

God Of...Abraham | Week 3 Sermon

Good morning and thank you for being here today. We are honored you decided to join us today. Your presence matters!

If you are new around here or just checking us out, we would love to meet you. Take a moment and stop by our connection area. I think we are giving away new cars today. Im not sure.

Show Flying Baby Photo | A photo named "The Flying Baby" taken in 1991 at Joshua Tree National Park in California, became famous in the American adventurous rock and mountain climbing community after it appeared on the cover of Patagonia magazine. Jordan Leads, the baby in the photo, landed safely in her father Jeff's arms just after being tossed by her mother, Sherry, across a great chasm between two giant boulders. The photo was set up by photographer Greg Epperson, and once published, became instantly infamous by both those who loved and hated the photo. To some, this photo represents the resilience of a strong family able to handle any obstacle. To others, the photo symbolizes more of a reckless attitude toward children, and is anything but 'family.' Regardless of which side you find yourself on after looking at this photo, there is no question that raising children and having a family is difficult in the easiest of circumstances.

In an ancient family, man named Abram, we see a story of his faith and his family while they are walking through some of the most challenging circumstances imaginable, in a foreign land surrounded by enemies.

This is our 3rd week dedicated to the journey of a man now known as Abraham, whose true story and real-life lay claim to being the starting point for 3 different world religions (Judaism, Islam, and Christianity), we see that when he decided to follow his God, everything changed.

We believe that regardless of where you find yourself in your spiritual journey,
Everything changes when God changes you.

Over the last couple of weeks and chapters of Genesis (Genesis 11-14), Abraham (still going by his first name, Abram) has followed God's calling away from his home and towards a promised land, family, and future.

Abraham has this promise from God in one hand. But he looks at the reality of his situation in the other. The reality doesn't yet look like the promise.

TIMEOUT: For those in the room who do not think of themselves as Christians or "someone of faith," and to those who are new to the Church and the Bible, there is something you

need to know. Christians look at the lives of people from the Bible as examples. Sometimes they are an example of what TO DO. But other times they are examples of what NOT TO DO.

Let's get a little raw today...Like Abraham, are you waiting on God to come through on anything in your life? Maybe you have already given up on God a little.

From a road trip to a faith journey, we all find ourselves in these kinds of spots along the way. As we look at this last leg in the story and life of Abraham, we will see how Abraham deals with waiting for all God promised.

Abraham's patience is running on empty. So, the question is, will Abraham be an example to follow or an example of failure?

In every journey, there are rest areas, pit stops. These are not necessarily moments of weakness (joke: although some fathers may see bathroom breaks on a road trip as exactly that).

In every journey, there are rest areas, pit stops. These are not necessarily moments of weakness (joke: although some fathers may see bathroom breaks on a road trip as exactly that).

One of the biggest phenomena in our world is this place called Buccee's.

How many of you are Buccee believers? You love it. How many say its overrated and overpriced?

The Buccee's chain of attractional travel centers are taking America by storm. With their ridiculous number of gas pumps, food, shopping, memorabilia, and all-around experiences, Buc-ee's will blow your mind.

Buc-ee's has made the rest stop, gas station, and bathroom break an oasis everyone looks forward to along their way, and even as a stop that divides up the legs of the longest or shortest of journeys.

While Abraham would never experience and enjoy a Buc-cee's, his journey is broken into 5 different legs that are encouraging rest stops for those of us reading about them today.

Even those of us struggling along on our own faith journeys.

Each leg of Abraham's journey begins in one place and ends in another. But, it is the space in-between that makes all the difference and deserves our focus.

Here is the overarching truth: **Every leg of a life following Jesus is worth enjoying.**

It is the miles and moments in-between the markers of our most important moments of faith that makes the difference.

And this is no more obvious than in the last couple legs down the homestretch of Abraham's life.

Stand with me as we read Gods word together.

Genesis 15.1-7 | After these events, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield; your reward will be very great. ² But Abram said, "Lord GOD, what can you give me, since I am childless and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" ³ Abram continued, "Look, you have given me no offspring, so a slave born in my house will be my heir." ⁴ Now the word of the LORD came to him: "This one will not be your heir; instead, one who comes from your own body will be your heir." ⁵ He took him outside and said, "Look at the sky and count the stars, if you are able to count them." Then he said to him, "Your offspring will be that numerous." ⁶ Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness. ⁷ He also said to him, "I am the LORD who brought you from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess." (CSB)

5 Legs of Abrahams Journey

1. Covenant | Vs. 1

Vs. 1 | After these events, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield; your reward will be very great.

Covenant relationships are found all throughout the Bible. There are personal covenants between two individuals. A covenant is a relationship between two partners who make binding promises to each other and work together to reach a common goal.

God promises Abraham a huge family that will inherit a piece of land in Canaan and bring universal blessing to all humanity. Gods part.

This is a redemptive partnership between God and Abraham that has large implications.

Mans Part - Similar to the Noahic covenant, this covenant is also accompanied by an outward sign, a reminder to Abraham and his ancestors. God commands the men to be circumcised. A symbol that sets Abraham and his family apart and shows that their fertility and future lay in God's hands.

God tells Abraham to leave his land and follow wherever he leads, train his family to do what is right and just, and practice circumcision in every generation. This covenant is both conditional and unconditional. God and Abraham each have a part to play, but ultimately, God will keep his promise to give Abraham a family who will inherit the land and bless the world.

Here in chapter 15, God begins the conversation with, “Don’t be afraid.” I love how He knows what to say before we can even approach. He knows the fears and struggles you are walking through. His covenant starts out with His care.

God knew Abram was afraid. God knew what upset him. But, here is something we need to know.

God doesn’t always answer prayer immediately. He answers prayer immeasurably!

God reminds, re-examines, and renews His promises to Abraham, not because anything has changed, but because He graciously wants to help Abraham in his unbelief.

That’s us, right. Many of us know what God’s covenant is, but we still need reminding of who He is.

God is not only using the time to do something for us, but to do something in us.

Like Abraham, we can take our struggle with waiting on God, to God.

Which leads us to the 2nd leg.

2. Concern | Vs. 2

² But Abram said, “Lord GOD, what can you give me, since I am childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?”

A lot has happened since God first promised great things for Abraham. He’s seen long distances traveled, many battles fought, and daring rescues completed.

However, these past triumphs are not enough for Abraham’s future hopes.

How about you? Do you find yourself forgetting past victories and rescues by God?

Do you struggle with trusting in God’s promises when the road is tough?

Concern left unattended can often turn into fear.

This is exactly what is happening to Abraham. He is becoming afraid that God either is not able or is not going to fulfill His promises. It is not hard to understand why Abraham is feeling this way.

Abraham is concerned about the lack of a child and heir. (Genesis 15:2)

His focus is on keeping what he has and not on experiencing all God has promised.

He is thinking more about who will inherit his wealth than how God will use him to be a blessing to the world.

But soon we see a shift. The next leg for Abraham is one of confidence.

3. Confidence | Vs. 6

Genesis 15.6 | Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.

He took his concern to God...and it turned into confidence. Abram believed the Lord, and He credited it to him as righteousness.

It's a big deal where you take your concerns.

Psalm 55.22 | Cast your burden on the LORD, and he will sustain you; he will never allow the righteous to be shaken.

When we bring our worries to God in prayer, we will never meet a deaf ear or a reluctant glance. We will instead find a father who gladly bends his shoulder to bear our burdens.

George Muller – Preacher who opened a large orphanage in England says, *“The children of God are permitted, not only permitted but invited, not only invited but commanded, to bring all their cares, sorrows, trials, and wants to their heavenly Father. They are to roll all their burdens upon God.”*

Sometimes a single prayer doesn't release the concern. It doesn't bring the immediate confidence. Therefore, we must keep rolling. Roll the big burdens. Roll the small burdens. Keep rolling and eventually it becomes a habit.

This great confidence of Abraham is referred to as righteousness in both the Old and New Testaments. Thousands of years later, the Apostle Paul would write in

Romans 4.1-3 | So how do we fit what we know of Abraham, our first father in the faith, into this new way of looking at things? If Abraham, by what he *did* for God, got God to approve him, he could certainly have taken credit for it. But the story we're given is a God-story, not an Abraham-story. What we read in Scripture is, “Abraham entered into what God was doing for him, and *that* was the turning point. He trusted God to set him right instead of trying to be right on his own.”
(MSG)

Credited to him (Abraham) as righteousness...

Make no mistake, human righteousness begins and ends with God. God alone makes Abraham righteous by His Promise and His Production.

Abraham's obedience led him to confidence.

But then we see another shift. This next leg for Abraham is one of conflict.

4. Conflict

Although there is no exact timeline from the promise of God in Genesis 15 to the conflict, we can assume that it was a good amount of time.

Genesis 16.1-4 | Abram's wife, Sarai, had not borne any children for him, but she owned an Egyptian slave named Hagar. ² Sarai said to Abram, "Since the LORD has prevented me from bearing children, go to my slave; perhaps through her I can build a family." And Abram agreed to what Sarai said. ³ So Abram's wife, Sarai, took Hagar, her Egyptian slave, and gave her to her husband, Abram, as a wife for him. This happened after Abram had lived in the land of Canaan ten years. ⁴ He slept with Hagar, and she became pregnant. When she saw that she was pregnant, her mistress became contemptible to her.

Only this time, Abraham is tired of waiting and makes his own way. Sarah began to despise her mistress.

Obviously, this was a horrible idea. Sarah is jealous immediately. How about you?

In what ways am I not waiting on God and handling things on my own?

This whole journey is now chaos. There is conflict everywhere.

There is conflict between Abraham and Sarah.

There is conflict between Sarah and Hagar.

There is conflict between God and Abraham.

And, ultimately there is conflict between Abraham and himself.

The conflict and mess was a direct result of Abrams decisions.

Like many of us, Abraham is lost between the God he loves and trusts, and the circumstances (mostly of his own doing) that seem overwhelming and impossible.

Thankfully, for Abraham and all of us listening, God is faithful.

The final leg of the journey for Abraham and Sarah is conception.

5. Conception

A year after Abraham and Sarah laughed at the promise of God, they would laugh again.

Genesis 21:1-7 | The LORD came to Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did for Sarah what he had promised. ² Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the appointed time God had told him. ³ Abraham named his son who was born to him—the one Sarah bore to him—Isaac. ⁴ When his son Isaac was eight days old, Abraham circumcised him, as God had commanded him. ⁵ Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. ⁶ Sarah said, “God has made me laugh, and everyone who hears will laugh with me.” ⁷ She also said, “Who would have told Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne a son for him in his old age.”

At the very time God had promised him.

Sarah has conceived.
The promise has been fulfilled.
The family line has an heir.
A new generation has begun.

God has brought me laughter...

See the relief and the resolve in this laughter. God’s promise has always been sure. God has always been trustworthy. But, it is something amazing when someone gets to live through the actual resolution of that promise.

Conclusion:

That’s exactly what we want for you. To experience the hope of God. Along your journey, notice God working. Whatever leg of your journey you are on...dont give up.

Spend some time with Gods promises this week.

Matthew 6:33

Romans 8:28

2 Corinthians 1:20

1 Timothy 4:8

Hebrews 4:16

The greatest of God’s promises are still available to anyone who will respond to His grace and His calling to come and follow Him. God can take someone from any place in life and give them a future they cannot imagine.