

**Genesis 11: 10 - 12: 5; "The Call of Abram", Sermon # 38 in the series –**  
**"Beginnings", Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2011,**  
**in the Morning Worship Service.**

Isn't it interesting that all these descendants of Shem are mentioned in verse 10 and following down to verse 26, and hardly a word is said about them other than who they begot. The reason for this is that these descendants are those through whom Jesus Christ our Lord would be descended. The mention of them is significant to the recording of Scripture from that standpoint. It is not, that what happened in their lives is insignificant in God's sight; that nothing further is mentioned. But it is rather to point out to us the immense significance of the coming of the Promised Seed, that they are mentioned. In the writing of the Holy Scripture, only those things that the Lord God wants us to know are made known. That is in order to stimulate faith.

Our knowing everything doesn't guarantee that we will exercise faith or hope or love towards God and others. It is receiving the truth that God chooses to give us, with all humility, that will save our souls and enable us to do the right thing in any given situation. James 1: 21 says, "...receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls." Now this morning we want to think about the call of Abram. And we want to learn from this passage things related to his call that will help us to understand what it is that God is looking for from us in terms of a response to that call. He was called to leave his country, told to get out of it and away from his family and his father's house.

I would like to relate this call to you this morning so that you might see something of the reality of what happens to a person when God's grace is at work, bringing them to salvation. There is the call that comes to all men through the preaching of the gospel. And many are called, but few are chosen, Jesus says in Matthew 20: 16. That kind of a call comes to all men, to repent and believe in Jesus Christ, but God does not choose all men unto salvation. But when He has chosen to call someone to Himself, the call is made real and effectual to the mind and the heart so that the person responds in ways that both God and men see. It is this that we want to look at this morning.

So the question that we are asking this morning is this. "What can we learn about how God's grace works in salvation, when we look at Abram's call?" And I think that if we look carefully, that we can see 3 aspects of God's grace at work in Abram, that we will see in ourselves if God is calling us to salvation in Jesus Christ and to an eternal inheritance.

**1<sup>st</sup> of all- We can see love's relation to the call. (verses 27-32 )**

I believe that Abram was a man who loved his family. It says in Chapter 12: 1, that "the Lord had said to Abraham: get out of your country, from your family, and from your father's house." This seems to indicate that the call came to Abram when he lived in Ur of the Chaldees. And Stephen, in Acts 7 verse 2, confirms this when he says, "The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran, and said to him, 'Get out of your country and from your relatives, and come to a land that I will show you.'" Now this must have been a hard command for Abram to obey. But the Scripture says, "The God of glory appeared to him."

Have you seen the blessed truth that salvation and the call of any person comes by a revelation of God's glory to your soul? And when God makes Himself known to you, if your call is a true call, you will obey that call to leave that place of false worship and sinful disobedience and proceed to the place where God would have you to worship. It is true that you love your parents and have tried to follow what they teach you about God, but when the revelation of His Word comes you, if what your parents say contradicts the Scripture, then you consciously choose to obey and follow the Scripture, even though your parents may disagree.

You know that I mean this in relation to matters of faith, as they exist in your heart or your mind. As a younger child or even as a teenager, you may not be able to leave the church that your parents attend, if that church is teaching error. The Bible tells us that before God appeared to

Abram that both he and all his family were idolaters. We find this in Joshua 24: verse 2. It says, "And Joshua said to all the people, 'Thus says the Lord God of Israel: your fathers, including Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor, dwelt on the other side of the River in old times; and they served other gods.'" This is very revealing; is it not? I am not sure that most of us think of godly Abraham as ever having been an idolater, or his father; an idolater. But let us remember that apart from the revelation of God to our souls; so that we can perceive the glory of the Lord; that we cannot be saved or know God.

Abram must have related this revelation to his father and to his brother Nahor. I am assuming that Haran had already died. He explained how the God of glory had revealed Himself to him, and how he was fully convinced and resolved to go. He loved them enough, I believe, to tell them that he was loathe to leave them behind, but that he must obey God, no matter how much he loved them. His father Terah was persuaded evidently, that something tremendous had happened to Abram, and so he determined to take Abram, Sarai, and Lot, Haran's son, to the land that the Lord would "show" him. Nahor evidently could not accept what he heard from Abram as applying to himself or to his immediate family and so stayed in Ur for awhile.

Later in the book of Genesis we find him living in Haran (the city of Nahor) and a worshipper of the true and living God, and Abraham sending to his sons for a wife for Isaac. But the thing that we see here portrayed to our hearts, is love's relation to the call. When God calls unto salvation, it produces a preeminent love for God in the soul. You will love obedience to God more than your love and respect for any man. This Abraham demonstrated. And yet, we see also here his great love for his father and his nephew Lot. He would take as many of the family with him as he could. This is always how it is in salvation.

When you come to know the Lord, and respond to His call to leave false worship and selfish and sinful disobedience; the desire of your heart is – Oh, that you my dear loved ones would come with me. Come out of the liberal Protestant church that does not preach the gospel and does not walk by the Word of God. Come out of the Roman Catholic church that thinks that salvation is by ritual works and sacraments. Come out of the false worship of any religion that does not worship the true and Living God. God Himself shows us the way to Himself by the revelation of His Word. This is what all true believers desire; the salvation of their loved ones. Well, we don't always see a favorable outcome to our desires in relation to our loved ones.

Jesus says, "I came not to bring peace, but a sword, and a man's enemies will be those of his own household." He says, "He who loves father and mother more than Me is not worthy of Me." (Matthew 10: 34-37) Terah went with Abram about half way to Canaan and he came to a place in Mesopotamia which he named Haran and they dwelt there. Now this was not the right thing for Terah to do. He knew that the call to Abraham was to go further than this, to cross the River Euphrates and leave the land of idolatry. He probably reasoned to himself that he had gone some ways out, and that it was enough.

Sometimes this is the way with those who try to be Christians and yet cannot fully obey the command of God. They reason, that if they have given up certain sins and have forsaken some worldly practices, that they will be fine if they remain in others. They substitute a partial obedience for a full obedience. But this is not what God is looking for and it truly endangers our souls, and the souls of others. When you are called to know the Lord, you must count the cost. And what that will mean, is your evaluating whether or not you have left the country of sin and false religion, and whether you will cross the river to a full obedience to the commands of God's Word, the Bible.

God will test whether you are willing. And you cannot let the compromised obedience of close relatives, in this regard, keep you from moving on to full obedience. I have often heard words like this – Oh, I could never leave the Roman Catholic church, or the liberal Protestant church, because my parents are there and this is the way that I was raised. I'll stay and try to worship there, even though I see the falsehood in it. But this is to put your soul and the souls of others around you into jeopardy. They may perish and end up in hell because you were not willing to leave when you knew

that you should. That is why in the book of Revelation 18: 4, when speaking of false Babylon, the false church, it says, "Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues." A true Christian will come out of a false church because he loves his family and the people around him. He will bear their reproach, if necessary, in order to show them the true way.

**2<sup>nd</sup> – We can see faith's relation to this call of Abram.** (Chapter 12: 1, 4, and 5)

It says, "Get out of your country and from your family and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you." This was to be a land that God would show him. He had never seen the place before, he didn't know what the people were like. He had to live by faith, and walk by faith. So does any true Christian when he is called into fellowship with God and with His Son Jesus Christ. And he did not just leave all his possessions in Haran, or all the people who were with him; he took them all and went over there sight unseen. So it is in the Christian life. We too, must live by faith. We must believe that God has something better for us than the old life of sin and the world's ways and attitudes.

We must really move away from the old and move toward what God has promised in the new place. This means that we will love God's people and the spiritual things of obedience to Christ more than our satisfying our own pleasures and walking in our old way of sinful independence. Abraham could have rationalized away his responsibility to go all the way that the Lord showed him, to Canaan. But he did not. It says in verse 5, "Then Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people whom they had acquired in Haran, and they departed to go to the land of Canaan."

To live by faith means that you stake everything that you possess on the truth of the gospel and the preciousness of the grace that Christ died to bring to you. Listen to Hebrews 11: 8-10 – "By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

Let me ask you this morning my friend whether or not you are willing to let God show you your inheritance. Are you willing to wait for God to give you the best things, are you willing to let him make the decisions about what you will inherit? Or do you go your own way and fight against His sovereignty in your life? Abraham certainly did not. He lived by faith. He believed the truth of Psalm 47: 4- "He will choose our inheritance for us, the Excellency of Jacob whom He loves." How can we apply this truth practically to ourselves today? Well, part of the inheritance of the Lord, which the Lord chooses for us, is the songs of worship and the hymns of praise that you will sing on the way to the heavenly Zion. I wonder if you are learning them?

I am very concerned for you my brethren and my friends that you might be falling short of the spiritual and heavenly calling that you have been called to, in relation to your personal and family worship when you are away from this place during the week. I am jealous with a godly jealousy, that you might understand what it is to reverence and worship the only true and living God by the music that you listen to, and the songs that you sing. Can God really be worshiped by means of the contemporary worship of this day?

I would say that it is like living in Haran. It is living in half-way obedience to God, and half-way obedience to the world and its lusts. Many people can pretend all they want to, that contemporary worship is true worship, but I believe that for the most part, it is not worship that is being promoted by the use of rock band instruments, and the beat and melodies that are used. It is fleshly excitement and a man-centered, self-pleasing type of worship that has been made up to satisfy yourself. It can hardly be pleasing to God. The Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs which the Lord has commanded that we use should always have good and developed Biblically sound theology in them.

And they should have a melody which can be read and sung by all. This is why we use the Trinity Hymnal and the Book of Psalms for singing. We believe that it is God-honoring. It is God-

honoring to hold a Psalter or a good hymn book in your hand. There is something spiritually tangible there to give to God in your songs of worship; something also to build you up in your most holy faith; and something that the angels do not have to cringe at, and put their hands over their ears as they listen to you. We should give God the glory due His name, and reverence Him, not only when we are here gathered together in worship, but also when we leave this place and go to our homes.

I have been convicted lately of the large amount of time that I have spent in past years listening to the music of the world. It is not all bad, but it is far from being all good. I would urge you to give God the glory due His name in your worship at home, just as much as you do here on a Sunday. If you have not purchased for yourself a hymn book and a Psalter, and cannot afford to buy your own, I would urge you to take one or both of these precious books home with you and use them during the week instead of listening to, and singing all the worldly music that you hear on worldly radio stations. How is God glorified in that? Well, He is not.

Memorize some of these Psalms and hymns and sing them, making melody in your heart unto God. Teach them to your children and sing them to them before they go to bed; sing to them and with them in family devotions. Make progress in holiness, righteousness, and truth. Search out the godly inheritance that has come down to you from the Puritans and the Reformers and all the godly song writers of the past. But do not fail to worship the Lord by substituting the world's music into the place of the true worship, and deceiving yourself into thinking that this is the kind of music that you will bring with you into glory when you die, or the kind of music that you will sing for all of eternity in the presence of the lamb.

Remember to what, and where, you have been called. You have been called to come out of idolatry. Some people make a god of their music. But you as a Christian are crucified to the world and its lusts. Clothe yourself then with Christ, and purify your heart and mind by filling it with the good music of the hymnal and the Psalter. Make not an idol out of worldly music, but give God the glory due his name. Abraham's call was to leave Ur of the Chaldees; to make a clean break with the world. His call was not to go half way, but all the way to the Promised land. And his call was not to learn the songs of the Canaanites, but to learn the new song which only God could teach Him.

I am not sure just what his singing in worship was like, but I am quite sure that it was not the heathenish songs of the land. Do not let anyone rob you of your eternal and lasting inheritance in this way, but cultivate your daily worship by the use of the Psalter and the hymn book as you are marching to Zion. To do this, to build a new musical repertoire, is to live by faith in relation to the call wherewith you have been called.

**And then 3<sup>rd</sup> – We can see, in this passage, God's faithfulness in relation to the call.**  
(verses 2, 3)

Notice that everything related to our salvation rests upon God's faithfulness to bring it about. Verse 2 – "I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you.; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." Truly, nothing would be impossible for God to do in relation to all these precious promises. He would bring them to pass. But that is how our salvation is as well. We can only see the impossibilities. He will do what is impossible for us.

He would bless Abraham for Christ's sake. He would make him a great nation, a promise given when his wife was barren and he had no children. He would make Abraham's name great, a promise given when he was a wanderer without a country or a home. He would be given heavenly protection at every point of his obedience, when he only saw himself as vulnerable. He would bless all the families of the earth, and yet he could not see how it could possibly be so. Let us understand that our being called to be a Christian is very much the same. God will bless us with all the blessings of salvation for Christ's sake, when He calls us.

Everything will rest upon His Faithfulness. We see our life a jumbled up sinful mess, but God can forgive us, and cleanse us, and help us to leave our sin, and the past, behind, if we will only

humble ourselves to listen to His Word and to obey it by faith. Let me ask you now; will you do this today? For I know that the Lord can bring back your captivity, which you have brought yourself into by your sin and unbelief. And He will if you will trust Him. Then you will say to others, as it says in Psalm 126: 3 - "The Lord has done great things for us, and we are glad." And verse 5 - "Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy." All these blessings come to those who have love in relation to God's call, faith in relation to God's call, and hope in the faithfulness of God in relation to their call. I pray that it so for you.