

BY FAITH ABRAHAM

Sunday Morning: January 20, 2002

Text: Hebrews 11:8 "By faith Abraham, when he was **called to go out** into a place which he should after receive for an **inheritance**, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went."

We are studying in Hebrews chapter eleven. We are studying men and women of faith. Abraham is just one in the list of men and women that are referred to in chapter 12 as a cloud of witnesses. Hebrews 12:1 "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us," These men and women in chapter eleven had weights. They had difficulties. They did slip and yet they are listed as one who pleased God and we can do the same thing even though we might slip from time to time. We are not perfect and we do struggle from time to time, but we can be restored.

Abraham was a man who *was called out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance*. The land that he was called to is known in the Old Testament as the land flowing with milk and honey. The land that he was called to was smaller than what God promised him. God promised Abraham and his seed the land from the River of Egypt, which is the Nile River, to the Euphrates River. All of that land was promised to Abraham Isaac and Jacob. The choice land was from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea. All these things that were written in the Old Testament were written as allegories, parables and types to teach us New Testament truth. Abraham was *called to go out* and he *obeyed*.

FEW CALLED OUT

Matthew 22:14 "For **many are called**, but **few are chosen** [εκ + λεγω, called out]."

This verse is not a salvation verse. Christ died for the sins of the whole world and anyone one can be saved. Here many are called and not all. The calling is unto his kingdom and glory. 1 Thessalonians 2:12 "That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you **unto his kingdom** and glory." There are a few that have been chosen to rule and reign in his coming kingdom and the word *chosen* is a compound Greek word that means *to call out*. Abraham was called out of and away from his people.

ABRAHAM, GET THEE OUT

Acts 7:2-5 "And he said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of glory **appeared** unto our father Abraham, **when he was in Mesopotamia**, before he dwelt in Charran, 3. And said unto him, **Get thee out** of thy country, and **from** thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall show thee. 4. Then **came he out** of the land of the Chaldaeans, and dwelt in Charran: and from thence, when his father was dead, he **removed** him into this land, wherein ye now dwell. 5. And he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not *so much* as to set his foot on: yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when *as yet* he had no child."

One thing I want us to see this morning as we study is that it is import for us to separate ourselves from those who would hinder us. Hinder us from what? Hinder us from pleasing God. Hinder us from doing the will of the Father. Hinder us from living a life that is pleasing to the Lord.

Abraham lived in Mesopotamia when God appeared unto him. Abraham's great, eight times, grandfather was Shem. He was one of the sons of Noah. It is very interesting what Noah said

about his son Shem, "Blessed be the Lord God of Shem." It was the God of Shem that called Abraham and blessed him. Shem was still alive when Abraham was about 150 years old. I would think it would be profitable thing to hang around Shem. Find out how things were on the other side of the flood.

The God of glory told Abraham to get out of thy country. I want you to separate yourself from where you are living. There are things in the land of Mesopotamia that will hinder you from doing things that are pleasing to me. In fact Abraham dwelt in Charran, which is north of where he lived in the Mesopotamia, until his father died and then God removed him into the land of Canaan.

Sometimes doing the will of the Lord is going to hurt. Separation of family is no fun. Back in those days family was very important. In the days of Abraham it was a patriarchal society and what patriarch said was the law. God is telling Abraham to break some very strong traditions. I want you to break away from those who might hinder you.

In verse 2 it says that the God of glory appeared unto Abraham to reveal his will for him. Abraham's salvation took place in the land of his nativity and not in the land of Canaan.

GET AWAY FROM KINDRED

Genesis 12:1-4 "Now the LORD had said unto Abram, **Get thee out** of thy country, and **from thy kindred**, and **from thy father's** house, **unto a land that I will show thee**: 2. And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: 3. And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. 4. So Abram **departed**, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran."

The Lord could have said that I want you to get out of thy country to a land I want to show you. Instead of telling him I want you to move, he told him I want you to make some hard breaks with your family. Not only get out of your country but move away from your kinfolk and your father's house.

For us to have the best that the Lord has for us may require us to separate ourselves from some special people. Our closest friends and family can often hinder us in doing the will of the Father.

Verse four tells us that Abraham departed as the Lord had spoken unto him, but unfortunately Lot went with him. There are those who never get the message and they become the tagalongs. There are time when you can't make others leave you but you must obey the Lord the best that you can and Abraham did that.

KINDRED CAUSE STRIFE

Genesis 13:7-9 "And there was a **strife** between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle: and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land. 8. And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we *be* brethren. 9. *Is* not the whole land before thee? **separate thyself**, I pray thee, **from me**: if *thou wilt take* the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if *thou depart* to the right hand, then I will go to the left."

We see in Genesis 13:7-9 how the Lord let a situation occur that will accomplish what he had in mind in the first place. God wanted Abraham's family away from him so he allowed strife to be gendered between Lot and Abraham. Being around family can often cause problems. This strife between Abraham and Lot was a distraction from doing the will of God. What is it in your life that is distracting you from doing what the Lord would have you to do. In this situation it was Lot

trying to be with his uncle that was allowing strife to develop into confrontation. We see that Abraham had other problems in the land because of the presence of the Canaanite and Perizzite. These were the people that the Lord would eventually drive from the land. Exodus 33:2 "And I will send an angel before thee; and I will drive out the **Canaanite**, the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the **Perizzite**, the Hivite, and the Jebusite:"

In verse 9 Abraham had the boldness to tell Lot to separate himself from me. Experience often gives enough insight into our situation for to make the hard decisions to do the right thing.

SEPARATED

Genesis 13:11 "Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and **they separated themselves the one from the other.**"

Repeating the account of separation is being repeated in verse 11. I believe this is for emphasis to us who will take time to look into the life of a man of faith. God repeats himself so that we will get the message. We are so nearsighted.

PRIEST ARE SEPARATE

Numbers 8:14 "Thus shalt thou **separate** the Levites from among the children of Israel: and the Levites shall be mine."

I remind you that the elect are priest. 1 Peter 2:5 "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." From this passage in Numbers we see that the Levites were to be separated from among the children of Israel because they are mine. When we separate ourselves from others who are we separating our selves to? Unto the Lord is the one that we want to be near.

BROUGHT NEAR

Numbers 16:9 "*Seemeth it but* a small thing unto you, that the God of Israel hath **separated** you from the congregation of Israel, to **bring you near** to himself to do the service of the tabernacle of the LORD, and to stand before the congregation to minister unto them?"

The priest were to be separated from the congregation of Israel so that the Lord could bring them near to himself. I think that it was for the same purpose that the Lord separated Abraham from his family and country so that he could bring him near to himself.

THE LORD SAID

Genesis 13:14-18 "And **the LORD said** unto Abram, **after that Lot was separated from him**, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: **15.** For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. **16.** And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, *then* shall thy seed also be numbered. **17.** Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee. **18.** Then Abram **removed his** tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which *is* in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the LORD."

I want you to notice that the Lord "said" something to Abraham. When was the last time that the Lord talked to Abraham? It was in Genesis 12:7.

THE LORD APPEARED

Genesis 12:7 "And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him."

This was the last time that God talked to Abraham. He had just come into the land of Canaan. Even though Lot was with Abraham, it seems reasonable to conclude that God wanted to confirm to Abraham that he had done the right thing in moving into Canaan.

From Genesis 12:7 to Genesis 13:14 was a period of time when there was no communication between God and Abraham. During this period of time we see Abraham moving out of the land where the Lord wanted him to live and one day possess. He moved into Egypt and lied about his wife and nearly got himself in trouble with the ungodly.

As long as Lot was with Abraham it was hard for the Lord to communicate with Abraham.

After Lot chose the land that he wanted, that was when Lord told Abraham that even though Lot chose the land toward Sodom and Gomorra, that one day the land Lot chose would be his also.

In Genesis 13:18 it tells that Abraham removed his tent and when he did he moved west away from of the evil cities of Sodom and Gomorra and his nephew Lot.

BE YE SEPARATE

2 Corinthians 6:14-18 "Be ye not unequally yoked together with **unbelievers** [απιστος, unfaithful]: for what fellowship hath righteousness with **unrighteousness** [lawlessness]? and what communion hath light with darkness? 15. And what concord [agreement] hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that **believeth** [πιστος, faithful] with an **infidel** [απιστος, unfaithful]? 16. And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 17. Wherefore **come out** from among them, and **be ye separate**, saith the Lord, and **touch not the unclean thing**; and I **will receive** you, 18. And **will be a Father** unto you, and ye shall be my **sons** and **daughters**, saith the Lord Almighty."

This portion of scripture encourages separation if you want a special relationship with God as your heavenly Father. I believe Lot was saved. He had the testimony of being righteous or just in 2 Peter 2:8 "(For that **righteous** man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed *his* righteous soul from day to day with *their* unlawful deeds;)"

This passage in 2 Corinthians 6 is telling us not to be yoked together with saved people who are not faithful. The word *unbelievers* comes from the noun meaning no faith or faithless. Obviously the lost are not going to be pleasing God by living by faith. Abraham was living by faith but there is nothing written to indicate that Lot was living by faith. Lot was faithless.

Being yoked together means that you must walk together. Amos 3:3 "Can two **walk** together, except they be **agreed**?" If one is a man or woman of faith and the other is not, they will not walk together in harmony.

There are times when we must separate ourselves from saved people because they are living in lawlessness. When lawlessness abounds the love of the many that have been called unto His kingdom and glory grows cold.

We do need to be with the lost to share with them the good news of salvation by believing in the Lord Jesus, but there are times when we must separate ourselves from them. Separation is necessary when the lost or the faithless cause us to drift away from pleasing God.

The Lord prayed in John 17:15 "I pray not that thou shouldest take them **out** of the **world**, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil." that God would not take them out of the world but that he would keep them from the evil of the world.

Paul continues with the question "what fellowship hath the righteous with unrighteousness?" The answer to that rhetorical question is a resounding NONE. The word unrighteousness is translated from the Greek word meaning lawless. It is the word *law* with the negative *a* in front of it. Again the question is what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness. A good example is believing the doctrine of Balaam. We are warned not to follow the doctrine of Balaam in

Revelation 2:14 "But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of **Balaam**, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication." Balaam taught that you are the chosen of God and you can let down your guard with respect to those who are lawless. Israel started marrying Moabites, descendents of Lot, and the next thing you see is found in Numbers 25:1-2 "And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. 2. And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods." When this happened God had to judge them.

In verse 15 it is also obvious that there is no agreement between Christ and Belial if he is the Devil. The verse that brings support to the thought that Belial is Satan is Nahum 1:15 ". . . O Judah, keep thy solemn feasts, perform thy vows: for the wicked [Belial] shall no more pass through thee; he is utterly cut off."

Some people may have trouble working through these relational concepts found in verses 14 through 16, so Paul nails down the fact there can be no common ground to have fellowship or be yoked together with them through the illustration of light and darkness. Everyone who can see knows when the light comes on darkness departs. When the light goes out darkness takes over. Do not put the light in your life under a bushel basket or under a bed. When you do that you start allowing the darkness to take over.

Continuing, "What part hath he that believeth with an infidel? The word believeth, again, should be translated *faith*, and the word *infidel* should be translated *faithless*. The key to understanding this phrase I believe is found in the word *part*. This word is not used many times in the New Testament but there is one place that gives us some insight into what Paul is trying to say here in verse 15. The verse is Colossians 1:12 "Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet *to be* partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." The word *part* and the word *partakers* are the same Greek word. The word *part* carries the meaning of portion and has to do with the inheritance. Those who are living by faith will have an inheritance separate from those who are not living by faith. Ishmael was sent away from Isaac because Isaac was going to have a different inheritance than Ishmael. Ishmael was a wild man and his hand would be against his brethren.

Continuing in verse 16 " What agreement hath the temple of God with idols?" Do you know what happened when idols moved into the temple in Ezekiel's day? God moved out. The glory of the Lord departed. The glory of the Lord departed in the same direction that Jesus Christ was led outside the city of Jerusalem. We all have concepts of idols. We think often of little statues sitting on tables or stands in prominent places in homes or places of worship. Idols can also be things that take priority in our lives before God. It may not be a little statue, but it can be many other things.

From the latter part of verse 16 to verse 18 we are given promises. If our temple is clean then God will dwell in our midst and walk with us. He will not be ashamed to be called our God and he will not be ashamed to call us his people. He continues in verse 17 saying that he would receive us. What are the conditions for this to take place? Come out from among the faithless, lawless, the unclean, and those who are in darkness and I will receive you. I will not say unto you "I never knew you." Having God as a father means having a closer relationship with Him. I am reminded of John 14:21 "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." and John 14:23 "Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me,

he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." Those who are obedient and clean will have a special relationship with the Father and that is a promise given in 2 Corinthians 6:18.

We continue in verse 18, "Ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." Becoming sons and daughters is a promotion to a place of prominence in the family. Before we become sons we are known as children. As children we are servants. There will come a day when we will be promoted to a position of a son if we will separate ourselves from the unclean thing.

This week in Israel there was a tragic suicide attack on a bar mitzvah party for a Jewish girl. She was 12 going on 13 and it was her time to be recognized as someone more than just a child. When a boy goes through bar mitzvah he becomes a son.

If you will separate yourself so that you will not become unclean, I will promote you to a position of a son.

OVERCOMER

Revelation 21:7 "He that **overcometh** shall **inherit** all things; and **I will be his God**, and he shall be my **son**."

A son is one who has demonstrated to his father that he is responsible and faithful in pleasing him. A son is one who is an overcomer and will inherit all things. God will not be ashamed to be called his God.

ESTEEM THE PROMISES

2 Corinthians 7:1 "Having [ecw, esteeming] therefore these **promises** (verses 17, 18), dearly beloved, let us **cleanse** ourselves **from** all **filthiness** of the **flesh** and **spirit**, **perfecting holiness** in the fear of God."

The word *having* is an interesting word. It is the word *ecw* and it is a present active participle. As a present participle it can carry the meaning *to esteem* or *to regard*. If we esteem these promises it means that we are going to do what is necessary to enjoy the blessing of these promises. What are we going to do? We are going to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit.

Perfecting holiness is the same thing, in type, as the priest sanctifying themselves to minister in the Temple. The thought about *perfecting holiness* means to carry through to completion what is needed to be separate from that which would defile us. In the Old Testament, if you were not clean where did you live? You lived outside the camp of the children of Israel. You could not come into the camp if you were unclean.

The following verses define the filthiness of the flesh and spirit.

WORKS OF THE FLESH AND SPIRIT

Galatians 5:19-21 "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20. Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, 21. Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told *you* in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

The filthiness of the flesh are evident in this passage. The filthiness of the spirit are mentioned in the sins of *hatred, strife, emulations* or jealousy, and *envy*. Paul warns those that do such things they will not inherit the kingdom of God or the kingdom of heaven. They will not rule and reign in the coming kingdom of our Lord. They will be expelled, in type, from the land flowing with milk

and honey just like Rueben was because he defiled his father's bed with the sin of adultery. Others, like Gad, Moab, Ammon, Esau, Ishmael, and half the tribe of Manasseh were excluded from the land flowing with milk and honey to warn us of what will happen if we live like they did. Those outside the land did not live by faith. They were either guilty of the sins of the flesh and spirit or they were just and lived by sight and not by faith.

ABRAHAM OBEYED

Hebrews 11:8 "By faith **Abraham**, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, **obeyed**; and **he went out**, not knowing whither he went."

Abraham did not know where he was going but he knew the direction. We have been told of our heavenly home and we also know the direction and that is up in the heavenlies. In Abraham's obedience he separated himself from the weights that could have easily beset him. Hebrews 12:1 "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight (family and friends), and the sin (lawlessness) which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,"

May we allow the Lord to help us to do what Abraham did. He obeyed and went out trusting the Lord for his future inheritance.