

ABRAHAM

(How God Enables You To “Start Over” Once Again)

Text: Genesis 12:1 – 13:4

Subject: How Abraham Was Sidetracked To Egypt, But Came Back To Bethel.

Introduction

Question: Has there ever been a time when God asked you to give up something and you didn't know why at the time?

Question: Have you ever been confused in your journey and found yourself worrying?

Question: Have you ever stumbled along the way and wondered how God would pick you up?

Question: Have you ever come to the end of yourself and felt the need to run into the arms of your Heavenly Father?

Question: Has there ever been a time or season when you found yourself a little distant from the altar and the fire of God?

(If So, Then Abraham Is For You)

I. Abraham's Communication

Fact: God communicated with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, all in different ways.

Fact: God knows how to deal with each of us specifically.

(7 Divine Communications With Abraham)

- #1. God told Abraham to get out of his country. (Genesis 12:1)
- #2. God not only promised Abraham a land, but a seed (descendants) as well. (12:2-3)
- #3. God promised an inheritance forever. (13:14-17)
- #4. God promised a seed that would become a great nation. (15:2-3)
- #5. God renews His covenant with the sign of circumcision. (17:1-14)
- #6. God promises the birth of a son next year. (18:10)
- #7. God instructs Abraham to offer up his son upon the mountain. (22:2)

(What God Reveals In This Communication)

- #1. Because Abraham listened to God, God was able to lead Abraham from blessing to blessing.
- #2. Anything that Abraham sacrificed or gave up, was nothing in comparison to what he received in return:
 - ◆ Abraham forsook his home, (but received a country).
 - ◆ Abraham cut off his past, (but received a promise for the future).
 - ◆ Abraham gave up the inheritance from his earthly father, (but received eternal treasures from his Heavenly Father).
 - ◆ Abraham lived in a tent in the wilderness, (but gained for himself a city whose builder and maker is God).

(In Other Words)

- #1. When God takes something away and you do not understand, He already has provision in store.
- #2. Whenever God seems to deprive you of something you want, He is only making room for something you need.

- #3. When ever we listen to and obey the Lord, the future will reveal the blessing of our decision.

II. Abraham's Call

"Now the Lord said unto Abraham, get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee" (Genesis 12:1)

(Abraham's call and ours involves 4 things:)

- #1. Abraham was called to "Get Out Of Thy Country"
 - ◆ Which was a call to separate from an idolatrous people.
- #2. Abraham was called to "Get Away From Thy Kindred"
 - ◆ Which was a call to separate from those who could hinder God's will in his life.
- #3. Abraham was called to "Get Away From Thy Father's House"
 - ◆ Which was a call to leave the place of his comfort and position as an heir of his earthly father.
- #4. Abraham was called "Unto A Land That I Will Show Thee"
 - ◆ Which was a call to believe that God would honor his faith as he walked in obedience to God.

(What Does This Call Mean To You And Me Today?)

- #1. "Get Out Of Thy Country" Means:
 - ◆ ... We have been called to separate ourselves from every idolatrous influence.
 - ◆ ... We have been called to separate ourselves from everything fleshly, carnal and worldly that hinders the flow of the Holy Spirit in our lives.
- #2. "Get Away From Thy Kindred" Means:
 - ◆ ... To remove yourself from anyone who hinders you from totally following Jesus.
 - ◆ ... To love God and put Him before all earthly relationships.
- #3. "Get away From Thy Father's House" Means:
 - ◆ ... Give up your rights to inherit from your earthly father, (and)
 - ◆ ... seek first the inheritance of your Heavenly Father.
- #4. "Go To A Land That I Will Show Thee" Means:
 - A... "You haven't got all the answers, but you do not need them".
 - B... "You cannot see what tomorrow holds, but you know who holds tomorrow".
 - C... "You can trust the Lord with the things you cannot see or understand".
 - D... "You can be sure that God "Makes all things beautiful in His time". (Ecc. 3:11)

Question: What is the secret to our strength and our walk of faith?

"Abraham moved to Bethel and pitched his tent, builded and altar and called upon the name of the Lord". (Genesis 12:8)

(The Secret?)

- #1. Pitched his tent, #2. Builded an altar, #3. Called upon God.

(All Symbolic To Us)

- #1. **The Tent** – Symbolizes our eyes fixed upon the world to come; we travel as pilgrims, strangers and live with eternity stamped upon our eyelids.
- #2. **The Altar** – Symbolizes death to our will, our way, our plans and our rights.
- #3. **The Calling** – Symbolizes absolute dependence and deep communion with God along the way

◆The **Tent** (we are strangers) ◆The **Altar** (we are surrendered) ◆The **Calling** (we are seeking)

III. Abraham's Confusion

Ask: Are there hurdles and obstacles along the way?

Ask: Is it possible to stumble and fall down?

Ask: Will God pick me up if I fall?

Ask: Is God a God of new beginnings?

(The Strange Twist)

Fact: After Abraham moved to Bethel, pitched his tent, built his altar and called upon God, (he did a strange thing). **"He journeyed going on still toward the south" (Genesis 12:9)**

(In Other Words)

◆ Instead of staying where he had his altar, (he left the altar and traveled down to Egypt).

Fact: Egypt is always spoken of as "Down" in Scripture".

Fact: Egypt is a symbol of the world!

Fact: Egypt is a place that God said "Stay out of".

"Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help, and stay on horses, and trust in chariots because they are many; and in horsemen because they are very strong; but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the Lord". (Isaiah 31:1)

Danger Zone: Abraham never asked God about going down to Egypt.

Danger Zone: Abraham sought relief during famine in the wrong place.

Danger Zone: Abraham traveled to a place where he could not build an altar and could not pitch his tent.

(Abraham's Confusion Included:)

#1. Forsaking (Genesis 12:10)

- ◆ Abraham left his tent, altar and place of intimacy with God.
- ◆ Abraham strayed to a place that offered no help.
- ◆ Abraham got sidetracked for a season to the wrong place.
- ◆ Abraham focused on the famine instead of the faithfulness of God.

#2. Fear (Genesis 12:11-13)

- ◆ Abraham lost his peace and began to worry about his life.
- ◆ Abraham lost his sense of security in the Lord.
- ◆ Abraham lost his confidence in the power of God.
- ◆ Abraham pretended to be what he was not, (Sarah's brother).
- ◆ Abraham became more concerned about himself than his own wife.

#3. Foolishness (Genesis 12:14-20)

- ◆ Abraham was rebuked by Pharaoh.
- ◆ Abraham was exposed by the Lord.
- ◆ Abraham was told to "go thy way".

Fact: Abraham made no spiritual progress in Egypt.

Fact: Abraham's time in Egypt was "wasted time".

Fact: Abraham experienced nothing good when he left Bethel (his tent and his altar).

(But God Did Not Cast Him Away Or Write Him Off Forever)

Question: Have you journeyed down to Egypt where you don't belong?

Question: Have you left the altar of communion and fellowship with God?

(Pg. 3 of 4)

Question: Have you sought for help from fleshly sources (instead of upon your knees)?

Question: Have you found yourself worrying and fretting like Abraham?

Question: Have you been confused in a situation that you cannot explain?

Question: Have you thought it's too late to change and start over again?

Question: Do you want to leave Egypt and experience a "New Beginning" with God?

(Never Ever Forget This:)

(When your life seems confused and without direction,)

#1. When life treats you bad – God still treats you good!

- ◆ There is never a time to blame God for your confusion.
- ◆ God means it for good (and redeems your hard places).
- ◆ When life gives you some garbage, use it for fertilizer and let God deepen His work within you).

#2. You're never alone when you feel alone – keep trusting in God's presence!

- ◆ Faith remembers what your feelings forget.
- ◆ Sometimes you just flat out don't feel the presence of God. (Hebrews 13:5 is still true).

#3. God has information that you do not have – trust His wisdom!

- ◆ Abraham began in faith (without all the details).
- ◆ Remember beloved: God's ways are not your ways. (Isaiah 55: 8-9)

#4. Its always too soon to think its too late – trust in the timing of the Lord!

- ◆ "A thousand years in our sight is like one day with our eternal God" (Psalm 90:4)
- ◆ "God's way is perfect and without flaw" (Psalm 18:30)

IV. Abraham's Faith

(In 12:10) "Abraham *went down* into Egypt"

(In 13:1) "Abraham *went up* out of Egypt" **(Did You Hear That?)**

- ◆ Abraham had gone down to Egypt where he never built an altar. (Why not?)
- ◆ Because there isn't any fellowship with God when you are in a place you don't belong.
- ◆ Because there isn't any joy when your conscience isn't clear and pure before God.
- ◆ Because there isn't any power in prayer when you know that you have strayed.

(What Did Abraham Do?)

#1. He turns around and goes back to the place of the altar as before.

#2. He goes back to Bethel where he enjoyed fellowship with God.

#3. He returned and was restored to the path of God's design.

(7 Things Took Place At The Altar In The Old Testament)

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|----------------|-----------------|------------------|------------|
| #1. Atonement | #3. Sacrifice | #5. Worship | #7. Praise |
| #2. Dedication | #4. Restitution | #6. Thanksgiving | |

Fact: The Fire of God never fell on an empty altar (I must give of myself and cooperate with God)

Conclusion

(Why Is Genesis 13:3 & 4 in your Bible?)

- ◆ To reveal to us that God is a God of *New Beginnings*.
- ◆ To reveal to us that God is a God that delights in leading us from Egypt to Bethel.
- ◆ To reveal to you that wherever you are, God can lead you back to the place of the altar with God!!!

AMEN!

Bill Kirk, Pastor

(Pg. 4 of 4)