

The Obedience of Abraham

The Obedience of Abraham

Today's Old Testament reading is about the character Our Lord wants us to develop. The Lord asks each of us to step outside of our comfort zone so that our character can grow. An important aspect of Christ-like character is obedience.

One biblical personality who illustrates obedience is Abraham; in today's text, "Abram." Time after time, God called Abraham to obey and step outside his comfort zone. And time after time, Abraham obeyed and God blessed him as a result. It's not that Abraham always got it right. But when he did, God blessed him. It's important to note that this man - this Abraham - plays a prominent role, as an example of faith, in all of the so-called Abrahamic religions. Although he is not viewed the same by all, Abraham is featured in the holy texts of Judaism, Islam and Christianity.

Today's scripture, focuses on the beginning of Abraham's journey with God. Seemingly out of nowhere, and with no real details, God called Abraham to lead his kin out of their homeland to go to "a land that I will show you." In this story, we have a beautiful lesson about the requirements of and rewards for obeying God.

The first requirement for obeying God is a willingness to sacrifice. Just as Abraham willingly sacrificed his homeland, his family, and his father's household, we must be willing to sacrifice to obey God. It will always require, at least, the sacrifice of getting out of our comfort zone. Other times, it may require more, like sacrificing something or a relationship we hold dear. Or we may be required to take the criticism of others. Or we may be required to put our feelings aside, as when God asks us to forgive those who have hurt us. Obedience always costs. But think of the greater cost of disobeying God.

The second requirement for obeying God is the willingness to step out. Just as Abraham was called to lead his kinfolk to a land he had never seen before, God calls us to a life of faith. It's not easy to step out by faith, but if we do what God calls us to today, His guidance will be with us tomorrow. We should never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God. God promised to bless Abraham's obedience, and He will bless ours. Just as the disobedient patient misses out on the full benefits of health care, disobedient believers miss out on the full measure of life's blessings from God.

And, not only will we be blessed, we will be a blessing! The chief blessing that Abraham would bring to all nations would be that the Messiah would be born to his lineage. Through his obedience, people could know and would come to Christ! Likewise, if we seek to live a life of obedience to God, we will bless others. Especially as they see Christ at work through us and are pointed to the Savior! This is our calling and ultimate reason for being in this world as the People of God.

As pointed out at the top of this message, Abraham didn't always get obedience right, but when he obeyed, he was blessed.

Today, the choice is ours. To obey or not to obey. To be blessed or not to be blessed. To be a blessing or not to be a blessing. Which choice have you been making? Which choice will you make—today?

Deacon John Pattison