

Roots of Saving Faith Pt. 2

Genesis 12:1-9, CBC, Sunday AM, September 1, 2024

Intro: **What is faith?** Last week, gave synonyms believe, trust, confidence, reliance; taught about girl math—something want to be true, so it is; we ALL are believers, but WHAT/in WHOM do we believe? **What does it mean to have faith in God?** Let me give you example from another century, hymn story; **Elizabeth Payson Prentiss—read compilation article; Do you relate to any of this?** Though perhaps foreign b/c of different circumstances, those desiring to grow in biblical faith will resonate w this; **what does it mean to “trust God”?** **when can you with confidence call yourself a Christian?**—Christians ARE believers/have faith/trust IN GOD; **no faith in God, not Christian, no ability to please Him Heb. 11:6;** **what does GOD say it means for you to trust God?** in day when words mean little, emotions of happiness, fulfillment, fear, anxiety, depression, hurt, and anger determine reality, need solid foundation for faith; **Elizabeth Prentiss is one of many who followed God with saving faith, but her faith/other’s based on faith of those God Himself has given us in His Story, the inspired (God-breathed) Scripture, right at top is Abraham; Gen. 15:6,** repeated in Rom. 4, Gal. 3, Jm. 2; 2 verses after Heb. 11:6 shows absolute necessity for biblical faith, this faith recognized **Heb. 11:8;** in fact, he gets one of largest sections in Heb. 11 describing biblical faith—**How did this example of faith in v. 8 take place?** This is what began last week; gave NOT over-arching definition of faith, but premise from passage concerning roots of faith; **Biblical faith begins with God’s call, is motivated by God’s promise, and responds with obedience and worship because of the worthiness of the One who called.**

I. **The Call of God v. 1**

1 Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go forth 3 froms separating Abram from 3 things that identify person from your country from familiar cities of **Ur/Haran**, places call home/feel settled, **And from your relatives** your people; talking about culture--language, customs, definitions, how you do things—celebrate, settle conflicts, grieve, how create/maintain community—**leave these like you who “get you,”** **And from your father’s house**, closest—those considered PART OF YOU; tightest relationships as God intended—Leave/separate from all these; but this not whole message;

II. **The Promises of God vv. 2-3**

Go forth . . . **To the land which I will show you;** forward gaze of call, NOT backward; there is another place than the one where you are settled; the ones that have been good to you; the ones that are familiar—THAT is place I will show you; number of ways to break down what follows; that first of 7 “I wills,” 5-fold blessing; **2 And I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and so you shall be a blessing; 3 And 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 will be blessed.”** Not only would others see/desire to be blessed like Abraham, he would be channel of blessing for whole world “No one would find divine blessing apart from the blessings given through Abram and his seed.” Ross, p. 264—this coming after Gen. 1-11’s 2000+ years where man rebelled against God’s word, **most recent interaction was God’s judgment dispersing nations who sought to make a name for themselves apart from God; now, God speaks showing intent to shower His favor on one man and his descendants; why Abram?** While not many faithful to God, were some (Melchizedek, perhaps Shem, Job); **1. A period of decline in those who fear God does not negate those who DO fear God.** but NOT b/c Abram so faithful to God; looked at Scripture showing pagan history and lingering hold on family/descendants; **God acted based on His own gracious, sovereign choice—no other reason 2. Nothing Abraham did was enough to deserve the blessing God offered him. Nothing he lacked kept him from God’s blessing being offered to him.** biblical pattern of God’s choosing showing mercy to undeserving AND His freedom to be gracious; Baldwin, if God had not called, would have continued as pagan, prosperous man; instead, **Matthews “Divine oath is like an avalanche of blessing cascading in wave after wave on the patriarch and his children yet to come.”** p. 105 only now, w command followed by blessing do we come to . . .

III. **The Response of Man vv. 4-5**

A. **Contemplate**

What questions went through Abram’s head? Where focus? Stuck on leave/separate OR promises? Where would you focus? So many possibilities/uncertainties postulated last week, but not ours to know; response of faith given simply;

B. **Commitment vv. 4-5**

God spoke, v. 1 Go/Leave halak, **4 So Abram halak went forth;** as w creation, so now w creation of new step in God’s plan of redemption, God spoke, Abram DID **as the LORD had spoken to him;**

1. **Shown through active obedience**

just did it! think this easy? Not standard faith as trusting your weight to chair example; not your mere disagreeing when people throw out God’s moral standards, not your mere showing up to church as your big sign of sacrifice for God’s kingdom or putting Bible on desk so others know you might read it; when we say one of TOP in biblical examples of faith in way that affects us all today, **Ross calls it life-changing act of faith** p. 259-260;

a. Forsaking all else

end of v. 4 **Now Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.** Don't care that lived to 175; our 40 living to 90; think how many opinions set, habits, reputation by 40—now, lives 35 years more—think how set (we can predict where you sit, park, who will leave things in pew, be first/last to leave—I can guess who more likely to think on words of song, Scripture, who most likely to notice people/things here at church—then move toward how spend time, react—**we are more predictable than realize**—**He RIPS apart and goes**; exchanges city life/ancestral home for desert; conversion of pagan who exchanged pagans of hometown for pagan Canaanites b/c of God of Creation; place of recognition and acceptance, friends, acquaintances, relatives—left settled life to be known as wandering Aramean Deut. 26:5; first 75 years? know NOTHING except couple lines end of ch. 11, don't know precisely what made Terah leave Ur for Haran; don't know why stayed until father died; Kidner notes that account does not take Abram as lingerer like Lot in Sodom 19:16; "it is reasonable to think that he was biding God's time until the family ties could be honourably loosened. To wait on without surrendering the vision can be an exacting task." P. 114 he continues, Abram's early history was gradual disentanglement from country, kindred, and father's house—not completed until end of chapter 13; while these questions not answered, must focus on what DO have—Waltke says, focus on God's call to Abraham to be his means of blessing and Abraham's obedient step of faith which changes course of history; **God prepares, then someone comes on scene**; **JD Vance, Tim Walz** then want to know everything about past; **how did father train Abram?** Same dad as Sarai—how close were they? what fears/experiences work through? Personality? important, **but when God's story moves forward, see ones He's prepared for part**; **Are you actively submitting to His preparation?** How is character developing? (what are goals, values, morals—means/boundaries to getting to goals—who do you listen to? Authorities/influences God provided or authorities desire/seek/perhaps fantasy ones in your head allowing you to think you are submissive? **Not know if truly submitting until includes someone crossing goals, priorities, sense of appropriateness**; following what you already value); need faith to follow, yield, change—**not talking about small amount of faith needed for authorities/influences/structures in your world—faith in God**; Remember Philips reminder of classic components of faith? Took **kn**owledge of God's call, **bel**ieved words were true, and **com**mitted by acting on that belief Phillips, pp. 486-487—need to check basis from which act/live—build/maintain good foundation for looking to God; **see it in here, some of you woke, waking up at different times/ ways/speed**—KNOW--what He has given us NOT what want/think need; BELIEVE to be true; ACT--Train, prepare, obey what know b/c time short—God preparing you to forsake all for His purposes

b. Affecting others

and Lot went with him. 5 **Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his nephew, and all their possessions which they had accumulated, and the persons which they had acquired in Haran,** --never dream/do alone (some more alone than others) but affects others—who should come/not? Lot? Haran's son—died in Ur; Milcah's brother—she marries Nahor, stays in Haran (24:10 calls city of Nahor)—22:20-23 say 8 children starting w Uz & Buz and ending w Bethuel—father to Rebekah who will marry Isaac; was it hard? For Sarai/Lot? —13:2 amazing how can have little cash on hand, but tons of STUFF! **and the persons which they had acquired in Haran,** slaves? Not likely, but not sure—from war, from situation in life—workers that found place in household; Ross, word not likely used for that; Bush word bears sense of acquisition—ie. Man makes money, acquires wealth—speaks of enlarging household establishment—gathering around him a train of domestics and followers disposed to cast their lot w him for different motives; Cassuto argues this expression probably refers to proselytes Ross, p. 265—if correct, already in Haran, Abram sharing faith in Lord—they bought in & went with—by 14:14, 318 trained men born into his house (disciple, part of family/team) under Lord—**imagine all organization, trust as caravan set out; and they set out for the land of Canaan; thus they came to the land of Canaan.** **and what he just did is a living example of biblical faith; Heb. 11:8 Abraham believed God—do you believe that HE believed God and acted on it? Observe—watch, listen—see faith in action** Baldwin--crossed Euphrates and made way south—**desert** road via Tadmor shorter but more demanding than main route through Aleppo and Qatna—both took in Damascus and Hazor—**well**-defined road in direction of Egypt, covered some 400 miles to Jordan valley, goal—welcome to canaan—NOW WHAT? Continue what been given until next instruction—(discontent, restlessness—**if you are EVER supposed to go there, serve there, must first learn how to serve HERE**); as passage continues inside Canaan, note that Abram's faith also . . .

2. Shown through active worship vv. 6-9

6 **Abram passed through the land as far as the site of Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. Now the Canaanite was then in the land.** **Baldwin**—twisting valleys led to pass b/n Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim which commands route to Mediterranean and north-west, and southwards to Hebron and Beersheba; this is where Shechem lies (eventually part of Ephraim); **hill**-country of N central Palestine—about 41 miles north of Jerusalem; Shechem means shoulder—shoulder of Mt. Gerizim dominates western horizon

of city—copious spring nearby ensured the importance of spot through ages—unwalled village of considerable size, dominated by oak or terebinth (turpentine tree) for which it was famous, Baldwin oak of Moreh (grove); oak—teacher or diviner’s oak—must have been holy tree—place of old Canaanite sanctuary (perhaps Judges 9:37—diviner’s oak); obeying God leads to place of pagans, perhaps reason for **Now the Canaanite was then in the land.** Perhaps that’s why stayed in hill country away from them; Ross, they are antagonists throughout book of Genesis; land inhabited by others; throw out idea of just go and look around and promise of God happens—wonder if wondered?

a. In response to God’s affirmation of His word v. 7

right in place of their worship, right in midst of others who did not fear God, **7 The LORD appeared to Abram** what? How? perhaps theophany; 2 more times 17:1, 18:1—dream, vision, physical appearance? Bush remarks SOME mark of divine, God’s business how to convey His will to His own creation; should create admiration and praise rather than merely curious research—just amazed that God would speak to secret chambers of our soul and by unknown channels to infuse strength, confidence, peace, and joy to hearts of his servants who are called to make sacrifices and encounter dangers for His sake p. 200; and said, **“To your descendants I will give this land.”** repeated promise—not just show, but give to descendants; Faith tested—DID hear from God, promise confirmed, **while this made it Abraham’s, would have to wait for God’s timing; How do you know he believed--didn’t have to have it all now in order for it to be true?** Act of worship, **So he built an altar there to the LORD who had appeared to him.** What is he doing? Doesn’t own land, stranger—builds altar in place of other gods; Had he done this before? What would other’s think? Don’t know--**Ssh, watch him worship—calling us to worship with him—**God, the One who sent him here is good; whether you believe or not, he does—asks for reverence, respect—**why? will have to look for clues as go through narrative;** DO KNOW that as obeyed, as God confirmed promises, faith growing; Bush v.1 **“A heart-affecting view of the divine glory has always a powerful loosening influence upon the ties which bind the heart to the world and to sin.”** P. 194. instead of impatience, seeing problems, see God’s Word & able to look ahead, frees to worship **Waltke** altar—expression of gratitude and consecration of Promised Land to God—in pagan religions, land and deity are inseparable—Abraham acknowledges God to be Lord of this land—**Lev. 25:23;** Bush--difference b/n God’s people and those outside? Those outside stop and build city wherever find fruitful plain to perpetuate their fame (Babel), God’s people build an altar to God to spread His name p. 201

b. In response to God’s continued presence and provision vv. 8-9

8 Then he proceeded from there to the mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; Bethel—house of God, Gen. 28:19 says formerly called Luz; 10 miles north of Jerusalem; perhaps no town exactly here—stayed away from towns & pitched tent here, then **and there he built an altar to the LORD and called upon the name of the LORD.** does it again—ssh, watch him worship; HE sees something praiseworthy and One worthy of worship & calling us to reverently join him in worship—why? will have to look for clues as go through narrative; start seeing pattern; **Bush** —“Wherever he had a tent, God had an altar, and an altar sanctified by prayer.” Matthew Henry in Bush this in face of proud, fierce, vindictive Canaanite people who might not appreciate devotion to God; would rather put life in peril than deny his God or forsake his service Bush, p. 202; called upon name of Lord **Gen. 4:26,** **“As the two parts of an hourglass are joined by a slender neck, the role of this one man connects the universal setting of chaps. 1-11 and the worldwide vista of the promissory call.”** P. 105 public proclamation of faith—Luther translated it “preached”, **Ross** God promised to make Abram’s name great/make him famous—Abram responded by proclaiming the name of the Lord, making Lord famous in Canaan—contrast 11:4 making a name for themselves; as he obeyed, confidence grew--**Faith is knowledge** passing into conviction, and it is conviction passing into confidence. John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, p. 111 Grace Quotes revisits same place in **13:3,** does same thing! **9 Abram journeyed on, continuing toward the Negev.** Rolling hills that end abruptly in desert region (Zondervan Pictorial Dictionary); **Kidner** now dry area south-west of Dead Sea—key part of strategic strip of land binding Asia and Africa together—Negev well peopled in age of Abraham; dry in summer, but rest of months, pasture land; know little about cities mentioned from text except what has to do w faith in the promise and response of worship all these places mean little now—empty except for obedience of Abram where left missionary witness behind him of name of God; by faith, claimed land for God/for descendants; **Heb. 11:9-10** **these places are pregnant in the future for Israel,** places of future life among people of God; Shechem is where Jacob later returns from Padam-Aram, settles in Shechem and purchased land from sons of Hamor Gen. 33:18-19, Josh. 24:32; Gen. 33-34, name of city and also prince of city; this where the Dinah incident occurred Gen. 34; Joseph’s brothers herding flocks here when Joseph sent to check on them; place of decision **Deut. 11:29-30** Joshua selected it as one of cities of refuge Josh. 20:7; Joshua gave farewell address Josh. 24:1, made covenant w people 24:25 at these oaks, told them to put away foreign gods; Joseph buried her Josh. 24:32; Abimelech son of Gideon killed other sons of Gideon and made self king of Shechem Judges 9:6; Rehoboam went to

Shechem to be made king by all Israel I Ki 23:1; Jacob said to put away foreign gods 35:2, 4, not same place??? May have been site of Jacob's well—if so, John 4 women at well in Sychar; Bethel--appearance of Lord to Jacob at Bethel 28:19, etc. **second only to Jerusalem in significance, Matthews;** Negeb, Hagar encountered angel here; Isaac/Jacob lived, David/Ziklag, etc. here; wilderness generation lived in this area during period of punishment Num. 13:17, 22, 29, 21:1, 33:40, Deut. 1:7

This brings us to remembering lessons learning about biblical faith & add some more--1. Biblical Faith Costs because it must Endure to go as the Lord had spoken, he had to pay; leave and wander among unbelievers & represent

God 2. **Biblical Faith Obeys in the face of unanswered questions because of the greatness of the One giving the commands.** 3. **Biblical Faith Looks Ahead for reward.** Focus not on what given up, what done, but on what

promised and One who promises; cost is irrelevant when the One calling is great. understanding grace is dependent on your understanding of centrality of God and His holiness, but also in remembering that 4. **Biblical Faith is Personal**—

today, v. 7 Lord appeared; for us today? God CAN appear, but this does NOT mean God WILL appear; Heb. 1:1-3; Ross notes, NT believer finds confirmation in sure Word of God (Bible) and Lord in flesh once and for all—Jesus

Christ. resurrection of Christ confirms promises God made to us Rom. 1:2-4 **Faith is the way in which I can look away from myself – both from my sin and my progress in sanctification – and look to Christ as my only hope.** Robert Godfrey, *Tabletalk*,

April 2004, p. 18 *GraceQuotes*—my peace I give you NOT as WORLD GIVES—means, another kind, another definition but REAL

quietness of soul/contentment; Jn. 16:32 in ME may have peace—told you these things that my joy may be in you, your joy filled; Rom. 8:1 no condemnation for those IN Christ Jesus; Col. 3:1-2 died, life hid, Christ who is our life—b/c lives personally, then pass on—(not

merely check w “better half”, family, boss, etc.) but let me introduce you to One great enough to call shots in life;

blessed to BE a BLESSING—in you all families of world blessed—I Pet. 2 proclaim excellencies of Him who called out of darkness

this is final lesson 5. **Biblical Faith Includes Worship** Worship is a way of gladly reflecting back to God the radiance of his worth.

This cannot be done by mere acts of duty. It can be done only when spontaneous affections arise in the heart. John Piper, *Desiring God*, p. 83 *Grace Quotes*

It IS a duty, but it is a duty that is willingly and joyfully given b/c of who God is! Heb. 13:15

Conclusion: What do we have so far as look at roots of faith? **Biblical faith begins with God's call 2 commands go & be a blessing, is motivated by God's promise, 5-fold and responds with obedience and worship because of the**

worthiness of the One who called. WHY did he just obey? WHAT was driving it – facts that led to belief in God in way that overflowed w regular private/public worship; watch as narrative unfolds to learn of Abram's God, because our

example of faith did not just follow blindly (be careful, blindly does NOT mean that you get all your answers, it means that what you've been given is sufficient to follow; remember Scripture reading? Why did Jesus question disciples lack

of faith? *Where is your faith?* D A Carson puts it into context: “The parable of the sower looks for hearers of the word who persevere and produce a crop (8:10-11, 15). The next lines tell the reader, ‘Therefore consider carefully how you listen (8:18). So now our text [of the calming of the storm]: genuine disciples display their faith when they so broadly recognize who Jesus is that they trust him in all

circumstances.” *For the Love of God Vol. 2 November 24 Gal. 3:7*; ARE YOU a CHILD of ABRAHAM? Trust God? if don't, look to Him, seek

Him—come to know not what you are looking for, but what He has revealed and what His call includes—believe it and commit—the worship we heard today will result when see grace of God to you in giving way back to Him—THAT IS

BLESSING—not your health, family, material blessings—but a way back to Him—the One whom we love, rejoicing in His promises as we wait their final fulfillment at His return

Genesis 4:26 To Seth, to him also a son was born; and he called his name Enosh. Then men began to call upon the name of the LORD.

Genesis 15:6 Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.

Leviticus 25:23 ‘The land, moreover, shall not be sold permanently, for the land is Mine; for you are but aliens and sojourners with Me.

Deuteronomy 11:29–30 “It shall come about, when the LORD your God brings you into the land where you are entering to possess it, that you shall place the blessing on Mount Gerizim and the curse on Mount Ebal. 30 “Are they not across the Jordan, west of the way toward the sunset, in the land of the Canaanites who live in the Arabah, opposite Gilgal, beside the oaks of Moreh?

Romans 1:2–4 which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures, 3 concerning His Son, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh, 4 who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord,

Galatians 3:7 Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham.

Hebrews 1:1–3 God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, 2 in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. 3 And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

Hebrews 11:8 By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going.

Hebrews 11:9–10 By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise; 10 for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

Hebrews 13:15 Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name.