

LET FAITH ARISE

God Is Not Moved By Our Hardship; God Is Moved By Our Faith

- Waiting...
- The LORD called Abram to leave his homeland, and to proceed to a different country.

“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. (Gen. 12:1)

- The focus of God's command was that Abram should uproot himself and follow God’s leading.
- **God called Abram to leave three things**, which were progressively more difficult: his country, his family (relatives), and his father’s house.
- His country was his *home region*, his family was his *clan*, and his father’s house was his *branch* of his clan. In Abram’s world such a move was unheard of.
- Only the poverty-stricken or the defeated would wander; only the landless and the fugitive would move about and leave their ancestral homes.

- Today, we don't think twice about this, but in Abram's time and culture, this never happened.
- God called Abram to leave behind **all he knew, all he had, all that gave him his identity and security to go as an unknown person into an unknown future.**
- Much like **the call of Jesus** to leave the glory of heaven to become flesh and walk among us as a vulnerable, unknown person, into an alarming future.
- It is widely recognised that the call of the church does not necessarily start with John 3:16, 'For God so loved the world...'; or even Matthew 28, 'Go into all the world...' the call of the church starts with Abram – go and leave your comfortable ghetto to the place I have called you to...'
- Every call of God starts with us leaving behind something we value and appreciate; something that we think we need, but really, can manage without – into a somewhat unknown future so that God can overcome the darkness in the world around us, and fulfill His desires through us.
- And with every call comes a promise.
- For Abram, the promise was to make a great nation from him; to make his name great; and to bless him.
- Out of Abram God wanted to make a nation that would be a beacon of light and a blessing to all the nations of the earth:

² I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” (Gen. 12:2-3)

- Our faith opens the door for God to move in power and perform miracles that would never and could never come to pass without God’s intervention.

Faith is the key that opens the door to God’s miracles, if we want to see supernatural signs and wonders and miracles, then stepping out in faith is the key that unlocks God’s power on earth.

- God wants the whole earth to be blessed, free from sickness, famine and pain, and so God searches the earth looking for hearts that are open to His prompting to step out in faith and put action to what we believe.
- Abram was one person who stepped out in faith, believing that God would use him to make a nation who would bless the earth. And so Abram left his homeland and everything that it contained for him and went to a foreign land so that God could use him to overcome the darkness in the world.
- No sooner had God called Abram to leave and go to the land of Canaan, than a famine arose in that land, and he had to uproot and move to Egypt.

- Several years later, when the famine had subsided, Abram and his family moved back to Canaan, but not long after they'd settled there, strife arose between Abram and his nephew Lot, and they parted company and went their separate ways.
- Each month that passed, became 1 step further away from God's promise being fulfilled. The months soon dragged into years, and the years became decades, and still no sign of God's promises being fulfilled.
- Abram stepped out in faith, believing in God's promises, but, decades later, no promise was fulfilled. Instead of doubting, and turning back, Abram remained a man of faith.
- Eventually, Sarai gave her slave girl Hagar to Abram to conceive a child, she bore him Ishmael. Abram was 86!!!
- Still a further 13 years passed until God visited Abram and finally gave him a tangible sign.
- The sign God gave to Abram was to change his name to Abraham which means ancestor of a multitude. In eastern cultures one's name was given as a sign of their identity and purpose.
- After God changed his name to Abraham, and at the age of 99, he and Sarah were visited by angels and told that they would give birth to a son.

“They said to him, “Where is your wife Sarah?” And he said, “There, in the tent.” ¹⁰ Then one said, “I will surely return to you in due season, and your wife Sarah shall have a son.”” (Genesis 18:9-10)

- And finally, the birth of Abraham and Sarah’s son Isaac breaks the drought of unfulfilled promise and we see the beginning of the great nation that God had promised.
- Of course, if we are familiar with the story, we know that God then asked Abraham to sacrifice his only son of the promise – again Abraham surrendered to God’s call, and in the 11th hour, God came through and provided a substitute sacrificial lamb.
- Do you know it took more than 25 years before Abraham saw the beginning of God’s promise fulfilled? Over 25 years of ups and downs, trouble and turmoil, disappointments and threats, challenges and obstacles. All the while trusting in God. His faith strengthening each step along the way, not weakening.
- How many times, do unanswered prayers weaken our faith?
- When we’ve earnestly cried out to God, but have seen no change, it often results in doubt, frustration, and walking away from God.
- But the faith that receives reward is the faith that endures the test of time.
- God’s call to us comes through the author of Hebrews:

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us...” (Hebrews 12:1)

- Complaining about our hardship will not motivate God to act.
- **God is not moved by our hardship; God is moved by our faith!**
- It was Abraham’s faith that opened heaven and enabled God to move upon the earth.
- It was not Abraham’s hardships or troubles that enabled God to act, it was his faith.
- Abel believed that God was the author and Lord of life, he acted upon this belief by offering the life of the firstborn of his flock.
- Noah believed that God would act in judgement and mercy upon the earth and so he acted upon his belief and built the ark – and because of Noah’s faith God triumphed over darkness.
- Abram believed that God would make a great nation through him, so he acted upon his belief and God’s power was released upon the earth to perform a miracle and cause Sarah to conceive and give birth to their son Isaac.
- It is not our hardships that enable or motivate God to move in power, it is our faith that opens heavens doors.
- It is our faith that activates God’s power.

David's story.

- God called Abram to leave what was known and comfortable to go to an unknown and uncomfortable place so that God could overcome the darkness that had blanketed the earth.
- God called Jesus to leave the glory of heaven to become flesh and walk the very unglorified human life, so that God could overcome the darkness that had plagued the human condition.
- God calls the church to leave what is known and comfortable and safe, to venture into the unknown, perhaps uncomfortable community, to connect with the vulnerable, hurting, marginalized, lost people in our sphere of influence, and point them to the God of love and power who has, can and will do what it takes to bring all of creation into a life transforming relationship with Jesus.
- What is it like for you to consider stepping out in faith to either share the good news of God's love, or pray for a miracle, or even become involved in a new/different ministry; all of which will unlock heavens power to move upon the earth?