

Sunday 18th April 2021 10 am

“The life of faith from Abraham the man of faith”

See service sheet online at www.knbc.org

Welcome Tim Middleton to lead

Missionary focus Missionary Sec.

Main reading: Genesis 12:1-7, Hebrews 11:8-19

Sermon: “The life of faith from Abraham the man of faith”

Hymn 645 The God of Abraham praise

Close -----

Listen to today’s sermon by clicking on the link at www.knbc.org.The audio file is [21_04_18.mp3](#).*Welcome and pray*

We used to play a game at Crusaders where someone has to go from one end of the room to the other. There is a direction to take, a route to navigate through and obstacles to avoid, quite a maze. A bit like life really. But they are blind-folded (Hold out blindfold). They cannot see so they have to listen to instructions which are given ... and listen carefully - or else they will end up in trouble. That is how it is to live by faith. x2 we cannot see so we must listen carefully.

Abraham was a man of faith, he could not see – so he had to listen carefully!

We have been looking at and learning from the people Jesus met. There are still more to consider but let’s broaden to those in the OT, they are after all, - I hope you realise this - those Jesus met, and sometimes very obviously so.

Abraham is a good person to start with. The first occurrence of everything in the Bible is important. In Abraham we see in full technicolour the life lived by faith. Abraham is described as the man of faith. He is commended as the man of faith. He is the example for all who are to live a life of faith.

All such men and women are, we are told, his children. **If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed** Ga 3:29. He is **“the father of us all”** Ro 4:16

So let us look at Faith, the man of faith, and how to live the life of faith.

Three lessons: we come by faith - we live by faith - go to heaven by faith. or Saving faith, growing faith, departing faith.

We first meet Abraham towards the end of Genesis 11. Abraham’s family are the seventh generation from Noah’s son Shem. Terah is the father of Abraham, Nahor and Haran. Sarah is Abraham’s wife. This large and wealthy family were all born and lived in Ur of the Chaldees; modern Iraq. Every Christian should study the life of Abraham. How the Lord God called him, how he saved him, how he grew Godliness in Him, and how God proved faithful to him in everything. Abraham lived by faith. *Study Abraham!*

“Leave and go to where I tell you” Firstly we start - in faith

At the beginning of CH 12 God calls Abraham: **“The LORD had said to Abram, “Leave your country, your people and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you.”** Back in 11:31 it says Terah had already taken his son Abram from Ur towards Canaan. Moses is in compiling this account giving due respect convention and to Terah in saying he took him. To clarify we read in Acts 7: **“The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham while he was still in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran. ‘Leave your country and your people,’ God said, ‘and go to the land I will show you.’”** Ac 7:2-3 So the call came to Abraham while still in Ur of the Chaldees.

✚ **Abraham heard the call - and headed the call, - Abraham obeyed.**

■ **What we have here is the green traffic light. It’s the green GO light!**

It is a specific call, Abraham is told to go, leave his land and go.

God put his finger on that man’s life and called him, so he calls you today. Will you hear his call and respond? Many have. Will you if you haven’t already, now leave your old ways, your own ways, and follow Jesus?

To follow Christ you must leave your old life behind. Christ’s call to you is to forsake those days - and those ways – change direction and follow Him.

Abraham obeyed **“So Abram left, as the LORD had told him;”** Ge 12:4

Why couldn’t he stay where he was? It was impossible to stay where he was and be useful to God. Why? Because they were living as idolaters.

Jos 24:2 “Joshua said to all the people, “This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: ‘Long ago your forefathers, including Terah the father of Abraham and Nahor, lived beyond the River and worshipped other gods.”

They worshipped the sun and moon, the gods Astarte, Molech etc. etc. They don’t look much like the idols we have today. No that is not what we have in England now. The names are changed but the idols are still here:

✚ What are the modern idols? Me and my life and my plans? That’s an idol. Is it too the face in the mirror? There’s the ‘fashion’ idol. That stubborn independent spirit – that’s an idol ...What do you *idolise*?

The only way to stop following idols is to leave. You cannot remain in the same place. You must sever the connection with your heart. Looking to an idol instead of the One true God who made you is sin - and you must leave your sin behind. It is difficult for they too have a voice, - a strong voice

- There is more than one voice giving instructions, there are many, x2 they all say “this is the way you should go”, “this way is better.....”

If you wish to honour God – then you must decide to leave your sin behind. It is difficult, so ask Jesus to help you. There must be that turning away for without this nothing else will happen, without turning away from sin you will never enter the kingdom of God. Abraham was told to leave his idols - and he did: **Abram left, as the LORD had told him** Ge 12:4

Because Abraham severed the tie with idols the Lord accepted him. That is what repentance is. Abraham was not perfect so God made him perfect in his sight so he could remain with Him. This was possible for him due to Christ on the cross who bore away Abraham’s sin just as he has done for many people, both beforehand and afterwards. Jesus our **priest having offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God.** Heb 10:12

Abraham’s took God at his word “**Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.**” Ge 15:6 In other words God gave him Godliness, x2 he gave him eternal life. Here is the key to the kingdom. This is the first time that *faith* is spoken of. God’s dealings with Abraham was showing us that salvation is by faith alone. Hab 2:4 “**the righteous will live by faith**” If you simply trust as a child trusts - you will be saved, you will live! **Abram left, as the LORD had told him;** He listened to that voice and obeyed.

It would have been a big deal to heave his home country “*why* are you going Abram?” “*where* are you going Abram?” “I don’t know”. What?

Like Noah building an ark in the middle of dry land. What’s this? And *why* Noah? Are you sure?, where’s the water Noah? I am building this because ^He said so. Both could not see clearly but both listened to the voice.

Do I hear you say “I don’t hear a voice”. You hear many the voices, the voice of the world, the voice of your own mind and will, the voice of others, with Satan’s powerful prompts the voice of conscience is smothered. But conscience is not God’s word. It is here (Bible), some have put it in their minds - most haven’t. Start with this (Bible) read, or hear it preached > obey

By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. Notice his obedience produced action he **obeyed - and went.** I can act because obedience is not about my reasoning - but about his promise and power. I trust him – he knows how he will do it - and I am trusting my life to Him. That is Faith.

God has spoken. That 1st step of obedience is a profound step. Now in Christ God is calling all people **to the obedience that comes from faith.** Ro 1:5.

✚ One step forward in obedience is worth years of study about it.

Obedience to Christ brings me to God. It allows me to see **him who is invisible.** It is a wonderful thing - When Abraham obeyed he heard God say: “**Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward.**” Ge 15:1 Abraham, was weak just as you and I are weak, so he can show us what a life of faith looks like. God said to him “**I am God Almighty; walk before me and be blameless**” Gen 17:1. Faith is another way of having “Christ in me”. Through Him I have power to walk well, to live a life that pleases God.

Now he is to live the life of faith..... It’s a call to trust - and wait.

“**Then the word of the LORD came to him: “...a son coming from your own body will be your heir.”**” Ge 15:4 So again God spoke, and Abraham had to believe and wait. If he did that he would see the fulfilment of this promise.

How good are you at waiting? **This is the yellow light.** It is a wait. Don’t jump the lights, don’t be impatient, don’t be an **amber gambler.** Wait. The time will come. Do you want everything straight away? **There is no amazon prime** in the Christian life. No instant **ready meals.** God has his purposes in causing us to wait. He is at work while we wait. So wait.

To wait on the Lord is a demonstration of faith. He is on the throne, he is in control, he is in charge of all things, he knows best, he knows what is best

for me more than I know. I am so glad the Lord helps me not to follow my foolish ways and mess things up. Thank you Lord for overruling.

So often I want to hurry things along.

Moving to L/R Lode Lane from Longbridge as the PED departments combined. A challenge, I entered a new office and what quickly proved to be a hostile environment. The only remaining desk, and sent to harmonise and introduce improvements to those who did not want them.

This was one of a number of occasions when I didn't want to wait, I wanted to force a move. But the Lord wanted me there.

How often I have wanted to pull the emergency cord. A get me out of here prayer. Wait, my grace is sufficient and if you will only wait you will see.

Tempted to take matters into your own hands?? **"Moses answered the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the LORD will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. The LORD will fight for you; you need only to be still."** Ex 14:13-14

Tempted to take matters into your own hands??

Abraham wobbled in his faith and followed Sarah's suggestion to have a son with her maid Hagar. Why not? It was a common practice.

Abraham had believed that God would give him a son from his own body but by who? If Sarah was childless maybe another? why not? See how the reasoning goes. The family depicted in Genesis conformed to the society of the day.

In an article on the "Marriage among the Early Babylonians and Hebrews," The author K. D. Macmillan refers to the Code of Hammurabi who says there is one legal wife but if she remains childless she can obtain the desired offspring by giving her own maid for that purpose.

The son thus born, Ishmael in this case, is Abraham's legal son and heir even if later a son is born to his wife as happened with Isaac. But **then the LORD said, "I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife will have a son."** Ge 18:10 Abraham trusted, but Sarah laughed.

God has to say No Ge 21:10-12 the elder son will not share in the inheritance. Now Abraham has learned to wait.

✚ God's promises - will be fulfilled - in God's way - in God's time.

Ishmael was born though disbelief. That's man's attempt to make a way. Ishmael is a figure of the law, that is man's attempt to possess the blessing

of God by his own effort. It is Isaac who is the promised one, he is a picture of Christ who God's has given for you & I. Only in Christ will you find God's favour.

Do you believe in God? Yes?? What's important is "do you follow Jesus?"

What about you? Some of you cannot see the way forward clearly, it's too difficult, too complicate, too many uncertainties? and obstacles? fine good.

When you cannot see - then you should be better listeners. Hear God's voice and following it. Listen carefully, then you will not stumble and fall

By faith Abraham, even though he was past age—and Sarah herself was barren—was enabled to become a father because he considered him faithful x2 who had made the promise. Heb 11

We sing **"I am trusting thee Lord Jesus, trusting only thee"** Faith is not being blindfolded and silence. No it's hearing, trusting and waiting on Christ's word.

Test 3 = The life of faith is obedience. He will test your profession!

"Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!"

God is speaking: is Abraham listening? **"Here I am," he replied.**

Then God said, "Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about." Ge 22:1,2

Abraham has the eyes of faith, he is up immediately and gets ready to do it.

This is the red traffic light. It stands for stop. I have to stop. No more of me He has his way. I give way to Him, in everything. Red = Isaac's blood.

How abhorrent this would have sounded **"Abraham, Go and kill your son"**; **Abraham, "Take your son"**, How about my cattle? my lambs? How about a servant or steward in my house? "No the word comes back **"I must have your son"**: **"Well I will bring Ishmael"**, **"No I must have you *only son*; your only son by Sarah."** Ishmael had been cast away and only Isaac is left **"must he go too? Yes, "Take Isaac, him, it must be Isaac. "But, Lord, I love Isaac, he is to me as my own soul. He is the long awaited for and promised son. a loved son. in Hebrew it is most emphatic.**

✚ **What is most precious to you? what do you most cherish? What would be hardest to give up? A family member? Something else, your own life?**

To follow Christ means to be willing to give up everything Jesus said, **"any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple."** Lu 14:33

■ Judy Cook in Thailand has given up parents, marriage, children, home
We don't all cross the world - but every Christian has the same willingness.

How can Abraham do it? 1st He knows God, and 2nd he knows it is God who is speaking. Through this he can overcome all his weak human doubts, and he can filter out all those conflicting voices. He knows Him who speaks.

In a room full of noise you can latch on to one voice My sheep know my voice
For Abraham how hard that long journey would be, and how hard that deliberate killing.

Life is a long hard battle, the biggest battle is with my own will, a will so fixated towards my own preservation and comfort that it needs a mighty blow to subdue it to God's good will.

Some try to see through the blind but is gives a very distorted view which means you will not interpret what you see properly and will lead you into trouble. "how will this be? How can that work?" I cannot see, God forbade murder would he now require me to kill my son? How could God mean that? Isn't this just what the heathens did in their pagan rites? And God hated it, how can he ask me to kill Isaac? How could God mean that?

✚ Abraham didn't try to figure out how God would do it – but trusted that He could.

■ So with a child. A child is low on understanding – but high on trust. He knows Dad can. That is it. That is all he needs to know.

God didn't explain, No, He is looking for obedience. 1st time in the Bible.

■ Mojtaba from Iran was imprisoned in the notorious Evin prison with it's hard regime and high walls and huge metal doors. The Lord had to teach Mojtaba that the only way the many inside would hear the gospel is if a Christian was placed inside. He realized that was God's will for him, he would now sacrifice his all for Jesus. "I never prayed for God to release me from prison," Mojtaba says. "It doesn't matter what situation I'm in, I can work in God's kingdom wherever God places me. It doesn't matter if it is in prison or out of prison. Because persecution will take the gospel to the places where nothing else can do it."

With the same obedience Abraham rises early and gets things ready to sacrifice Isaac. Isaac carries the wood as Jesus carried the wood (cross).

By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had received the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, even though God had said to him, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be

reckoned." Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death." (Heb 11:8-19 NIV)

*Trust and obey, for there's no other way
To be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.*

When we walk with the Lord in the light of His Word,
What a glory He sheds on our way!
While we do His good will, He abides with us still,
And with all who will trust and obey.

He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Ro 8:32

How much do you love God?? He asks me that question so often when I am faced with a difficult choice before me. Jesus is clear **"If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters—yes, even his own life—he cannot be my disciple.** Lu 14:26

I am to honour my mother and father, God says I should. So how much more should I love God. Abraham loved God and left the solution to Him.

Alive now

I am the God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob. Abraham is alive now. His faith was genuine and that means he stood firm through all the storms of life. Physical death was for him and all like him a gateway into true life. Abraham is alive now, and will always be. So is Isaac, so Jacob, so Job so all the true men and women of God in the OT. So also Paul and Stephen and Mark and Luke, also Mary, Dorcas. So too the millions around the world who have lived by faith. When we get to the end the blind fold is off, then we will see him clearly. See the One who lead so faithfully through this life. We will see him as he is.

By faith Abraham was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God." Heb 11:8-10

You here this morning. Will you live that life of faith, trusting Christ for everything, yes everything, and join with Paul: **"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."** Ga 2:20

Abraham is called **"the friend of God"** Jas 2:23 he is **"faithful Abraham"** Ga 3:9. He did not withhold the best he had - but was willing to give it up.

That is the life of faith. Do the same and you will receive a rich welcome into heaven. *May the God of Abraham be praised.*

End