

Intro

~ In Bunyan's famous book "Pilgrim's Progress" John Bunyan shows the travel of a fellow named Christian who is journeying to the celestial city. The title is properly called "Pilgrim's Progress from this world to that which is to come." He discovers this world is not where he belongs and he' on his way to heaven. Along the way he encounters many difficulties, trials and lessons along the way. He meets those who would divert him from the Celestial City. He is a pilgrim

~ We too find ourselves in a similar path as Christian. This world isn't our home and we're journeying to heaven

~ The writer of Hebrews tells us about another pilgrim named Abraham

~ With this in mind that this world isn't our home – we don't set our roots down in this earthly place and that should direct the kind of values and life we live

~ Abraham had to live by faith as he was going, staying and looking for a heavenly city

Outline

By Faith we obey and go (v8)

- The obedience of faith

By Faith we obey and stay (v9)

- The staying of faith

By Faith we look and wait (v10)

- The waiting of faith

By faith Abraham was:

1 Going – While not knowing

- (Where) Where is the Lord taking me?

2 Staying – While not knowing

- (Why) why haven't things changed?

3 Looking – While Not Knowing

- (When) when will deals with waiting for the Lord's eternal city

Text**1 By Faith we obey and go (v8) - The obedience of faith**

~ Going – While unknowing / Not Knowing (Where) Where is the Lord taking me?

~ Key words of v8 – Called, Obeyed, Went Out, By Faith = By faith he went

What about Abraham

1 Our knowledge of Abraham extends back to the nineteenth century B.C. Scripture indicates he was a citizen of the city of Ur, located on the Euphrates River in what is today southern Iraq. Ur was already an ancient city in Abraham's time and boasted an elaborate system of writing, sophisticated mathematical calculations, educational facilities, and extensive business and religious records. The city was dominated by a massive three-staged Ziggurat built by Ur-Nammu during the beginning of the second millennium B.C. Each stage was colored distinctively, with the top level bearing the silver one-roomed shrine of Nammu, the moon-god. The royal cemetery reveals that ritual burials were sealed with the horrors of human sacrifice. So Ur, advanced as it was, was nevertheless in the bonds of darkest paganism. And Abraham, as an idolater (Joshua 24:2), was a part of its conventional social and religious structure. (Kent Hughes)

2 When God chose Abraham it's as if God cut him out of a rock (Is 51:1,2)

3 Today Jews, Muslims, and Christians revere the name of faithful Abraham, but it is likely his contemporaries laughed at him when he left Haran. (Holman)

By Faith

~ Abraham is doing many things by faith in this chapter along with the other heroes of the faith

~ By faith and through faith is mentioned 18 times

~ By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

~ When we don't know and are uncomfortable – we obey by faith

When he was called to go out

~ In the Greek, he was called is a present participle, and the translation could be, “when he was being called.” In other words, as soon as he understood what God was saying, he started packing. It was instant obedience. It may have taken several days, or even weeks or months, to make final preparation for the trip, but in his mind he was already on the way. From then on, everything he did revolved around obeying God's call. (MacArthur)

Go Out

~ Go out (1831 exerchomai) Escape, deport. Abraham escaped a life without God in Ur

~ This leading to the unknown leads us to the uncomfortable

Obedience

~ Obedience (5219 hupakouo) to hear under as a subordinate, to listen attentively to, to heed or conform to a command or authority

~ Abraham's calling was similar to that of the apostle Paul in the NT. God personally spoke to him and he obeyed

~ Acts 26:19 Paul in giving his testimony to King Agrippa said that when the Lord called him “he wasn't disobedient to the heavenly vision?”

~ When the Lord leads us to go we obey

~ This teaches us to heed God's leading

He Went Out Not Knowing Where He Was Going

~ While going Abraham didn't know where he was going

~ Abraham was immediately willing to give up his homeland, his friends, his business, his religion—everything. He wasted no time putting all these things behind him.

~ God leads us into the unknown because it teaches us to trust him with where he's calling us to go

~ When the Lord called Hudson Taylor to start China Inland Missions it required faith by Hudson because he could see no way possible for it to be done

~ When the Lord calls us he doesn't always give every detail of the plan – so that we have to live by faith

Obstacles to coming to Christ and following

1 Leaving worldliness – All that's in the world is the lusts of the flesh, eyes and the pride of life (1 Jn 2:15-17).

These things are not of the Father and they will pass away

~ We're called to leave the world

~ The force that makes us want to hold on to the old life is sometimes called worldliness. Worldliness may be an act, but primarily it is an attitude. It is wanting to do things that are sinful or selfish or worthless, whether we actually do them or not. It is wanting men's praise whether we ever receive it or not. (MacArthur)

2 Leaving behind what we know – We don't know that when leaving the world we won't be missing anything. It's easy to fall back on and rely on what we know. To start to follow Christ takes faith

3 Leaving behind old habits and acquaintances – These old habits and acquaintances will tie us to the world

4 Leaving behind – We may be called to leave behind a career or past success

2 By Faith we obey and stay (v9) - The staying of faith

~ Staying – While not knowing - (Why) why haven't things changed?

~ It's uncomfortable to sometimes to stay where God has called us to stay – but by faith we can stay

By faith Abrahamd sojourned

~ Sojourn (3939 paroikeo) to dwell, to reside near as a foreigner

~ While Abraham was obedient by faith to go a new place God called him to go to...he left behind friends, family, his homeland and his religion he now has to stay in a strange place he's not accustomed to

Sojourn

- Acts 7:6 Israel would sojourn as strangers in Egypt
- Acts 7:29 Then fled Moses at this saying, and was a stranger in the land of Midian

- Eph 3:19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God
- 1 Pet 2:11 Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul

The Land of Promise as in a Strange Land

- ~ Abraham lived in this land as a stranger. It still wasn't really his. He lived in tents and God didn't tell him to make a permanent structure and to plant his roots there
- ~ Abraham's decedents would be the ones to possess the land later when Joshua led them into that land
- ~ Strange country (strange country = another's, not your own, belonging to another, alien)
- ~ Dwelling (2736 katoikeo) to house permanently
- ~ God told Abraham to stay and get comfortable in the uncomfortable because this is where God works
- ~ Tabernacle = He lived in a tent
- ~ Isaac and Jacob were heirs with Abraham of the same promise – god repeated the patriarchal covenant promises to them (Isaac and Jacob)
- ~ This idea of sojourners is seen in light of Cleophas who walked with Jesus on the road to Emmaus

Staying – While uncomfortable / not knowing (Why) why haven't things changed?

- Why do I have to be uncomfortable in this strange place the Lord calls the land of promise
- This deals with the uncomfortable
- While we call it uncomfortable the Lord calls it the land of promise
- I would describe the uncomfortable place as inconvenient, hard, and challenging but God called it promise
- When God calls us to stay we stay by faith

~ It was promised but never possessed. Abraham's faith required a great deal of patience in order to live without grumbling as an alien in his own land.

God Testing Abraham's Faith

- God was always testing Abraham's patience. He did it with the land and also with a son
- Abraham had to stay and wait
- When Abraham moved off the place where he was supposed to stay and went to Egypt he made a mess of things and if not for the faithfulness of God, the plan of God could have been ruined by Abraham's disobedience

3 By Faith we look and wait (v10) - The waiting of faith

- ~ While Not Knowing (When) when will deals with the waiting for the Lord work and move
- ~ NLT = Looking confidently forward to a city with eternal foundations, a city designed and built by God
- ~ It's hard to wait on the Lord but we look by faith to our eternal dwelling
- ~ We're heavenly minded
- ~ When we can keep our eyes on the eternal we can live biblically in the temporal
- ~ Foundations (2310 themelios) something put down, the beginning, first principles
- ~ This world is fallen and the foundations have been destroyed
- ~ Abraham wasn't looking for a city whose foundations were destroyed or faulty
- ~ A few bricks in the garage foundation have eroded and decayed
- ~ We ask ourselves what kind of foundations we are building on. Are they faulty or decayed or heavenly?
- ~ The way to be comfortable while waiting in this world is to look for a heavenly city
 - (When) when will deals with waiting for the Lord to work and move
 - When will the Lord deliver us from this present evil world
 - While waiting for and expecting an eternal city
 - We see this principle of others looking for a city
 - Heb 11:12-16 *Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable. 13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. 14 For they that say such things declare plainly*

that they seek a country. 15 And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. 16 But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.

- Moses also took the long look (Heb 11:24-27) *By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; 25 Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; 26 Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward. 27 By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.*
- Heb 12:22 *But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels*
- Heb 13:14 *For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come*
- Jn 14:1-4 *Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.*
- Paul was able to say in 2 Tim 4:7 that he fought a good fight, finished my course, kept the faith and because he did this there was laid up for him a crown of righteousness. This is Paul looking for the eternal city built by God
- The record of Hebrews 11 is of those who by faith looked and lived for the eternal – not the temporal
- 2 Cor 4:15-18 *For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God. 16 For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. 17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; 18 While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.*
- While we live in this world we're living for the next

~ Joyfully looking forward to the eternal

~ Abraham didn't know if/when he would inherit the Promised Land for his descendants but did set his gaze toward a heavenly promised land

~ We should make no apology for being heavenly minded.

~ It is when we concentrate on things below that we live and die with every little thing that goes wrong or seems to last too long or is not successful or appreciated. That is why Paul tells us to set our minds "on the things above, not on the things that are on earth" (Col. 3:2). When our minds are on heaven we will be patient with what happens down here. If we look continually at the things of this world—its trials, troubles, and struggles on the one hand, or its money, fame, and pleasures on the other, then we cannot help becoming absorbed in the impatient desires of the flesh. But if we keep focusing on heaven, on God, on Jesus Christ, then we do not care about what goes on here.

~ This stuff and busyness of life tends to make us short-sighted

Conclusion

~ Now we know we're not going to be called to be Abraham and Sarah and God will start a nationality through us, but God does call us to obey, follow and stay

~ We may not be called to go to a mission field but as Christians we are on the mission field

~ On this mission field God requires faith-obedience

~ This obedience takes shape in following his leadings in our life - This obedience takes the following forms

1 In the commands of the bible

2 In our daily life we apply that word to the situation we find ourselves and that which we encounter

3 Once we do this we're prepared to obey God in the bigger things of life

~ It is discouraging to pray and trust and work and see no results but that's why it's a walk of faith

~ As we go there's faith, as we stay there's faith and as we wait for the Lord's return there's faith

~ We fix our eyes on an eternity with the Lord – It will be worth the wait

~ Abraham obeyed God by faith when he did not know why God was so working (Heb. 11:17–19) in leaving, staying, waiting for a son, and offering up his only son to the Lord