A WILLING FAITH

**DATE: 11/12/2014 Wed.**

**TEXT: Hebrews 11:8-10; 17-19; Genesis 11, 12**

**INTRODUCTION**

So far … in **Hebrews 11** we have looked at The Way, The Worth, The Walk and The Work of Faith

This evening we are going to be looking at the *Willingness* of Faith

Abraham was a Great man of Faith, and stands out as one of Israel's greatest heroes

Abraham had a Willing Faith

Willingness is the attitude of someone ready to do something without being forced; they are helpful, cooperative and enthusiastic

This is what we mean when we speak of a volunteer

Whatever God called for, whether it was to leave home or to offer his son …

Abraham was Willing to Obey God

Unfortunately that spirit is lacking today

Real Faith will always be Willing

Let’s look at **“The Willingness of Faith”**

 **~~~Prayer~~~**

There are several aspects of Willing Faith described here in our text and the life of Abraham

First there is -

**I. “LISTENING” – v.8a**

***“By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed;”***

To Listen means *to pay attention, take to heart*

We know Abraham was listening because he – ***“obeyed”***

This is the secret to Abraham's success

He was ***“called to go out”*** and he ***“obeyed”***

***“called”*** – summoned, requested

(By what … means Abraham was called, we are not told)

Obedience always results in the blessing of God

God's first word to Abraham was the clear command to move out by faith

**Genesis 12:1 – *“Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:”***

Please note that at first Abraham only Obeyed partially

(There were also other times this would happen as well)

Notice again **Gen. 12:1** - ***“had said”*** - past tense

Partial Obedience will always cause troubles

**Genesis 11:31 – *“And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son's son, and Sarai his daughter in law, his son Abram's wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan; and they came unto Haran, and dwelt there”***

For some reason they stopped in a place called Haran

If you look at a map, you will find that Haran is north and east of the Promised Land

The long term problem would be Lot going with Abraham

God said in **Genesis 12:1 – *“Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:”***

Obedience is always God's requirement

When God commands us to do something, He expects obedience / He expects us to Listen

Too often believers treat commands as choices

However, anything less than absolute obedience is disobedience

We need to understand that both obedience and disobedience have consequences

**Deuteronomy 11:26-28 - *“Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse;” “A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day:” “And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known”***

God gave Israel a wonderful land, but they had to do right in order to enjoy it

God summarized the whole matter in two words:

***“blessing”*** and ***“curse”***

***“curse”*** - a *cause of unhappiness or harm*

They could have either one

If they obeyed God's Word, They would be blessed

If they disregarded His Word, they would be cursed

This isn’t … as if God does it to us, but rather that we bring these things upon ourselves for not obeying the Truth

Let no one think that he will live successfully apart from the Truth

The bottom line is simple!

We are blessed when we obey and suffer when we don’t

Obedience is the greatest test of our love for God

Jesus said in …

**Luke 11:28 – *“... blessed are they that hear the Word of God, and keep it”***

**John 14:21 – *“He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him”***

Obedience stood out in Abraham's life

There was no kicking and screaming

No demand of explanation

No complaint about the distance of the trip

 We ought to be willing to do what God requires

It was by Faith that Abraham obeyed God

**ABRAHAM “LISTEN” TO GOD**

The second aspect of Willing Faith described here is seen in Abraham …

**II. “LEAVING” – v. 8b**

***“…and he went out, not knowing whither he went”***

Abraham had a Command and he obeyed

But he also had God's Promise of Provision

Let’s look again at …

**Genesis 12:1 – *“Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee”***

The Command was ***“Get thee out”***

The Promise was ***“I will show thee”***

This is where a lot of folks fail

They see the Command, but fail to see the Promise

Here’s the Faith!

**Genesis 12:4 –** ***“So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him …”***

Faith not only obeys regardless of evidence,

But Faith also acts regardless of conditions

All Abraham had when he left home was the Command and Promise of God

There was no road map! No GPS! No deputation!

There are a lot of folks waiting to step out for God if He will give them the details in advance!

**Quote:** Someone has said – *“too many Christians are camped out on the edge of obedience, looking across the divide—trying to figure out the consequences of obeying God!”*

Following God meant that Abraham would have to cut his ties, leave his place of security and comfort, leave his family and abandon his home

At the Word of God, Abraham left everything and became a pilgrim

Is God's Word good enough for you?

If God called you today, to step out by Faith and leave everything behind, would you do it?

**ABRAHAM “LISTENED” TO GOD**

**ABRAHAM “LEFT” FOR GOD**

The next aspect of Willing Faith is seen in Abraham’s …

 **III. “LIVING” – v.9**

***“By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:”***

The decision that Abraham made would affect the rest of his life

It was a decision that he would have to live by

The word *“****sojourned”*** means to *reside as a foreigner, to be a stranger*

Abraham never built a house … but rather lived in tents

He knew that what he was looking for was not to be found in this world

Christians are not content anymore to be pilgrims

For the most part Christianity has settled down in the world

Paul said that we are to be a *“****peculiar people”*** in **Titus 2:14**

In other words, we are to be different

But instead of being Peculiar many have become Partners

Peter said that we are to be ***“strangers”*** in **I Peter 2:11**

But instead of Strangers, many have become Settlers

Abraham lived in the land of Canaan, but he never settled down there

He knew that Canaan was not his true home

May God help His people to realize that we are not citizens of this world

We are merely Pilgrims here

**Hebrews 11:13 *– “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”***

**ABRAHAM “LISTENED” TO GOD**

**ABRAHAM “LEFT” BECAUSE OF GOD**

**ABRAHAM “LIVED” FOR GOD**

The next aspect of Willing Faith is seen in Abraham’s …

**IV. “LOOKING” – v.10**

***“For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God”***

The thought here is that his Faith in God kept him looking for what God had promised

What faith! Abraham moved from one place to another, setting up his tent for a while and then moving on

He found no place of rest and satisfaction in the world

No matter where he went, who he met, what he had or who he was with, there was always something missing

Abraham ***“looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God”***

**Song:** From town to town Abraham moved along singing:

*“This world is not my home, I'm just passing through.*

*My treasures are laid up, Somewhere beyond the blue.*

*The angels beckon me, From Heaven's open door,*

*And I can't be at home, In this world anymore”*

Abraham had a vision of the heavenly city whose builder and maker is God

Abraham believed God and he knew that there was something far better than anything this world had to offer

Once we fix our heart on Heaven … it's hard to be at home in this world anymore

**ABRAHAM “LISTENED” TO GOD**

**ABRAHAM “LEFT” BECAUSE OF GOD**

**ABRAHAM “LIVED” FOR GOD**

**ABRAHAM “LOOKED” FOR HIS HEAVENLY HOME**

Lastly, Abraham had a Faith that was …

**V. “LASTING” – vs. 17-19 …**

Abraham's Faith endured every command

Everyone has a Measure of Faith

**Romans 12:3 *– “For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith”***

But not everyone has a Lasting Faith

A lot of folks have the Faith to get saved,

But they don't have the Faith to obey and endure in tough situations / times

I've seen several over the years who started well,

But when they came up against a great trial … their faith failed

Theirs was Not a Lasting Faith

Nothing shows the magnitude of Abraham's Faith like his willingness to offer Isaac

**A. Abraham was ‘Tried’ – v.17, 18**

Let’s look at **v.18** first

***“Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called:”***

Isaac was the son of promise

Humanly speaking, God's promise to Abraham of one day being a great and mighty nation was going to come about through Isaac

In other words the whole of God's promise to Abraham was wrapped up in Isaac

Abraham could have very easily gotten his eyes off of God and trusted Isaac as the source of his blessing

We are all too often just like that!

We focus on the Gift and neglect the Giver

***“By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son,”***

**V. 17** describes Abraham as being ***“tried”***

God allows us to get into some tight spots to test our faithfulness

**Quote:** W. H. Griffith-Thomas said – *“Life is a succession of tests, for character is only possible through discipline.”*

This was without a doubt Abraham's greatest test

This was Abraham's only begotten son

Now God is saying, sacrifice him

Human reasoning would break down here,

But Faith obeys without explanations and answers

**Abraham was ‘Tried’**

**B. Abraham was ‘Trusting’ – v.19a**

***“Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead …”***

Abraham did not go up on Moriah that day expecting God to provide a lamb to sacrifice in place of Isaac

Instead, he expected to offer Isaac and witness his resurrec­tion

When he approached the mountain, he told his servants …

**Genesis 22:5 – *“Abide ye here with the donkey; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you”***

Understand that up until this point, no one had ever been raised from the dead

Abraham had never seen or heard of someone being brought back to life

However, Abraham had Faith that God would fulfill His promises

**Titus 1:2 – *“In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;”***

Since Isaac did not have children at this point, God would have to raise him from the dead

**Abraham was ‘Tried’**

**Abraham was ‘Trusting’**

**C. Abraham was ‘Triumphant’ – v.19b**

***“… from whence also he received him in a figure”***

The word ***“figure”*** means *a type or a picture*

Abraham saw the work of the promised Messiah in Isaac

**Genesis 22:8 – *“And Abraham said, My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together”***

Isaac is a type of Christ

-- Christ and Isaac were both Sons of promise

**Genesis 18:18 – *“Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?”***

**Galatians 3:16 –** *“****Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ”***

-- Like Christ, Isaac trusted his father and was willing to be sacrificed at his hand

**Luke 22:42 *– “Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from Me: nevertheless not My will, but thine, be done”***

-- Both Christ and Isaac carried wood for their sacrifice

**Genesis 22:6 – *“And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together”***

**John 19:17 –** *“****And He bearing His cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha:”***

-- Both Christ and Isaac were only Sons

**Hebrews 11:17 – *“By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son,”***

**John 3:16a – *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son …”***

**CONCLUSION**

Abraham's Faith was in God's ability to do what He had promised

As far as Abraham was concerned, Isaac was as good as dead

God commanded the sacrifice and Abraham was committed to offering him

In his heart Abraham fully believed that Isaac would die and God would resurrect him

In that, Isaac prefigured the resurrection of Jesus

That is what Jesus was talking about when He said to the Jews,

**John 8:56 – *“Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad”***

What a great Willing Faith Abraham had!

 **May we be Willing to do the same!**

**ABRAHAM “LISTENED” TO GOD**

**ABRAHAM “LEFT” BECAUSE OF GOD**

**ABRAHAM “LIVED” FOR GOD**

**ABRAHAM “LOOKED” FOR HIS HEAVENLY HOME**

**ABRAHAM “LASTED” BECAUSE HE KNEW GOD WAS ABLE**