

APPLICATION

Think about your earthly family. What does it mean to be a part of God's family? What does it mean to be adopted as a son or daughter? What step do you need to take in accepting your adoption as a son or daughter of God?

Read Genesis 12:1-17

- What stood out to you the most in this week's sermon?
- What promises does God give to Abram? (vs.2,3,7)
- At what age does Abram set out to follow God's call? (vs.4)
- What has God told you to do? How do you know? How has God confirmed that call to you through others and repetition?
- What do you think Abram felt as he was leaving home? What do you think he felt when God appeared to him and spoke to him? When have you felt these things in your own life?
- Notice that Abram calls on the Lord (vs.8) *and then* set out. What are you asking God for? What do you need to set out for?
- What keywords and statements do you see in this text?
- What major lessons can be learned from this story?

Inductive Bible Study

Look in the back of your Bibles at the map. Follow Abram's journey from Ur (Mesopotamia) to Haran, to Shechem (Canaan), to the hills east of Bethel, then to the Negev, and finally to Egypt.

Underline vs. 1 "Leave your country and people...."

Underline vs. 2 "I will bless you..."

Underline vs. 7 "To your offspring, I will give this land..."

For Parents: God calls Abraham and gives him a great promise and that promise *is to give him a name*. What namesake do you have for your family? What mantra can you establish for your family? Create one for your family and rehearse it as often as you can. Examples:
The Jones _____. [are honest, love deeply, are never late, etc.]
The Smiths are people who _____. [are kind, always forgive, never give up, fight for each other, do our best, are always thankful.]
As Meyers, we _____. [help each other, try our hardest, trust one another, make the world a better place, try new things, etc.]



The Call of Abraham • Session 11

We have made it to the last session and what a journey it has been! These early chapters of Genesis have had so much packed into them that it feels as though we have only scratched the surface. We hope this has all been an opening to a far greater journey God is inviting you on: a journey of diving deeper and discovering the wonders, truth, and blessing God has for you. How ironic it is that as we wrap up this small journey into the gospel beginnings of Genesis, we do so with the story of Abraham and the very beginning of his great journey. In other words, we are leaving the primeval stories of creation and cursings to enter the *patriarchal* stories of covenant. We shift over at chapter twelve to a whole new set of stories.

It is here that God's redemptive movement toward humanity gets a huge unpacking. It is here that God's mission to redeem humanity from sin and death and destruction finds its peculiar attribute—that of salvation through a particular man and family. God's cosmic mission is now tied into a one-to-one relationship with a chosen man and that relationship is established based on faith!

This glorious calling of Abraham is both hard to fathom, yet oh-so-wonderful. God is going to bless the world through a human! God is going to see the masses through a man. God is going to engage lost humanity through a member of humanity itself. This stunning new approach shows us the otherworldliness of our God. It also shows us his absolute power to use the very thing that needs fixing as a means of blessing. But it also shows how vitally important relationships are to God and how pivotal salvation hinges on them.

BIG IDEA: Salvation in the Christian faith is quintessentially all about belonging to a blessed family. It is all about God working through a family of humans who are set apart for his purposes, to be a blessing to the nations. That family is both earthly and heavenly!

At the end of the tower of Babel story, we are left without hope. In fact, these first eleven chapters of Genesis have stressed again and again that there is no hope for sinful human beings outside the mercy of God. Now the story of Abraham begins! His story doesn't end with a cursing. It begins with a blessing! God speaks to Him in a shocking and wonderous way. Not unlike the message given to the shepherds on the night Christ was born (Luke 2:8-20). *Hint: Advent is coming up! These blessings seem to counterbalance the curses we have seen in 1:17-19, 4:11-12, and 9:25. The ground was cursed. Abram is promised a land. Cain was cursed as a wanderer. Abram is promised a home for his decedents. The builders of Babel sought to make a name for themselves. God promises to give Abram a name (Genesis 12:2)!

I. God Speaks

Our God is a God who speaks. We saw him speak creation into existence; speak commands to Adam and Eve; council to Cain; specific instruction to Noah; and now a great calling to Abram! Leave your homeland. "The glory of God appeared to Abraham while he was still in Mesopotamia. God said, "Leave your country and your people, and go to the land I will show you" (Acts 7:3). "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" (Hebrews 11:8). What a calling! This one man was chosen to start something totally new! God promises this journey will be blessed. We see here that God is the prime mover. He calls and we are to respond.

II. Abraham Becomes the Father of the Faith

So, Abraham left home. He left all his prominence. He left what he knows. He left his security and significance all behind. He trusts God. The reason this is a good thing is that he will be a blessing to others. God is asking each of us to become more than we currently are for the sake of others. It is not always comfortable. Abram certainly wasn't. His journey wasn't without hardships and trials, but he trusted that the

best place to be was in the center of God's will. "He did not waver in unbelief regarding the promise of God but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had the power to do what he promised" (Romans 4:20). "Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness... so then he is the father of all who believe... He is the father of us all. As it is written 'I have made you a father of many nations'. Those who believe are his children and are blessed along with Abram, the man of faith" (Romans 4:3,11,17, Galatians 3:6-9, and Romans 9:6-8).

III. God Chooses a Family

From this simple, yet significant act of obedience, the whole world receives a great lesson and blessing. In Christianity, we aren't playthings to the gods. We also aren't equal to God. *We are his beloved family*. We aren't greater than or less than anyone else. Christianity teaches that we are either slaves to sin or heirs in God's family. That is what the story of Abram is all about, becoming a part of God's family through faith. This chapter transitions us into thinking about ourselves as a family. We shift from the primeval context of other creation myths and subverting other cultures to a real historical narrative of God's unfolding relationship with specific people.

God picks and chooses his family. He chose Abram and from him the Israelite people as his special people. But there is also a promise to all others. A promise that we, who are not Jews, can become part of his family too! As it says in Hosea, "I will call them 'my people' who are not my people" (Romans 9:25, Hosea 2:23). God specially chose Abram, but he also invites us all to be his people and heirs in his family! All he asks of us is to believe; to trust him. In this, we are redeemed from our sins and given a new name! We, who are not Jewish, are grafted into this family by adoption through repentance and faith. This grafting in of the Gentiles into the family line of faith is a great and wonderous mystery (Romans 11:17). Praise be to God!

"He redeemed us, in order that the blessing given to Abram might come to the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit." You become a son, adopted into his family through that Spirit. For the Spirit was poured out in our hearts and it cries out Abba 'father' (Galatians 3:14 and 4:6-7).