

DEVOTIONAL MESSAGE

Hearing God's voice (Part 1)... by Gareth

READ HEBREWS 11: 8-10; GENESIS 12: 1-9

- The first really great character of whom we read in the Bible is Abraham. In Hebrews Eleven, one verse only is given to the biographies of Abel, Enoch and Noah, but to Abraham twelve verses are given. Jews, Christians and Muslims profoundly reverence Abraham, and the Bible is full of references to this great servant of the Lord. It is important to emphasise the fact that Abraham really did live, for some have tried to tell us that we cannot rely upon the historical accuracy of the book of Genesis. The devil will always try in ever so subtle means to question and even disregard scripture.
- One day, Abraham, who lived in the city of Ur, heard God speaking to him – Genesis 12:1; and immediately He had finished speaking to him, Abraham obeyed God – as we learn from Genesis 12:4; Hebrews 11:8-10. Abraham knew quite definitely that God had spoken to him, – ‘even though he did not know where he was going.’ This was the obedience of faith.
- Let us notice five aspects of the obedience of faith as illustrated in this particular period of Abraham’s life.
- Abraham's obedience was prompt.
- This is clearly brought out by a comparison of Genesis 12:1 and 4; Hebrews 11:8. How God spoke we do not know, but that He did speak we are quite sure, and directly Abraham heard His command, in faith he obeyed. His obedience was prompt. When God speaks to us it is sometimes very difficult to explain the ‘how’ of it. That He has spoken we are sure, and all that we have to do is promptly obey His voice. For three New Testament illustrations of the obedience of faith and prompt response to hearing God’s voice let’s look at - Acts 8:26-30; (Philip) 9:10-17; (Ananias) 10:9-33. (Peter). Is God speaking to you today? – 1 Samuel 15:22 and John 2:5
- Abraham's obedience was practical.
- We are told in Genesis 12:4 that when God spoke to him, ‘Abraham left as the Lord had told him.’ Abraham’s faith was active – read Hebrews 11:8-10 again!
- Faith obeys God by launching out upon His promises and by doing what he asks of us without question. In James 2:17, 20. "Faith without works is dead"
- Abraham's faith had works there was an action, a stepping out. What an upheaval this meant in his life. He had to pack up of all his goods, saying goodbye to all his friends and moving out to do God's will! Has God spoken to you? If so, some very practical action must demonstrate your faith in Him; you must obey Him.
- Abraham's obedience was progressive.
- When Abraham left Ur, this was only the first step of faith. But one step of faith will always lead on to another, and another.

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Week 26

- *Psalm 37:23: "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delights in his way."*
- Turn to *Genesis 12*, and notice the progressiveness of Abraham's faith in this first stage of his experience:
 - Verse 4 – 'Abraham left;
 - Verse 5 – 'Abraham set out;
 - Verse 6 – 'Abraham travelled through;
 - Verse 8 – 'Abraham went on;
 - Verse 9 – 'Abraham set out and continued;
- God's desire is that the principle of faith should operate throughout every part of our lives. He wants us to trust Him, not only for spiritual needs but also for temporal needs – *Matthew 7:11*; "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened" Also *Luke 11:13*.
- ***Abraham's obedience was peculiar.***
- By all human standards, it was a very strange thing that Abraham did – suddenly to pick up all his belongings, gather his family together, leave his home, his wider family circle and friends, and go off to an unknown destination. The non-Christian says, 'Why has that fellow given up his job?' 'Why has that girl, who has just become a Christian, given up her unconverted fiancé? Why is that fellow going to waste his life as a missionary?.....I call it foolish!' But is it foolish? No, not if God has spoken and if faith is obeying. It may be peculiar in the eyes of the world, but it is very pleasing in the eyes of God – *Matthew 5:10-12*, and compare *Exodus 19:5*. "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people"
- ***Abraham's obedience was productive.***
- By simply hearing God's voice and doing His will, Abraham produced something for the glory of God and for the blessing of millions – *Genesis 12:2* and *22:18*. Here we learn that God wonderfully multiplies our simple acts of faith and obedience. Turn to *Genesis 26:2-5*, where God is explaining this to Isaac.
- Let us pray that we may have grace to hear God's voice and always to do His will, promptly and in a practical way; and that we may not mind if others think our actions are peculiar. Let us also believe that God will make our obedience productive, to His glory and to the blessing of many.
As we come to break bread in a few moments this morning let us reflect upon the obedience of Christ - *Philippians 2:5-11*
- Because of Christ's obedience even unto death and subsequent resurrection 3 days later. Many are blessed. If you're one of the blessed today come and partake of these emblems today.