

An Imperfect Faith

Genesis 12:10-20

“Donald Grey Barnhouse comments on this incident by saying that like a coin that has a head and a tail, every event in life can either draw us to God or draw us away from God. If Abram had stayed in Canaan when the famine came, his faith would have grown. He would have seen the Lord providing. Since he did not stay in Canaan, the same famine that could have been a means of spiritual growth actually took him away from God, led to sin, and eventually brought humiliation. What an important step it would be if we would learn that lesson about life. Instead of complaining, we would trust God. Instead of saying, ‘Why has God let this happen to me? Doesn’t he care? Why has God abandoned me?’ we would say, ‘Here is another opportunity for me to trust God... It is not always easy to do that... He does not want our way to be easy, because if it is easy we will not grow. He arranges the steps of faith in an upward direction so that our spiritual muscles will grow strong and we can eventually scale the heights of great blessings.’” Boice

- I. Genesis 12 introduces us to the beginning of God’s plan of redemption. He chose one man, Abram, to carry the lineage from which Jesus Christ would be born. He is an example of a man of faith chosen by God to fulfill His sovereign will. When you study his life, you see a similar pattern of faith in our lives that mirrors his journey of faith. Abram was called, we are called. God drew Abram near to Him; He drew us near to Him. Abram believed God; we believed God. God saved Abram; He saved us. The Lord opened Abram’s heart to know Him; He opened our hearts to know Him. God started Abram on a pilgrimage of faith, and He has done the same for you and me. God made unilateral unconditional promises to Abram; He made unilateral unconditional promises to us. The encouragement we get from knowing that God’s promises are yes in Christ Jesus, is knowing that God cannot lie. In other words, he does not in any way give us false hope. He is true to us in every way because He is perfect and trustworthy in all He says and does.

Gen. 12:1-3,7

1 Peter 2:9

John 6:44-45

John 14:1

Titus 3:5

1 Jn. 5:20

Phil. 1:6

John 6:40

John 10:28

Hebrews 6:13-20

Joel 3:1-2

Numbers 23:29 *God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?*

- II. Abram provides us with a powerful example of how treacherous our faith journey can be when we choose not to trust God to give us the wisdom we need in solving our problems. Abram faced a trial. It was the first test of faith God brought into his life to teach him the importance of trust. He allowed for him to make a terrible choice in running to Egypt knowing that his compromise and lack of trust could cost him dearly. His choice put his own life in danger, led him to deceive, put his wife Sarai in a potentially adulterous situation, and put Pharaoh and his court in painful circumstances. All the consequences of his lack of trusting God could have been avoided if he had simply put his faith in God to solve his problems. It's a powerful lesson the Lord wants us to take to heart knowing that we too are prone to not trust him, especially in the uncertainty of what the future holds.

Gen. 12:10-16

James 1:5-6

James 1:2-3

1 Peter 4:19

Rom. 5:3-5

Heb. 12:7

Prov 3:11,12

"To rely on Egypt means trusting human resources rather than God. It is something believers must avoid. If they find themselves in Egypt through lack of faith in God's strength or promises, the only solution is to get out as quickly as possible — and not go back." Boice

Phil. 4:12-13 *I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. 13 I can do all this through him who gives me strength.*

- III. *"Fortunately, God does not permit his children to go their own way indefinitely but eventually brings them back to their senses and to him."* When he does, he, through grace and mercy, helps those who have drifted from him to deal with the consequences and rebuild their lives through Him. After Abram's rebuke and deep humiliation, he found himself turning back to God a different man. We must never dwell on our past failures; God doesn't want us to stay there. Instead, the change in character God gives us through them is meant to mature and deepen out trust in Him.

Gen. 12:17-20

"If we wonder why Pharaoh did not punish them but rather sent them off with their new riches, it is because Pharaoh was still suffering the effects of the plagues. He never again wanted to be on the receiving end of the power behind Abram. Significantly, those new riches were no blessing to Abram. The ill-gotten gain caused huge trouble in the following years, first in the strife with Lot's herdsmen, and then through a young Egyptian woman named Hagar, who was likely one of the maidservants given to Abram by Pharaoh." Grant

Lamentations 3:22-23 *Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions (mercies) never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.*