

Reteaching/Study Guide from Lakeside's Online Worship
Sunday, January 10, 2021, Sermon by Dr. Greg Corbin, Senior Pastor
"Abraham: A Friend of God" – Genesis 12:1-9

"The Lord said to Abram: Go from your land, your relatives, and your father's house to the land that I will show you. ²I will make you into a great nation, I will bless you, I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. ³I will bless those who bless you, I will curse anyone who treats you with contempt, and all the peoples on earth will be blessed through you."
Genesis 12:1-3 Christian Standard Bible (CSB)

After Genesis 2, the story of God's "very good" creation becomes quite bleak. The tragedy occurred because the crown of God's creation, mankind, time and again chose to seek their own glory rather than reflect the glory of their creator. With few exceptions, they failed to follow the purpose for which they were created until "the Lord saw that human wickedness was widespread on the earth and that every inclination of the human mind was nothing but evil all the time, the Lord regretted that he had made man on the earth, and he was deeply grieved" (Genesis 6:5-6). Even after the judgment of the flood and the grace of the ark, humans persisted in their unrighteous, self-elevating agendas. Finally, the thread of hope comes into focus with the introduction of Abraham at the end of Genesis 11, and then from Genesis 12 forward, God's work of redemption becomes increasingly clear through the Old Testament until the Word became flesh as the One and Only Son of God was born as a descendent of Abraham. Like the other Patriarch's of Genesis (Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph), **Abraham is never presented as perfect, but his life does provide at least three key examples for us of a person who follows God's grace in a fallen and broken world.**

Abraham is a picture of saving faith (Genesis 12:1-6). First, God's promises to Abraham point toward Jesus. God's Old Testament revelation of Himself would be given through Abraham's descendants, and God's salvation would ultimately come through one of Abraham's descendants. Through Jesus, all the peoples of the earth would be blessed. Second, Abraham's legacy is an example of how we are to come to Jesus – by faith. Abraham's life revolved around hearing God's voice in a broken world, taking God at His word, and obediently following God's leading even when the promises of God were beyond his sight. This began when he left Ur of the Chaldeans with his father. It continued when he heard God in the pagan culture of Haran and left with his family to go to a land that God would show him. It was epitomized when he believed that God would give him a son and against the backdrop of the countless stars that reflected the descendants he would one day have he believed God and God "credited it to him as righteousness" (Genesis 15:6). Abraham shows us that salvation is possible only by grace through faith.

Abraham is a picture of a balanced life (Genesis 12:7-9). His pattern of life reflects a healthy balance between things that are temporary and things that are eternal. As he traveled through the land of promise, he pitched his tent as a temporary residence along the way. But at each stage in his journey, he built a permanent altar as a reminder of the ultimate, lasting value of the God whom he served. Abraham understood that the things we acquire in this life are passing and that we are but temporary residents in this world. Our devotion must ultimately be to God, not to material things. "He held possessions loosely because he lived with the end on mind" (Greg Corbin).

Abraham is a picture of a friend of God (James 2:23). Abraham's faith in God was far more than a formality. It was personal. His worship was certainly not ritual. His relationship with God was

grounded in genuine devotion and love. He walked with God in such a way that he knew God and heard His voice. For this reason, Abraham is called “a friend of God” (James 2:23). What an awesome example and reminder for us. Church life can too quickly become ritual, and conservative values can become little more than legalism and ideology. Abraham reminds us that knowing God is about loving Him and walking with Him daily.

To reflect further about Abraham’s example, read Romans 4:1-25, Galatians 3:1-19, Hebrews 11:8-19, and James 2:14-26.

Questions/Actions for Reflection/Discussion/Application

- Have you believed God like Abraham? By grace through faith in Christ, have you received God’s gift of righteousness?
- How would you explain the meaning of “Abraham believed, and God credited it to him as righteousness?”
- How does Abraham’s balanced pattern of life contrast with the current values of our culture? How does it challenge you?
- Are you a friend of God? Or are you just going through the motions of church life?

Happy New Year,

Stacey