



Sermon for Mar 14, 2021, “The Beginning of Blessing Is Obedience”

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 12:1-5 ¹ Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. ² I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” ⁴ So Abram went, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. ⁵ Abram took his wife Sarai and his brother’s son Lot, and all the possessions that they had gathered, and the persons whom they had acquired in Haran; and they set forth to go to the land of Canaan. When they had come to the land of Canaan[.]

Introduction: Is there obedience to God in us?

Genesis is a book about the beginning. It refers to the beginning of the world, the beginning of humankind, and the beginning of Israel. Today's text speaks of Israel's beginnings. God chooses a man who will be the ancestor of Israel to save mankind, and he is Abraham. Abraham, who was called by God, obeyed the word of God and went on in faith.

Let us remember! The door of blessing opens through obedience. If we want richness and abundance in our lives, we just need to obey God's Word. We hope to check the basics of our faith through the story of Abraham in the Bible.

First, let's look at the things God promised Abraham, and how Abraham made the promises God gave us to be fruitful.

Body: The Lord's promise and Abraham's answer

In today's text, we find the amazing promise that the Lord gave to Abraham. But before giving the promise, the Lord tells what he should do. **Let's look at Genesis 12:1. The LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you."**

This verse shows us that in order to walk with the Lord, we must come out of our limits and frame of reference. It also tells us that we must pay a price to obey the Lord's Word. These two things continue to happen in Abraham's life. And the same thing happens in our journey through life.

There are three promises the Lord gave to Abraham. **First, the Lord promises that He will make a great nation through Abraham.** Abraham has no son yet. And later, he gets a son, Isaac. In spite of Abraham's situation, God says he will have countless descendants; as many as the stars in the sky and sand of the sea. This is the way the Lord does things. We should know that the Lord's work does not depend on the circumstances of Abraham.

Second, the Lord promises that He will make Abraham's name great. What we should not misunderstand here is that making Abraham's name great is not revealing his name to the world in order to gain worldly honor. The meaning of these words is that Abraham's name will be used in the Lord's salvation history and will be listed in the genealogy of Jesus.

The third promise of the Lord is that Abraham will be a blessing. The words 'Abraham will be a blessing' means that Abraham has a good relationship with the Lord. Also, it means that Abraham will enjoy the blessings that come from the Lord. Genesis chapter 3 shows us that humans are cast out of heaven



because of Satan's temptation. The Lord wants to restore the relationship with humans, so He uses Abraham as a source of blessings. **So Genesis 12:3 says, "I will bless those who bless you, and him who curses you I will curse; and by you all the families of the earth shall bless themselves"**

This verse means that those who respect and imitate Abraham will receive the same blessings Abraham received. On the contrary, those who despise Abraham are drawn away from the blessings from God that Abraham received. Because Abraham tells us what faith is, what it is to live by faith, and who the Lord is, in the end, Abraham becomes a source of blessings, and the ancestor of faith according to the Lord's promise.

Then, how did Abraham come to the fruit of this promise? Where is the secret that could be the fruit of the promise?

1) Worship

First, Abraham worshiped the Lord well. When Abraham arrived in the land of Canaan, the first thing he did was to worship the Lord. Let's look at Genesis 12:7. **The LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built an altar there to the LORD, who had appeared to him.**

Throughout his life, Abraham was constantly worshiping the Lord. He worshiped when he was grateful to the Lord, and when he repented after sinning. The bible verse in which Abraham worshiped the Lord is as follows.

"From there he went on toward the hills east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. There he built an altar to the LORD and called on the name of the LORD." (Genesis 12:8)

"From the Negev he went from place to place until he came to Bethel, to the place between Bethel and Ai where his tent had been earlier and where he had first built an altar. There Abram called on the name of the LORD." (Genesis 13:3-4)

"So Abram moved his tents and went to live near the great trees of Mamre at Hebron, where he built an altar to the LORD." (Genesis 13:18)

"Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba, and there he called upon the name of the LORD, the Eternal God"(Genesis 21:33)

If we do not meet and have fellowship time with the Lord, what strength and wisdom will we get in the secular world? Being able to have an intimate relationship with the Lord is the privilege of children of God and His chosen people. **So Psalm 32:6 says, "Therefore let everyone who is godly pray to you while you may be found; surely when the mighty waters rise, they will not reach him."** What is the second reason why Abraham can receive fruit from the Lord's promise?

2) Working together

It was from being together with others that Abraham was able to receive the fruit of the Lord's promise. Abraham was not alone from the beginning. **Let's look at Genesis 12:5 today's text. "He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated and the people they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan, and they arrived there."**

Abraham had to lie because of his wife, and battle because of his nephew. However, Abraham became an example of intercession because of his nephew, and through his wife he experienced the more wonderful things of the Lord. Abraham lied to Pharaoh in Egypt that his wife was his sister, and this put him in trouble. However, through the Lord's intervention, he recovered his wife from Pharaoh, and eventually came back from Egypt to Canaan.

Furthermore, in Genesis 17:15-16 we find the Lord's promise to Abraham's wife, Sarah. **"God also said to Abraham, as for Sarai your wife, you are no longer to call her Sarai; her name will be Sarah. I will**



bless her and will surely give you a son by her. I will bless her so that she will be the mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her."

This verse is the Lord's promise to make Sarah the mother of the nations. This means that if Sarah does not become the mother of the nations, Abraham alone cannot become the father of the nations. The Lord's work is not done alone, but is done together with others. Abraham's story in Genesis clearly shows us this. Therefore, we must remain together even though there is a burden that comes with being with someone. However, when we are together we become mature, and when we are together, we can better handle the Lord's work. From working together, we experience the Lord's grace.

3) Rise again

Lastly, Abraham became the fruit of the Lord's promise because he rose up again after he fell down. It is easy to think about Abraham as the ancestor of faith without fault. But throughout his life, we can find his many mistakes. For his own safety, he lied to the pharaoh twice that his wife, Sarah, was his sister. In addition, he listens to his wife Sarah and gets son Ishmael through Sarah's servant Hagar. Because of this, Abraham experiences great conflict and regret. Nevertheless, Abraham rises again. He always worships the Lord, intercedes, and strives to know the will of the Lord. This is not because of Abraham's strong will. It is thanks to the Lord's mercy and grace which intervenes and resolves each of Abraham's crises.

Conclusion: The consequences of Abraham's obedience

Now let's summarize today's sermon. In Genesis chapter 22, Abraham passes the Lord's test which offers his only son Isaac to the Lord. The Lord says to Abraham: **"Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son."**(Genesis 22:12)

This verse is God's acknowledgment of Abraham as the father of faith.

Also, Proverbs 19:20 says, "Listen to advice and accept instruction, and in the end you will be wise." Like Abraham, let us cherish the place of worship, and be with those whom the Lord told us to be with. Also, even if we fall down, let's get up again, and rely on the Lord's mercy and grace. Only then can we believe that our names will shine like the sun in the sky and become examples of faith for our neighbors.

