

**Date** : 5 March 2023

**Theme** : The men who walk by Faith

**Topic** : Abraham's Going On faith – Contrasting man of faith vs man of flesh.

**Key passage** : *Genesis 13, 14*

**Key verse** : *From the Negev he went from place to place until he came to Bethel, to the place between Bethel and Ai where his tent had been earlier and where he had first built an altar. There Abram called on the name of the LORD. Genesis 13:3,4*

## **Introduction**

Last Sunday, in *Genesis 12*, we learnt about Abram's going out faith when God called him out of *Ur* to follow Him. Likewise, God has called us out from our sinful past to become part of God's family. God promised seven blessings to Abram. Abram believed God and by faith he set out.

Abram believed God's promises and began his journey of faith: We call this his going out faith, the faith of a beginner taking his first steps walking with God. Obviously, through the twist and turn of life's circumstances, he made mistakes trying to meet his needs. But he did not turn away from being loyal to God. He learnt fast whilst growing in faith. Today we examine the out workings of his going on faith.

We see how God is merciful and loving. God intervened to protect Abram in spite of his mistakes. All of us lack of faith, but there is no excuse for stagnation. We too must learn to acquire going on faith. Going on faith is practised only in covenantal partnership with God. This is how it looks like as demonstrated in Abraham's life.

## **1. Start from the beginning**

From Egypt, Abram returned to Bethel where he had first built an altar to the Lord as a worshipper. Now he would return to the same starting point which was his appointed place with God.

a) Return to worship, hear His voice and take instructions.

Similarly, God calls us back to our beginning of faith, our devotion, the excitement of knowing and walking with God. We see His power, His work in our midst. Sadly, that excitement in God begins to wane. Soon we take church for granted – what had been so special and exciting to us, has now lost its lustre.

b) Return as a beginner to the basics of walking with God

Abram came back to start all over again. In Egypt, he had learned that his own wisdom got him into trouble. Many of us, having started on our journey, tend to drift away from God and His people. If you are such a one, always return to this starting point to learn the basic habits of faith, like reading God's Word. This daily habit produces the faith we need to continue on our journey.

c) Choose your fellow travellers; separate from carnal believers.

After Egypt, the blessings of wealth and prosperity surface the true priority of Lot, rendering him unsuitable as a fellow traveller. *Genesis 13: 2,5*.

How does one discern between the godly from the carnal believer as one's fellow traveller in this journey of faith?

## 2. Abraham's going on faith as demonstrated by the way he made decisions.

(Contrasting choices between the man of faith vs man of flesh)

	<u>Situation</u>	<u>Choice</u>
a) Abram came to Bethel <i>Genesis 13:4.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Returned to where he should begin. The promises at the beginning seemed general.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To get back to basics of worship, waiting upon God's instructions.</li></ul>
b) Lot saw Jordan <i>Genesis 13:10, 11</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Attracted to the visible, existing benefits<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ For personal gain</li></ul></li><li>• Well-watered like the garden of Eden<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Like Egypt</li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lot chose the whole plain<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Pitched tent near sin city- Sodom, spiritual adultery.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- disregarded the spiritual climate</li><li>- disregarded God's view</li></ul></li><li>○ Plain as day, he did not consult God.</li></ul></li></ul>
c) Abram listened to the Lord <i>Genesis 13:14-17</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Separated from Lot's materialistic influence.</li><li>• God <u>promised</u> land specifically, <i>Genesis 13:15-17</i><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Abram's worldview was godly.</li><li>○ God confirmed Abram's offspring would be as innumerable as the stars.</li><li>○ Abram looked where God <u>instructed</u>. north / south / east / west</li><li>○ Faithfulness is staying loyal to God's values</li></ul></li><li>• Received God's promises<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Obeyed instruction to walk the land (= symbolically taking possession) <i>...Go walk through... Genesis 13:17</i></li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Believed God's promised blessings.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ To your offspring. <i>Genesis 13:15, 16</i></li><li>○ I will give you what I am showing you.</li></ul></li><li>• Abram sought future blessing rather than immediate gratification.</li><li>• Obeyed = believed <i>...So Abram moved...to live at Hebron... built altar (=worship) Genesis 13:18</i></li></ul>
d) Lot in trouble <i>Genesis 14:14</i> (not a covenant keeper)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1<sup>st</sup> sign of departure from the Lord<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Lost all goods and food <i>Genesis 14:12</i></li><li>○ Lost freedom. Why?</li></ul></li><li>• War: 4 kings attacked 5 <i>Genesis 14:5</i> <i>Since</i> he (Lot) was living in Sodom <i>Genesis 14:12</i><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Result: he became a captive</li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Was Lot's worldview influenced by the evil spiritual climate?<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Lot was rescued because of Abram's favour.</li><li>○ Lot, after his rescue, did not get back to the start point of faith to walk with God, no repentance.</li></ul></li><li>• He did not change</li><li>• Impending catastrophe and greater lost.</li></ul>
e) Abram in blessing <i>...blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth... Genesis 14:19</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Abram, the Hebrew <i>Genesis 14:13</i>. A man under favour:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Local leaders allied (subject) to him</li><li>○ Trained 318 men</li><li>○ Managed his household</li></ul></li><li>• understood timeliness (moved in the night)<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Strategist – directed the attack</li><li>○ Fruitful – recovered all goods</li><li>○ Victorious – defeated kings</li></ul></li><li>• Refused any benefit from worldly kings (who were doomed for destruction), not greedy</li></ul>	<p>Example of outcome of covenant keeper: Blessing / Instruction / Sign (BIS)</p> <p>Why was Abram victorious?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Favoured by God</li><li>○ Blessed by Melchizedek Priest, Most High <i>Genesis 14:19</i></li><li>• Spiritual realm – God did it. <i>...God Most High... delivered... Genesis 14:20</i></li><li>○ 10% of everything. Abram's offering to God to acknowledge God's deliverance.</li><li>○ Thoughtful of Hebron friends who helped: Aner, Eshcol, Mamre <i>Genesis 14:24</i></li></ul>

## Applications

a. Where are you today in your faith journey?

Are you a beginner acquiring spiritual habits?

Or an 'old' Christian who have drifted off like Lot?

... How do you identify with Lot's decisions and his world views?

... What will returning to the starting point of practising spiritual habits look like for you?

Or like Abram?

... aspiring to live by God's promises

... committing yourself to a lifelong faith journey

... returning to the spiritual habits to keep you in your going-on faith

... receiving the Word, prayer, witnessing and helping someone else to grow in his journey of faith.