

Abraham, Father of our Faith?

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Introduction: Many churches today are forsaking the gospel.

- A. As a new Christian I often wondered how such a thing could happen in the days of the Apostles. **(Gal 1:6-7)**
 - 1. The perversion came in the focus of their faith. They mixed the two covenants that in that very act caused them to seek justification by the Law. **(Gal 5:1-4)**
 - 2. It is important to understand how to build a living faith! **(Gal 2:16, 19)**
- B. When we look to build a living faith our God has pointed to Abraham as an example of how to build such a saving faith. **(Rom 4:11-13, 16)**
 - 1. This is not just any kind of faith!
 - 2. Abraham will show us both the kind of faith we need and how to build such a faith! Do not build your faith with junk.

I. Abraham had a Faith that Separated Him from the World

- A. Abraham had to leave his family religion, idolatry. **(Josh 24:2-3)**
 - 1. God called Abraham from this kind of background. **(Gen 12:1, 4)**
 - 2. Was God being too hard on Abraham by making him make such a difficult choice so early in his faith?
 - 3. Could Abraham have kept his personal belief in God and remained in fellowship with the religion he was raised in? **(1 Cor 10:18-20)**
- B. The beginning of the faith of Abraham is like the beginning of every Christian's faith.
 - 1. Could Paul have stayed in Judaism? **(Phil 3:4-10)**
 - 2. A biblical faith will also bring you into "the fellowship of His sufferings."
Human religion will be at the core of this conflict! **(Jn 16:1-3)**

C. Some today are giving up on undenominational Christianity.

"The churches joined in "covenant" across denominational lines to serve their communities together — not waiting on the day when all Baptists and Methodists would be converted to our way of thinking and not waiting for some national merger effort. Just walk across the street, agree to work together, and together seek God's will for how to bring his redemptive work to Tuscaloosa.

But this works best when the churches share worship and eucharist — when they enjoy table fellowship as one."
- Jay Guin, University church of Christ, Tuscaloosa, Alabama

II. Abraham had a faith that made him a pilgrim.

- A. What is a pilgrim? **(Heb 11:8-10)**
 - 1. **παρεπίδημος, ον** of one who stays for awhile as an alien in a place
sojourning, staying; subst. temporary resident, sojourner, stranger; fig. of Christians, as not counting this earth as their home.
 - 2. Have you ever lived in a foreign country? Your heart is at home.
- B. How can we become pilgrims in our own land?
 - 1. By wanting something far greater that the world has to offer! Have you ever been so caught up in something that all else is blocked out?
 - 2. We become pilgrims when we prepare ourselves for heaven. Ex. In Nebraska:
"You are not from here!"
- C. God will allow us to face hardship concerning our desires. **(1 Pet 2:9-11)**

1. What kind of faith redefines sin because resistance is “too hard?”
2. Was Jesus a “legalist” when he told this young man a hard thing to do?
(Mt 19:21-23)

D. A living faith will stand when God’s way is difficult! (Mt 19:9-12)

1. Does God’s grace contradict any difficult earthly consequence of sin?
2. Some seek for a different kind of faith.

“..whenever my reading of some Biblical commandment drives me to a doctrinal posture that is oppressive to human beings whom God is trying to redeem, it is time for me to double-check my interpretation of Scripture.”

“..some mistakenly think that they are honoring God and doing something that can save marriages by condemning divorce and forbidding remarriage with such legalistic fervor that they make spiritual orphans of people..” Rubel Shelly, Divorce and Remarriage – p 22, 35

3. How about reading Hebrews 11! (Heb 11:17-18, 35-39)

III. Abraham had a faith that embraced the promises of God

A. A living faith looks at the next life and not at the hardships of this life. (Heb 11:13)

1. Did Abraham ever have an easy life? It depends on what life you speak of!
2. A living faith is satisfied with the simple directions God has given and will not try to change them to make life easier.

B. Abraham was promised a great number of descendants.

(Gen 12:1-3; 13:14-18; 15:4-6)

1. This was not easy for him to accept, consider his age.
2. He received the promise and had to wait years. (Psa 27:14; Isa 40:31)

B. What do we do when we understand God’s word but our “wisdom” disagrees?

1. God’s promise was contrary to human expectation. (Rom 4:17-18)
2. Abraham never wavered in his confidence in God. (Rom 4:20)
3. Some today will only accept the Lord’s will when it makes sense to them.

Consider the universal promise concerning Biblical Baptism. (Acts 2:38-39)

“I refuse to subscribe to the sacramentalist view of baptism! After much study and reflection, I believe this doctrine to be *contrary* to the teachings of God’s Word. I do not believe that we can dogmatically affirm that one’s baptism is the *precise point in time* when God *imparts* eternal salvation to a believing, penitent disciple of Christ...” - Al Maxey as quoted by Jay Guin

C. Where do you place your trust?

1. If God is in it, then all is well. (Rom 4:21)
2. Do we waver in the forgiveness of God? (Rom 4:24-25)

IV. Abraham had a faith that was tested

A. Why did Abraham offer Isaac? (Heb 11:17-19)

1. A Biblical faith grows through tests! (1 Pt 1:7; Rev 2:10)
2. Please do not buy into the watered down standards of those who falsely talk of God’s grace.

B. We know that God will take our failures and build us as long as we carefully look to the light of His word.

1. Several years ago I had to leave two churches early in my walk of faith.
2. I believe that all of us must fight to have the faith of Abraham and the grace that is found in that stand!

Conclusion: Do you have the faith of Abraham? (Rom 4:23-24)