

**Jesus: Our Great High Priest Forever**  
**(Week 21)**  
**Hebrews 11:8-19**  
**“Abraham: The Founding Father of Faith”**

**Introduction**

As we continue in the “Who’s Who of Faith” Chapter (**Hebrews 11**) in **verse 8**, we come to Abraham. It is quite possible that no one else who ever lived, displayed as much faith in God as did Abraham. His name means “Father of Multitudes”, and he is known as the patriarch of Judeo-Christian faith, and yet, when God called him, he was a childless pagan living in the Mesopotamian city of Ur (located in southern Iraq). It is an amazing thing, what God can do with a lost person, who is simply willing to yield up their lives to Him in faith! When God first appeared to this mighty man of Faith, his name was simply “Abram”, which means “great father”. By the time God was finished with him his name had been changed to “Father of Multitudes”!

The story of Abraham’s journey of faith is nothing short of incredible, and you can find the entire narrative from beginning to end in the book of **Genesis, chapters 12-25**. As I stated earlier, Abraham was a pagan man living in a pagan city when God called him. His father, Terah, worshipped the moon god, “Sin” or “Nanna” (**Joshua 24:2**), who was considered to be the principal deity of the Chaldeans. So you see, Abram wasn’t chosen because of his great faith in The One True God, he was simply chosen! God just looked down from heaven and said, “There’s the one I want!” (figuratively speaking), and that was that. Abraham went from being just another lost person, to a person of unshakable faith in God. How does that even happen? He heard God’s Word, and he believed it! Simple as that.

**“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.”**

**Romans 10:17 (KJV)**

Just as soon as Abraham heard the voice of The LORD, he responded in faith. This became the very pattern of Abraham’s existence. He simply believed everything that God ever told him. This is exactly what faith is my friends. When we hear the Word of God and respond to it in faith, what we are actually saying is that no matter what anyone else says, we believe that God can be trusted. Though we cannot see with our own eyes what he has promised, we stand upon the foundation of His Word and believe that He will do what He says.

**“Now faith is the reality of what is hoped for, the proof of what is not seen.”**

**Hebrews 11:1**

Just as God called Abram, He is calling us today to join Him in a “walk of faith”. Abram had no earthy idea where he was going when God called him to follow, but he trusted God to work out all the details. Too many people demand to have all the answers up front, before they will choose to commit to anything. But Abraham was convinced that God had something better to offer, even if he didn’t completely understand what that “something” was, or even how long it would take to get it! That, my friends is a textbook example of genuine faith. Are you trusting Christ like that? Or do you panic every time something goes wrong and begin to doubt His promises? Now we all have our “moments of weakness”, even old Abraham had a few of those. But we have been chosen to follow Christ in such a way that others will see in us a living demonstration of faith. Abram did that, and he was blessed for it. We too will be blessed, as long as, we will keep our eyes upon Jesus, the Source and Perfecter of our faith (**Hebrews 12:2**). We must not allow ourselves to become distracted by the storms of life. Remember Peter, when he walked upon the water (**Matthew 14:22-33**)? Just keep the focus on Christ and trust Him with all the details, and you too, like Abraham, will find yourself embarking upon an epic journey of faith. God longs for us all to have as our possession a powerful Faith that will: **Start** The Journey, **Stay** The Course, and **Stand** The Test. Let us look together at Father Abraham’s incredible journey of faith.

### **Faith to Start The Journey (vs. 8-10)**

"A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step." We've all heard this old saying. I am told that it originated from an old Chinese proverb, but no one seems to really know. However, the truth of the statement is without question. Everything must have a starting point. Abraham's life has become, for us all, a shining example of incredible faith, but it all began with just a single step of obedience.

**"The LORD said to Abram: Go out from your land, your relatives, and your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you. I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I 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**

Wow! First of all, let me begin by saying what an incredible list of promises that was. God personally guaranteed that Abram would be rewarded beyond his wildest dreams, if he would simply set out on a journey to "the land God would show him". Notice that there are no directions or GPS coordinates. There is no mention as to the location of Abram's final destination. He was just simply commanded to follow God and told that God would let him know when they got there! In essence, God was saying, "Abram, do you believe me?" That is the very foundation of faith. Every one of us have been given the promise of our eternal inheritance based upon this man's kind of faith. I have no earthly idea where heaven is, or when I will get there, I just know that Jesus has promised to take me there, and I believed that He will. That is why I decided to follow Him. How about you? This journey from me began when I said "yes" to Christ, just as it began for Abram when he moved out of his comfortable house in Ur and packed those tents upon his camels. He believed that God had something better in store for him. So, he got up and left.

Now Ur, by all archeological evidence was a pretty modern place. I even read somewhere once that the houses there were complete with plumbing systems that had a kind of "flush toilet". Abram no doubt had some degree of wealth, for he and Sarah had servants that accompanied them on their journey. No doubt, a lesser man would have tried to negotiate with God. Things were, after all, pretty good for them in Ur. How could they just pack up and leave without some kind of concrete proof as to where they were headed? God didn't offer Abram any proof, no pictures of the promised land, nor any real estate agents, who would give him an online "virtual tour" of his new home. No, Abram was given a choice; follow or don't follow. Abram rose up to follow, for one reason, and one reason alone... because he believed God.

Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Ur. Pretty much says it all doesn't it? I mean, there's not a whole lot that I can add to that. He wasn't a young man anymore. Most of us get more conservative as we age. The "lets take chances" phase of our lifetimes are far behind us in our twenties and early thirties. But not for Abram. He wasn't about to take a chance on missing out on what God had promised. I often wonder if the rest of his family, and even his neighbors in Ur, tried to talk him out of going. "Abram, this is crazy!" They might have said, "Your a bit old to go wandering off in the wilderness, wouldn't you agree?" But Abram, BELIEVED God. Kind of reminds me of an old song that we used to sing in the Baptist Church:

Though none go with me, I still will follow  
 Though none go with me, I still will follow  
 Though none go with me, I still will follow  
 No turning back, no turning back  
*(I Have Decided To Follow Jesus by: Sadhu Sundar Singh)*

Most people do not know this, but the words of this song were actually taken from the testimony of a man in India who gave his life to Christ and was then made to watch as his children and wife were executed, before he too was martyred for this faith. Gives the song a different perspective, wouldn't you agree? Why would someone be willing to lay down his life, and the lives of his family, for the sake of following Christ? Because they believe that what God has offered is far better, that is why. That is

exactly what Abraham believed, and that is what every true follower of Christ still believes. What God has promised is far better than all the treasures of this old world.

**“By faith he stayed as a foreigner in the land of promise, living in tents as did Isaac and Jacob, coheirs of the same promise. For he was looking for a city that has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.”** **Hebrews 11:9-10**

You see, for Abraham the inheritance of the “Promised Land” was not even to be realized in his own lifetime. God told him that his descendants would inherit the land after four generations (**Genesis 15:16**). Although Abraham knew that he personally would never live to “own” the Promised Land, he was willing to live there as a foreigner, until God would ultimately fulfill His promise. Why? Because the promises of God are worth waiting for! Do you ever feel like a foreigner in your own country. I certainly do. More and more with each passing day in fact. The older I get, the more that I realize that I just don’t belong here. I, like Abraham, am longing for a better place, **“a city that has foundations, whose architect and builder is God” (Heb. 11:10).** This is the inheritance that we have been promised. Are you ready to follow? Do you have enough faith to start the journey? It all begins with that first step of faith. Trust God. His Word is truth.

#### **Faith To Say The Course (vs. 11-16)**

Not only was the Promised Land not given to Abraham in his lifetime, but the promise of all those descendants was certainly a long time in coming. You see, God promised Abraham a son of his very own, an heir from his own body that would be the beginning of a “great nation” (**Genesis 15:4**). I believe that Abraham had at first thought Lot, his nephew, would become his heir. But after Lot had abandoned Abraham (**Genesis 13**), no doubt the old patriarch was starting to wonder how he could become a great nation, when he and his wife were still childless. When you’re getting older by the minute, believing in something that only happens to “young people” becomes harder and harder. But once again, God reassured Abraham that he would indeed have a son in his old age (**Genesis 15:4-5**), which brings us to my favorite verse in all of scripture:

**“Abraham believed The LORD, and He credited it to him as righteousness.”** **Genesis 15:6**

Every time I hear that verse, I want to stand up and cheer! How is it that a sinful man can be seen as righteous? By **believing** The LORD! That’s how. Abraham had faith, a lasting faith, that enabled him to stay the course, even in the face of the seemingly impossible. Why? Because **nothing is impossible with God (Luke 1:37).**

Let’s not be naive here. Sarah had serious doubts about the whole “child bearing thing”. She even laughed, when she heard God say it (**Genesis 18:12**). At some point, Sarah became convinced that she needed to “help God out” with His promise (thus the whole “Hagar disaster” **Genesis 16**). But God doesn’t need our assistance to keep His promises. He will keep them in His own time. All that Abraham and Sarah really needed to do was keep trusting and wait on The LORD. Sometimes it seems like God has forgotten us, but He never does. His timing is **always** perfect (**Ps. 18:30**). Sarah did have the son she was promised, when she was 90 and Abraham was 100! God waited until there was absolutely no doubt in anyone’s mind about the miraculous nature of Isaac’s birth. I just **love** how the scriptures say that Abraham was **“as good as dead”** when Isaac was born (**vs. 12**). Now, you’ve got to admit that The LORD does indeed have a sense of humor! Only God can produce life from something that is “dead”. Isn’t that where we all were, before He chose to work a miracle in us? **Nothing is impossible with God.** He did everything that He promised with Abraham.

Through it all, Abraham never even entertained the possibility of returning to Ur. He trusted in God and finished the course, because he believed that God would ultimately deliver something far better (**vs. 15**). And, because of Abraham’s unshakable faith, God was not ashamed to be called Abraham’s God (**vs. 16**). He did deliver the son of promise, whose descendants are as numerous as the stars in the

sky (**Genesis 15:5; Hebrews 11:12**). And, it is from this lineage of Abraham, that Jesus, The Son of God came into the world to deliver us all from sin and guarantee our eternal inheritance. God came through for Abraham, in ways that he could never ask for or imagine (**Ephesians 3:20**). He will do the same for you... So, no matter what trials you are facing today, no matter how long you feel like you have waited upon the LORD, keep the faith and stay the course! For God's promises are always kept.

**"For you need endurance, so that after you have done God's will, you may receive what was promised."** **Hebrews 10:36**

### **Faith To Stand The Test (vs. 17-19)**

Just imagine that God had promised to give you a son and heir, that would make your name great and cause your descendants to number as the stars in the sky. You wait for 25 years for this promise to be kept... twenty-five YEARS. When you're a hundred years old, you witness the greatest miracle you have ever seen in your life, that son is born! Abraham named him Isaac (Yitschaq), which simply means "laughter". I'm quite certain that the name was given not only as an expression of sheer joy, but also to serve as a reminder to Sarah, that it's probably not a good idea to "laugh off" the promises of God! Can you just imagine the worship service that they all had, when this miracle child was born? I bet there were a lot of sacrifices placed upon the altar of God that day. But, God asked for one more.

**"Take your son," He said, "your only son, Isaac, whom you love, go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of mountains I will tell you about."** **Genesis 22:2**

Now, we live in a world today that has tried to "re-invent" God. The televangelists would have you believe that God would never ask you to do anything difficult or uncomfortable. They say that God just wants you to be healthy, wealthy, and happy all the time. But, that's not the God of the scriptures. Would you like to know what He wants from you:

**"Love The LORD you God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength."** **Deuteronomy 6:5**

That is what God requires. Just when Abraham thought the worst was over, the waiting and the trials were over, God put his faith to the test. Must have been a long and sleepless night, but *The Bible* tells us that Abraham rose up early the next morning to obey The Word of God (**Genesis 22:3**). Now I've often wondered, if he got up early so that he wouldn't talk himself out of going, or if he just wanted it over. Either way, Abraham obeyed God immediately. I wonder how many times the old man just broke down and cried on the way to Mount Moriah?

*The Bible* tells us that Abraham, by this time in his walk of faith with God, was convinced that God would raise Isaac back from the dead (**Hebrews 11:19**). So he went on... in faith. Now, we all know the rest of the story, but Abraham didn't, that is not until he drew back the knife to slay his beloved son. God stopped his hand, and He provided Abraham a substitute sacrifice. Abraham had been ready to do the unthinkable. Why? Because he loved God more than anything.

"Though none go with me, I still will follow."

Do you love God like that? Do you trust Him, not only to begin a journey of faith, but to stay the course and to lay your everything upon the altar of faith? Would your faith stand the test? Just how trustworthy is your GOD? And, just how faithful... are YOU?

**"Without faith, it is impossible to please God...."** **Hebrews 11:6**

And ALL of God's people said... TRUTH!!!