

Abraham - man of faith, feet of clay

Genesis 12–25, Hebrews 11:8–19, Romans 4:3

The Genesis record clearly illustrates that Abraham indeed had feet of clay. Twice he denied Sarah was his wife, because he was afraid people would seize her and kill him. He had a child through Hagar, instead of waiting for Sarah to conceive. His affection for his nephew, Lot, was very commendable but proved quite a testing ground for him in his walk with God.

However, the Hebrews record is very powerful. Abraham is a man of faith, worthy of being recorded among the great heroes of faith paraded in this famous chapter.

God, of course, is well aware of Abraham's weaknesses and failings. But Abraham was a man prepared to trust and obey the living God. He was also prepared to pursue God's agenda, not his own, even at great personal sacrifice.

God's plan was to send His Son. This Son, Jesus, would be born into a family and a nation. This nation would be a blessing to all nations and, subsequently, all nations would have the opportunity to receive a Saviour who would destroy the curse of sin and undo Adam's disobedience and failure. Jesus would not arrive out of nowhere. He would have a context and a background. Through the Jewish nation, originating with Abraham, the Saviour Jesus would come and destroy all the works of the evil one.

Abraham is the start. Let us reflect on three areas where he trusted God:

1. Location

Abraham left Ur of the Chaldees. He went out trusting God and arrived at an unknown destination but, nevertheless, a place where God's people would dwell and where Jesus would be born. We too need to trust God regarding our location. Sometimes, we are required to move geographically, to be where God wants us to be and He will bless us. However, we often want to stay where we are. We feel comfortable and we do not like the unknown. But obeying God and moving on, will always be the best. Even if we are called to remain in the same place, we will still need to be in the right place at the right time. Are we listening to God? Each day, are we open to His divine promptings, telling us to visit this person or go this place? Jesus spent every moment of every day, located in the Father's will. We must seek to do the same.

2. Resources and Provision

Abraham left Ur but needed a miracle to be the father of a great nation that would bless all nations. He needed an heir. He and Sarah were childless. This was a vital provision required and he and Sarah had a great trial of faith, until one day the miracle happened and, despite their old age, Sarah conceived and Isaac was born. You may be in the right location but you need to see God's provision. Be patient. Wait on the Lord. Do not operate out of the flesh and never fabricate or settle for less than God's best. You may need people, money, a change of circumstances, land or property. Be assured, God will release what you need. Keep trusting Him, in the expectation that He will provide exactly what you need, in accordance with His infinite wisdom.

3. Sacrificing the best

The story of Abraham being willing to offer Isaac as a sacrifice, has many lessons in the life of faith. Abraham was naturally attached to his son but God requires commitment to His vision and purposes, not in the means of blessing but in God Himself. We find this very hard sometimes, as God prunes and tends us to ensure that He and He alone, is at the centre of our lives. The second significant lesson is that, through this process of being willing to offer up his son, Abraham's faith perhaps slowly but surely, grew to an understanding that God could raise the dead. This incredible progress came about through the test and trial but what a triumph, as he prepares to offer Isaac.

The Lord requires us to be in the right location, to step out of our comfort zone and to listen to Him. He will provide all that we need, to do what He has called us to do. He will work in us so that we know, with God, nothing is impossible. We begin our Christian life by trusting in Jesus, who rose from the dead. We walk day by day in the knowledge that Christ's grace is sufficient and, whatever trials and tests we handle, the God who can raise the dead, will see us through.

May God bless you.

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