Abram and Nahor took wives. The name of Abram's wife was Sarai, and the name of Nahor's wife, Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah and Iscah.

Now Sarai was barren. She had no child. Terah took Abram, his son, and Lot, the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sarai, his daughter-in-law, his son, Abram's wife.

And they went forth together from Ur of the Chaldeans to go into the land of Canaan. But when they came to Haran, they settled there.

[1 : 17] The days of Terah were 205 years, and Terah died in Haran. Now the Lord said to Abram, Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you.

So Abram went as the Lord had told him, and Lot went with him.

Abram was 75 years old when he departed from Haran, and Abram took Sarai, his wife, and Lot, his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people that they had acquired in Haran.

Abram passed through the land of Canaan. When they came to the land of Canaan, Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Morah.

At that time, the Canaanites were in the land. Then the Lord appeared to Abram and said, To your offspring I will give this land.

[2 : 53] So he built there an altar to the Lord who had appeared to him. From there he moved to the hill country on the east of Bethel and pitched his tent with Bethel on the west and I on the east.

And there he built an altar to the Lord and called upon the name of the Lord. And Abram journeyed on, still going towards the Negev.

So this is God's word to us today. Let us be blessed through hearing it. Good morning, church.

How's everyone doing? You can do better than that.

How are you doing, guys? You're very good. Wonderful. Well, for those whom I haven't met, my name is Kelvin. My wife, Cindy, is over there.

And then my daughters, Esther and Holly. And it's really exciting to be here. And I really thank the elders and the staff for just giving me the opportunity to share God's word with you all today.

[3 : 56] And yeah, just, and they've been praying for me during the week as well. So if this doesn't go well, you can, you know, anyways. Right. Yeah. So, yeah, we're in Genesis.

So how about we bow our heads and just pray together and give this time to God. Yeah. Heavenly Father, we need you.

Amen. And so, what we don't know, please teach us. What we have not, please give us. And what we are not, please change us.

Please open our ears and hearts and minds. Soften us so that we can respond to you rightly.

And all these things we pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Yeah. Yeah, so we're going through Genesis as a church right at the moment. And let's pick up from where we left off, shall we?

[5 : 00] So last week, we saw that in chapter 11, that human pride persisted after the great flood. Instead of going forth and fill the earth, what did they do?

Well, they found a piece of land. They decided to settle in it. And then they just, you know, started building, you know, Australia home and gardens type stuff. Build a city. Build a city. Build a tower. Build a tower.

Build a tower. Why? Because they wanted to make their name great. And they wanted everybody to stick together. Exactly the opposite of what God wanted.

So God came down and confused their languages and scattered them over the earth. Now, the question we're left with is, what's next?

You know, where is this world savior, this serpent crusher, you know, that God has promised, you know, the one, the seed of the woman that's coming? Well, you know, where is that going to come from?

[5 : 54] People are all over the place now. Well, the second half of chapter 11 tells us that it's going to come through the generation of Shem, you know, the descendants of his.

And then eventually it came to terror. That's the passage we're looking at today. And then that leads us to one of the most pivotal moments in human history, like Marty has alluded to already, the call of Abraham.

And then later, as we know, he's called Abraham. And then later, God named him Abraham. So it's the same guy. I'm just going to stick with Abraham today so that we don't get all confused.

Today, we're going to look at the essence of God's call, the purpose or some purposes of God's call, and responding to God's call. Let's go, shall we?

So what is the God's call? The word call has many meanings. It can be a phone call. It can be a judgment call. You know, it can be a shout, right? But in the Bible, when it's God calling, it's usually just naming something.

[6 : 57] Like in Genesis 1, we saw God call the light day. And then, another time, when he's calling someone, he's actually summoning somebody.

Summoning somebody. How do we know that? Well, if we look at Hebrews 11, you know how the writer summarizes a bunch of Old Testament people about how they have faith and how they acted in faith?

When it comes to Abraham in verse 8, the writer describes him as someone that God has called. The word there in Greek is kaleo, which is the same word as summoned.

So what is God's call or summon like? If you've watched some movies that's got royal families or kings or queens in them, you have some ideas.

For example, if you're older, like me, you might have watched Braveheart. You know, my daughter just asked me, what's Braveheart? Well, Braveheart, Mel Gibson, you know, of course.

[7 : 57] You know, and if you have Gen Z, you know, you would have watched, what, Frozen, right? And if you want to really kill time, you probably watched The Crown, right? Yeah, so, you know, you get the idea.

Summoning is not always pleasant out there. You know, sometimes people are, you know, dragged before the throne, screaming and kicking and everything. Well, God's calling is not like that.

It's nothing like it, so wipe it off your mind. Okay, what it is like, it's quite the opposite. God's call or summon is getting a taste of God's beauty and then being drawn to him progressively.

God's call or summon is getting a taste of his beauty and being drawn to him progressively. So that we don't get confused, God actually called Abraham twice.

First call, as Stephen, the deacon in Acts 7, has told us, that was when Abraham was in Mesopotamia, where Earl is, and Earl is in Iraq, near Persian Gulf today.

[8 : 58] And then that is before he lived in Haran, which is north of Syria, in Turkey, modern day. So in Acts 7, verses 2 and 3, Stephen said, Brothers and brothers, hear me.

The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran, and said to him, Go out from your land and from your kindred, and go into the land I will show you.

The second call, and when we go back to Genesis 12, verse 4, we see that Abraham left Haran. So that's the second call.

You'll find both places on Google Maps. If you use Google Maps, I think most people do these days. You type in Earl, and then Iraq, it will actually show up, and it will show you some pictures of it and everything.

It gives you some nice background, actually. And then if you type Haran, Turkey, it will actually show up again with some ancient-looking huts and everything. So you can have a go at home.

[10 : 03] Don't do it now. And then if you use the direction function in Google Maps, it will tell you it's actually like a 1,000-kilometer walk. 241 hours, apparently. All right?

So you can try that some other time, too. Right? Yeah, so that's some background for you. Yeah. All right. So where are we at? Yeah, so notice here in Acts 7 that God didn't promise Abraham anything.

So according to Stephen, God just told him to leave and go to an undisclosed location. That's it. You know, no flowery or nice promises. Just go. Yeah? Yeah.

And so it wasn't that what God said or some nice promises that drew Abraham to God. So what did? Stephen says here, the God of glory appeared to our father, Abraham.

God drew Abraham to himself with himself. I think that's what happened. God is like saying to Abraham, come, get a taste of who I am.

[11:06] My holiness, my perfections, my goodness, my character. Let me blow your mind and draw you to myself, not with what I'm going to do for you or give you, but simply who I am.

So Abraham's experience of God summoning or draw could be something like, you know, if you're a coffee lover, it could be something like one day you're walking to work, you know, and all of a sudden you can smell this excellent, wonderful aroma of a coffee.

And you're like, no way. How can a coffee smell that good? You know, I really want one. Okay, where is this? So you pull out your phone, you try to look it up.

There are no coffee shops nearby. Maybe it's just too new. But wait, if I go get this coffee, I'm going to be late for work. What should I do? But then this coffee is just smelling too good.

You know, you're in trouble here. You're really struggling. You really want that coffee. And you look up and you saw this big sign saying, coffee this way. But then you look where the arrow is pointing, you see a massive roundabout and there's like four intersections there, you know.

[12:19] But still, at the end of the day, you really want to go. And you know and you're sure that as you get there, the coffee is going to be even better when you're sipping it than the smell that you're getting.

God's summon is getting a taste of God's beauty and then being drawn towards it progressively. Now, how is God's calling progressive and not a once-off thing?

We can see that in Genesis 12 verses 1 to 3. God's second call to Abraham. Now, God's call this time, like he just spoke to Abraham and didn't really appear.

It doesn't say God appeared. He just said God spoke to Abraham. And then he said to Abraham, go from the country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you.

This is kind of similar to the one that Stephen was talking about, except actually slightly different. And this is how God drew Abraham to himself. A step at a time.

[13:17] You know, you may experience the same thing similar to in your own journey. And maybe your experience is different and that's all good. Looking back, I can now recall that God was clearly drawing me to himself again and again.

But then somehow at the time, I just couldn't perceive it. You know, I was like blind. So in any case, God's calling is getting a taste of God's beauty and being drawn to him progressively.

I think that is the essence of God's call. So why did God call Abraham? And how about you and me? Now we come to the second point, purposes of God's call.

As there are many in the Bible, we will only cover some of the key ones today. Now Genesis 12 verses 1 to 3 has two sections. I'm not sure if you noticed.

Each beginning with a command followed by three promises. So one and three and then one and then three. The purposes of the first section is personal and the second section is global.

[14:18] Let's start with the personal one, the first one. A personal purpose of God's call is to leave your old self behind and cleave to God for healing and fulfillment.

The first thing God tells Abraham to do is to leave his land. Go to another land. First one says, go from your country, in Hebrew, the word is actually land, same as the other land in the same verse, and your kindred and your father's house and to the land that I will show you.

To us who live in the suburbs, land is more about housing and lawn mowing, right? But back in the day, in Abraham's day, land is a source of livelihood.

You know, there is everything. You know, there's fineness and security. The more land you have, the more animals and more crops that you can produce. And so you're more secure. Life was like a game of monopoly.

You know, if you start losing the land or if your land is not producing, you know, anything, nothing, then you're in trouble. You know, you're going to go downhill from there. So God is saying to

Abraham, go, leave your old livelihood and your sense of security behind.

[15:28] Notice how God never told Abraham where to go, but just said, go, I will show you. Why? Because back in the day, you know, to the tale of Babel's story, the humanity's act of rebellion, what did it begin with?

It began with finding a good piece of land, you know, and then using the human common sense as, that's it. I'm going to stay here. Yeah, so God doesn't want Abraham to repeat the same mistake. God wants Abraham to walk by faith and not by sight. Use an uncommon sense. Live a day at a time. So God is reversing Babel here.

A fresh start for humanity. Beginning with Abraham, go, leave your livelihood and your security. Let me take care of you.

But land wasn't the only thing that God told Abraham to leave. God also told him, leave your kindreds and your father's house. Basically, leave your parents and your family relatives.

[16:33] Now, leaving family relatives and parents in our Western individualistic culture isn't really a big deal, right? Independence is highly valued.

The earlier the kids can leave home, the better, right? Well, the theme song in Disney's animation movie, Frozen, that brainwashed all our kids and along with the parents, you know, is a case in point.

But that's not the case. I'm not going to sing it. I just can't do it anymore. Yep. Yep. There you go. But that's not the case in Abraham's social context.

In their culture, your identity is given and forever tied to your family. Your goal in life is to honor the family name. Your vocation is dictated by who your parents are and what they did.

They're not ideals like, you know, follow your dreams and go do a personality test, you know, discover who you are. There's none of that. Successes and failures are always shared in your family.

[17:37] So in a nutshell, your identity comes from your family and without them, you're nobody. So what's God telling Abraham to do when he says, leave your father's house?

Well, kids and teenagers, this is not God's call for you to run away from home. So please stay with your mommy and daddy. I repeat, stay with your mommy and daddy.

But what God is telling Abraham to do and us too is leave our old identity behind. Whatever it is that is defining who we are, let it go.

I can't believe I just said that. But, anyways, besides leaving security and old identity behind, God also tells Abraham to leave his guilt, his hurt and his shame behind too.

So in their culture, one of the very key roles and responsibility of being a son is to do what? Well, some people love it. It's to make babies, you know, make a lot and a lot of babies.

[18:38] The more babies you have, the better. You know, and especially the more sons you have, the better. Because the sons, what can they do? The more sons you have, they can take care of the fields, do all the hard labor, you know, and also sustain the family line so that family can continue to go on.

And Abraham's father, Terah, had very high expectations of all his sons and his daughters and even spouses too. And how do we know that? Let's take a look at Genesis chapter 11, verses 27 and 29.

Okay, you see all these names there? Nahor and Haran and the wives and, you know, Milcah and Sarah was a half-sister, so one of Terah's lineage.

All these names mean noble, ruler, queen and so on. And princess and to rule. You know, even the name of Abraham can mean exalted father or their strength.

So Terah wants his family to be like kings and queens. Be strong, be powerful, top of the food chain, you know. But then the Bible tells us in Genesis 11, 30, very sadly, Sarai was barren.

[19:47] Sarai is Sarai, same person. She was barren. She had no child. Guess what the community would be saying? What? No son?

No one to take care of the field? Oh gosh, what a failure. You know? Shame on you, Abraham. What's going on? You know, imagine, you know, with a name like that, you know, and then having no child.

His name must have stunk. So when God commanded Abraham to leave his relatives, what was God doing? He was cutting him off from all the shame and guilt and everything else.

Are you hurting right now? Are you hurting right now? What are your guilt and your shame? What's defining you that is causing you this hurt right now?

Whatever it is, God is saying, leave those things behind. Leave your identity, your security, your hurt, and your shame behind. And cleave to me for healing and fulfillment.

[20 : 54] But how? Well, God's going to do that through his personal promises. His personal promises. First, the promise is to heal. Let's look at Genesis 12, verse 2.

I will make of you a great nation and make your name great too. How is God healing Abraham? God is saying here, instead of you trying to be great and failing in your own strength, let me, God, be the source of your greatness.

Let me give you a new identity. I see the barrenness that you are suffering. People are laughing at you, you know, and Sarai, you know, all the time, every day.

But that's okay. I'll make a strong nation of millions out of you. I'll turn the impossibility into reality. Your weakness into strength.

Your shame into glory. The father of a great nation will be your new identity. I will make your name great. I will make your name great.

[22 : 02] Stop being DIYers. Start being DIYers. Trust in Yahweh. Isn't that the most liberating and healing thing that can happen to us too?

That in Christ, we can have in Him the name above all names? We can have, we can be the sons and daughters of the king of the universe? We don't have to find our own identities anymore. We don't even have to create them. We don't have to create them by climbing some ladder. You know, the social ladder, academic ladder, the corporate ladder, you know, or even, you know, being the best parent kind of ladder.

What's wrong with climbing those ladders? Well, when we fail, we start losing our identity. We lose our job. You know, fail in class.

Our kids don't turn out so great. We are now kingly priests, the Bible says. Little Christs, the Bible says. Can you come up with something more honorable and greater?

[23 : 11] The first set of personal promises is healing. But there's one more, and that's the promise of fulfilling. We can see it bang in the middle here.

In the verse, God says, and I will bless you. Like Pastor Dave told us last week, blessing is deep fulfillment. So God is promising Abraham he will deeply, deeply fulfill him.

I will bless you. Your sense of security and livelihood and well-being and satisfaction in life will no longer depend on you and your land or your work and how well that's all going.

Instead, I will fulfill you, inside and out. No more living like a balloon, you know. You know what happens to a balloon? You're going to pump it and pump it and pump it.

And then what happens? It deflates. And you're going to go pump it and pump it and pump it again. And then it deflates again. No more pumping, God says. I will fill you.

[24 : 11] I will bless you. Jesus says in Matthew chapter 5, verses 3 to 6, Taylor Swift, Netflix, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, video games, sporting passions, wining, dining, work, money, success, properties, pornography, family, being busy cannot fulfill us.

Hunger for the right relations with God, Jesus says, and he will fulfill you. And we should note that these promises in Genesis 12 to 12 are not conditional.

God didn't say, if you leave this and leave that, then I will bless you and do this and that. It is not a deal, but a partnership. God does not benefit from Abraham leaving anything behind.

God is like saying, take off your dirty clothes and just put it in the basket. I will wash it and dry it. And by the way, here's something new. Try it on. God's promises are pure grace.

So here we have the personal promises of God's call. One command and three promises. Leave your old self behind and cleave to God for healing and fulfillment. And what's the one word summary for this?

[25 : 59] Repent. Leave behind and cling to me. Repent. 180. That's it. So next, we have God's global promise, global purpose.

Just like God's personal purpose, God's global purpose come in one command and three promises. So where's the command? It's at the end of verse 12.

Let's show it. The ESV Bible reads, so that you will be a blessing. But then, the words, so that you will, is actually not in the original text.

So the translators added it for like stylistic purposes. The sentence in Hebrew simply reads, and be a blessing. And the word be is imperative. So basically, the whole thing is a command.

God's command for Abraham and for us is to stop living for self and start being a channel of God's grace. Stop living for self and start being a channel of God's grace.

[27 : 04] Be a blessing. Whatever deep fulfillments that you have received from me, God is saying, go pass it on to others. Go pass it on. Have you seen the champagne tower before?

Now, the purpose of the top glasses and all the glasses below is not just to be filled. But it is so that it can be filled and that it can overflow and then it goes pass on to every other glass underneath.

That's the purpose. And so is God's grace that's given to us. The God that we worship and love is a triune God.

One God, three persons, Father, Son, and Spirit. They're co-equal. They're never self-centered. They're always other-centered, unconditionally loving one another.

Tim Keller says it's like Father, Son, and Spirit are dancing each other all the time. That's not one person standing still and goes, you go around me. No, it never does that.

[28 : 11] God never does that. It's always around the other person. It's always about the other. And then when you read through the book of John, it gets a bit confusing sometimes, right? Father, Son, Son, Father, Father, Son.

They're just passing to each other all the time, the glory. That is God's image. We were created in that image. God said it's not good for Adam to be alone.

Why is that? Because before Eve was around, there's no one that's equal to him that he can dance around with together, metaphorically speaking. We are supposed to be other-centered.

We are never supposed to say or think things like, what about me, me, me, me, me, me, me? We are supposed to be always about him and about others.

But when humanity became self-centered, the image was defaced, like a broken mirror, falling short and reflecting who God is.

[29 : 13] So here, God is saying to Abraham, beginning with you, let's restore this broken image and be a blessing. Be other-centered. This is a command.

Back in April, we had a memorial service here for one of our former church members, Alan Robinson. He was with Grace Church, we were told, for more than 30 years.

And during the service, Don shared a story about Don, about Don, about Alan. And there came the time, apparently, that he was trying to decide whether he should stick around.

He was trying to, he's about to retire. So he's trying to decide whether he should work more, you know, or retire. You know, and the idea is that if he could, you know, retire, he could spend more time serving the church.

And if he were to keep working, then he can give more money to the church. So Don said at the time that the church financial needs were more pressing, right? Is that right, Don?

[30 : 15] Yeah. And so Alan went ahead and kept working for a few more years so that he could give more money to the church and then meet the need. What a great example of being other-centered.

I believe that is just totally God's image working in him. Now, to Abraham, living in other-centered and other-person-centered life can really, you know, be pretty scary, right?

You know, he probably is thinking, like, if I do this, you know, be a blessing, wouldn't people think I'm weird? Now, wouldn't I get burned? Now, everyone else is self-centered, right? You know, what if they start abusing me and stuff?

You know, what if they take advantage of me? So these are not unreasonable questions. But how do you think God would respond? Actually, the answer is right here in verse 3.

It is a promise to bless and to curse. God says, I will bless those who bless you. And him who honors you, I will curse.

[31 : 18] Now, curses are something, sometimes, seen as punishments. But I see it more as God withdrawing his common grace.

It's like in Genesis 3, you see God cursing the ground, right? God wasn't punishing the ground. You know, he's like taking away the common grace so that the ground will no longer do what it's supposed to do.

Everyone who dishonors Abraham, literally anyone who mistreats Abraham or belittling Abraham, God says he will curse.

Now, is that fair? I think it's probably more fair if people treat God lightly, right? And belittling God, and God says, I will curse you, you know?

You know, like pay him back, like curse him back. Teach him a lesson. Respect God, right? But why is Abraham getting this special treatment? The only way this promise is going to make sense is that God is promising Abraham that he's now going to represent God to humankind.

[32 : 29] And God's got his back. As Jesus says in John 5, 23, Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him.

Why? The Son, Jesus, represents the Father. He sent the Son. So it's like the ambassador of a nation. He represents the ruler or government or king of another country in a foreign land. And if you attack the embassy, what are you doing? You're attacking the country he's representing. You're declaring war. So in the same way, mistreating Abraham is like mistreating God. So God's saying to Abraham, I will bless those who bless you. God is promising Abraham unwavering support. As Abraham represents God to humankind.

Now, what do you call a representative of God to humankind? There's a very specific term for it in the Bible. It is a prophet. In Genesis chapter 27 and verse 7, a prophet is what God called Abraham. [33 : 33] When God told Abimelech to return Sarah to Abraham. Don't touch her. Return her. He's a prophet. And what do prophets do? They receive God's word and they pass it on.

That's who prophets are. They represent God. Right? They're not fortune tellers. They are both the foretellers of God's word and also the foretellers of God's word.

Representing God. And God's word, Abraham surely received. As the Lord gave him another promise. In Genesis chapter 12 verse 3.

God says, In you, all the families of the earth will be blessed. In Galatians 3 verse 8. The apostle Paul calls his promise.

The gospel. The gospel. Why? Because Jesus, the one who will single-handedly save all the nations. Is indeed in Abraham.

[34 : 34] What a promise of hope it is. To Abraham and to us. The gospel of Jesus Christ. Is the ultimate blessing. God gives to this broken world.

So what is the global purpose of God's call to Abraham? Stop living for yourself. And start being a channel of God's grace. God will be with you. As he saves the world.

With the gospel. Through you. Now isn't it why God called you and me as well? God is on a mission to save the world.

And he has called you and me to be part of it. God says in Matthew 28. Go make disciples of nations. What's that? Bless all families of the earth. With my gospel.

Baptize them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. What's that? You know. Pass on this new great name. This new identity. That I have given you. Teach them to observe everything I have taught you.

[35 : 34] Deny yourself. And carry the cause. Love God and others unconditionally. And be a blessing. Be a channel of God's grace. And I will be with you always.

Till the end of the age. What's that? I will support you. Because you represent me. Do we see how broken this world is?

Do we see how broken Australia is? Do we see how dark the Newcastle and Lake Macquarie area really is? Without the gospel.

Without Jesus. Without Jesus. People are like zombies. Walking dead. God did not call us to make us just better people.

God called us to show people who he is. As he saves people through us. What a wonderful purpose. So far we have looked at the essence of God's call.

[36 : 35] And the sum purposes of God's call. Lastly we come to responding to God's call. And this will be quite short. As I am now standing between you and the coffee.

Now obedient action is the main way to responding to God's call I think. When we were young. My mom used to say to us kids. Go vacuum the house and mop the floor.

And then she would give me a toothbrush. Anyways. We never said to each other or to mom. Let's do a study on it. Before we clean.

Or let's form a committee to discuss that. Or let's pray about it and see if we have peace. We never really just talked about it that much.

We just went ahead and did it right. So sometimes I wonder when God says go do something. You know why we just. Anyways. You know what I mean. As we look at Abraham.

[37 : 40] It appears to me that faith driven obedience. Not words. Is the primary response to God's call. In Hebrews chapter 11 verse 8.

He tells us. The writer tells us. That it is by faith. And not by compulsion. That Abraham obeyed. And then in Genesis chapter 12 verse 4.

It says after receiving God's call. Abraham went forth. As the Lord had spoken to him. That's all he took. He listened to God. And he took action.

Now that's obeying. That's what you tell your kids too right. Continuing on. Verses 5 to 8 tells us. What this obedience looks like.

First Abraham just went all in packing up. You know. First 5 says that he left nothing behind. Took everything. You know. People and everything else. There's no turning back. Just as the Lord told him.

[38 : 37] So far. No word from Abraham. And then in verses 6 to 7. We see the Lord appear to Abraham again. This time in Shechem. And God promised him.

To give one of Abraham's descendants. That piece of land. And Paul says that. That descendant. That offspring. Is actually Christ. Now in response. Here Abraham built this altar there.

Why an altar? Why did he build an altar? Right? Well he's being a blessing. Just as the Lord told him to. He didn't offer any sacrifice there.

Do you notice? He just built it. It's just a thing sitting there. He is preparing. A space. For other people. To experience God. Just as he had.

Maybe it's for the future generations. You know. Future Israel. You know. That God has promised him. A new nation. Maybe it's for all nations of the earth. We don't really know.

[39 : 33] Because the Bible didn't really say. Doesn't really say. But we know that Abraham is still silent. Not a single word. No PTL text. No prayer hand emoji.

Nothing. He just kept silent. Then in verse 8. He moved again. This time to another place. Between this place called Beth El. Which means the house of God.

And Ai. You know. Which means wrongdoing or confusion. Not artificial intelligence. You know. And there he built another altar. Kept being a blessing.

Then finally. He opened his mouth. And the Bible says. He called upon the name of the Lord. Yahweh. That's all he said. No record of him saying anything else to anybody.

Until he gets to Egypt. There's no doubt. That Abraham's obedience. As driven by faith. Is the emphasis here. Everything the Lord has commanded.

[40 : 34] He just put it into action. Not a word. Isn't that interesting? Maybe action. Really speaks louder than words.

And as you may have heard it said before. Faith that saves. Is never alone. Why? Because faith that is not dead. Really works.

Now before we move on. To our very very last point today. I want just to quickly touch on. What faith is. Because it is by faith. That Abraham and all of us. Respond to God's call.

And it's by faith. That we can obey. With the right motive. Hebrews 11. Verse 1 says. Now faith. Is the assurance of things hoped for.

The conviction of things not seen. Now what does this mean? I believe faith. I believe faith. Is not a leap in the dark. But unseen hope. That we are sure.

[41 : 30] Will come to pass. Because of who God is. In the movie. Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade. If you are old. You would have watched it. Right. Harrison Ford.

Playing Indiana. Is in search of the Holy Grail. The last cup. That Jesus apparently used. In the Last Supper. Of course. Or fake. Now he steps into. What appears to be. The impassable chasm.

Okay. Only when he punches himself. He sticks his foot out. Next slide. He punches himself. Into the chasm. Alright. And then he finds this. Like invisible bridge. That was previously.

Couldn't be seen. Okay. Next slide. Yeah. Next slide. Yep. Oh. No bridge. Oh. Oh. Okay. Back. Back. Back. Back. Back. Back.

Go back. Yes. Can you go back? Yeah. Oh. That's the bridge. Here you go. Yeah. And then. And then. So he was like. You know. Close his eye. Hold on to his hat. Bam. He went across. Is this biblical faith?

[42 : 27] This is not biblical faith. A leap in the dark. Is not biblical faith. When Bible talks about faith. It is unseen hope. That we are sure it's going to happen. We're sure. Hope is unseen.

Because it is God's spoken promises. About the future. New bodies. New kingdom. New earth. New city. God is going to dwell with us. No more suffering. No more pain. No more tears.

Hebrews 11 says that Abraham kept moving and never settled. Because he's looking for a new city. One that is designed and built by God himself. That is hope.

Now how can we be sure these unseen things will happen? It is because God and his spirit has graciously allowed us to see through the scripture. That he can be trusted.

During the 19th century. There's a famous type of walker called Charles Blondin. Have you guys heard this illustration before? You're all good right? Should I change it? I feel like every pastor has used this.

[43 : 31] So I'll go ahead anyways. Yeah. So he's famous for setting up a rope right across the Niagara Falls. Doing all kinds of crazy things on it. Right? He's drinking something here.

A wine maybe. You know. Head stands. You know. And then apparently he brought a stove up there. And cooked an omelet there before. Right? It's amazing. And then apparently one time. You know. He was pushing this wheelbarrow. And he went over the Niagara Falls and came back. Everybody said. Yeah. Way to go. Blondin. You know. Yeah. More. You know. You're amazing. You're incredible. What a great guy. You know. And then he said to the audience. What did he say? I need a volunteer right now. He would come on to this wheelbarrow that I'm pushing.

This tiny little wheelbarrow. And then all of a sudden. Everybody went silent. You know. Like sometimes in Bible study. When we are looking for answers. Everyone's like. And then.

[44 : 32] Suddenly this little lady. Raises her hand. Said. I will. And then. He wheeled that little lady across. And then later on.

It was reported. That lady. Was in fact. His mom. That's faith. Faith is not a leap in the dark.

But unseen hope. That we show will come to pass. Because. Of who God is. Because of who God is. Faith is a confident hope. That rests on God's promises and character.

That's another way of putting it. Now finally. How. How. To have the power. To respond to God's call. Where to get this powerful. Power from.

How are we supposed to have faith like Abraham. And obey like Abraham. And respond to God like Abraham. I believe that we can never. And should never.

[45 : 29] Try. To have. Faith like Abraham. With our own strength. I don't think it works. Our faith. Responding to God's call.

We work shamelessly. Only. If we gaze upon Jesus. The champion. Of our faith. Who saw us. As his joy. When he endured.

The cross. Measuring success. Is not always bad. Sometimes it's actually quite good. But our faith journey. Can get very dangerous.

We start measuring ourselves. Against like Abraham. And David. And Paul. And so on. Progress. Can lead to pride. Failures. Can lead to shame.

And guilt. And even backsliding. So how are we supposed to. Respond rightly. To God's call. By faith. Without using Abraham. As a yastick. Hebrews 12 says.

[46 : 25] That the only way. We can endure. This faith marathon. We're in. Is to fix our eyes. On Jesus. The founder. And perfecter. Of our faith. Who for the joy.

That he set before him. Endured across. Despising the shame. And is seated. At the right hand. Of the throne. Of God. It is done deal. Abraham.

Is not the real hero here. Jesus is. He is the perfecter. Of our faith. What does that mean? That means. His perfect faith. Is credited. To our imperfect faith.

That's it. It's done deal. And the same time. Having done that. That actually. Fills our faith. How? How do we see that. In today's passage.

Abraham. Left the land. And his father's house. But Jesus. Left his father. And heaven. Why? For us. God promised Abraham.

[47 : 25] That he will make his name great. But what happened to Jesus? He gave us his name. The name above all names. And came down here. Became like a slave. Philipians 2 said. And then.

He died a horrible death. And lost his reputation. Why? So that we. Can receive. The greatest name. In him. God.

Also promised Abraham. I will bless those who bless you. And him who dishonors you. I will curse. What about Jesus? He got hung on the cross. Became the cursed one.

So that we. Can receive God's blessings. Abraham built an altar. For the Lord. For others to meet God. But Jesus. Went on the cross. As his. As the altar.

And became. A living sacrifice. For you and me. Abraham. Suffered shame. Because Sarah was barren. Did you know. What shame Jesus suffered.

[48 : 21] Besides being mocked. And flogged. And having a sign on the top. He was stripped naked. By the Roman gods. Because historically.

That's what they did to everyone. Who went on the cross. That white loincloth. You see. In the. You know. Paintings. And stained glasses. And so on. They were added on.

You know. The western. Artists. Think that. It's more appropriate. You know. But Hebrew 12 says. That. Jesus. Endued the cross. Despising.

That's shame. Why? Because while he was suffering. Physically. And shamefully. On that cross. He saw you and me. As his joy. In front of him. His joy.

He saw us. On that cross. He said to himself. Yes. This is shameful. But. They. You and me. Are totally worth it.

[49 : 20] Dear brothers and sisters. And friends. This is what our loving saviour. Has provided us with. To live out the faith. That he has called us for. Shamelessly.

All the days of our lives. Let us never forget. And let's pray. Our heavenly father.

We thank you for calling us. And drawing us. You never had to. But you did it anyways. And we thank you.

For giving us Jesus. That we can. That we can. Receive the gift of faith. Oh father.

We want to believe. Help our unbelief. God. God. God. Have this hope. Have the resurrection of Christ.

[50 : 26] So real. In our lives. Every day. That we can just look to him. Knowing that we are your joy.

And have the strength. And the confidence. And the identity. And all the blessing. That you fulfilled us with. Help us live it out.

So that we can really be a blessing. In Jesus name we pray. Amen. Amen. For good days. I love you. I love you. I love you. Thank you.

I love you. For good days. Thank you. Thank you.