

Life of Abraham

Genesis 12 – 10-4-11

Let me review a little of what we discussed last week.

The book of Genesis is the book of beginnings. We have in Genesis the beginning of the revelation of God, and that it the subject of the greatest importance. We learn of His eternal existence, His goodness, His wisdom, His power – to name a few of His attributes. But we also learn that He is a holy God. We have here the story of creation. We learn about the first sin among human beings, how it came about, and what its results were. We have in Genesis the foundations of human history. We learned that the first eleven chapters cover a period of at least 2,000 years, as much time as the remainder of the Old Testament put together.

So the first eleven chapters are both introductory and foundational. And it is very important that we understand what they have to tell us.

Four men stand out in Genesis 1-11, although many others are mentioned.. They are Adam, Abel, Enoch and Noah. Adam was the first man. Abel was the first man to die. Enoch was the first man who did not die because God took him. Noah and his family, eight in all, who were the only people on earth whom God spared from death during the flood. We can study all four of these men with a great deal both of blessing and spiritual profit.

So the first eleven chapters move very rapidly. When we come to chapter 12, the pace slows down and we get acquainted with four other men and their families, a man, his son, the man's grandson, and then the man's great grandson. As you know they are Abram, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. The life of Joseph takes us to the end of the book of Genesis.

Bible teachers who teach Genesis usually outline the book by the people who are prominent in the Bible, but the Holy Spirit has divided it according to the generations. So we would have to agree that His divisions would be the best. Let me remind you of what they are.

They are as follows:

1. Introduction – the Creation (Gen. 1:1 -2:3).
2. “The Generations of the Heaven and the Earth” (Gen. 2:4-4:26).
3. “The Generations of Adam” (Gen. 5:1-6:8).
4. “The Generations of Noah” (Gen. 6:9-9:29).
5. “The Generations of the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth” (Gen. 10:1-11:9).
6. “The Generations of Shem” (Gen. 11:10-26).
7. “The Generations of Terah” (Gen. 11:27-25:11).
8. “The Generations of Ishmael” (Gen. 25:12-18).
9. “The Generations of Isaac (Gen. 25:19-35:29).
10. “The Generations of Esau (Gen. 36:1-37:1)
11. “The Generations of Jacob (Gen. 37:2-50:26).

Now let us begin the exposition.

The latter part of Genesis 11 prepares us for the study of the life of Abram. Abram is first mentioned in Gen. 11:26 and a descendant of Shem, who, in turn, was a descendant of Noah. Then from verse 27 of ch. 11 on down to the end of the chapter we learn about Abram, his brothers, and that they were all born in Ur of the Chaldees. Archeologists are not exactly sure of that this was, but it probably slightly north and east of the Persian Gulf and in the area of the Euphrates River. When Stephen was giving his defense before the Jewish

Council in Acts 7, just before he was stoned to death, he spoke of Abraham. His comments in Acts 7:1-4 fit in with what we are reading today in Genesis 11. And you will notice that he actually quoted in verse 3 from Gen. 12:1. (Read Acts 7:1-14.)

One thing seems certain about the area in which Abram was born. It was an area given to idolatry. In Joshua 24:2 we are told that Terah and Abraham, which would have included their families, “served other God.” And then in that same chapter, verse 3, the Lord told Joshua to tell the people of Israel, “I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood (river), and led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his seed, and gave him Isaac.” Genesis 11:31 tells us that Abram’s call came to him in Ur of the Chaldees. So we know that Abram had been saved before he left his original home. And the reason I say that is because of what we read in Hebrews 11:8:

8 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.

The words “by faith” tell us that Abram was saved before he was called, and before also that he left home. An unbeliever cannot do anything by faith. Only a child of God can truly act by faith because faith is a special gift of God, and it has to do with God’s will.

12:1 Sometimes I wish that the words of God in the OT were printed in red like the words of the Lord Jesus are in the NT so they would stand out to us as we read them. The word “had” here should be in italics because the Hebrew simply says, “And the Lord said.” But I am sure that the KJV translators added the word “had” because they wanted us to know that God called Abram before he ever left Ur.

We are introduced in Gen. 11:27-32 to Abram and his family, and that they left their home in Ur and went to Haran. But we are not told *why* until the beginning of chapter 12. The call given to Abram recorded in chapter 12 had been given to him in his original home in Ur. We do not have any record of a second appearance of the Lord to Abram until when we get to Gen. 12:7 after Abram finally got to Canaan. In the call you will notice that the Lord did not tell Abram *where* he was to go, just that the Lord would let him know when he got there. We do not know how Abram was led, but in some miraculous way the Lord did lead him.

The life of Abram is often called *the life of faith*. What do we mean by this expression? It is clear as we go on through Scripture, we find that others lived a life of faith. In fact, all of us who know the Lord are called to live a life of faith. What is it? It is simply a life of trusting God. A believer may be born, live, and die in the same place, but still he is to live a life of faith. It does not mean that he doesn’t have a job. A believer may receive a regular salary, and yet he is to live a life of faith. Our lives as Christians begin by faith, and it continues by faith. Romans 1:17, Galatians 3:11, and Hebrews 10:38 all tell us that “the just shall live by faith.” We are saved by faith, and only by faith, and we live by faith after we are saved. So don’t think of living by faith as applying only to people like Amy Carmichael and Hudson Taylor and George Mueller. They may have been called to follow the Lord without the guarantee of any regular support. But the Lord does not deal with all of us like that. And yet we are all to spend our lives trusting the Lord. In these days of financial problems, that may become more of a factor with all of us.

We are to spend our lives trusting the Lord. It is a life-long learning process. In Margaret Cowman’s very excellent daily devotional book, *Streams in the Desert*, I came across an excellent definition of what it means to live by faith which George Mueller had written in commenting on Phil. 4:6-7. On the words, “in everything” he said this. That it is

not merely when the house is on fire, not merely when the beloved wife and children are on the brink of the grave, but in the smallest matters of life, bring everything before God, the little things, the very little things, what the world calls trifling things – *everything* – living in holy

communion with our heavenly Father, and with our precious Lord Jesus all day long. And when we awake at night, by a kind of spiritual instinct again turning to Him, and speaking to Him, bringing or various little matters before Him in the sleepless night, the difficulties in connection with the family, our trade (business), our profession. Whatever tries us in any way, speak to the Lord about it (p. 296).

This may sound like it is easy to do, but it is not. We are so inclined to trust in ourselves, or in circumstances, or in what others will do for us, that it is difficult for us to turn to the Lord first and always.

Please note that this was a call to separation, from his native country, from his relatives, from his immediate family, "Unto a land that I will show thee." I would take this to mean that not all of Abram's relatives, nor even of his family (brother, nephews, etc.) were believers. God has not called all of us to special service, but He called all of us who are saved, to salvation. And it is always, as I have said, a call to separation. And just as Abram's call was a call from and a call to, the same is true of us. When I was a boy the common idea about a Christian was that he didn't smoke or drink. He didn't go to movies. He didn't dance.. And so the idea was prevalent that a Christian was a person who didn't do a lot of things that most people do. But there was a lack of teaching about what a Christian does! Today I am afraid that there is a great lack of teaching both as to what we have been saved from, and what we have been saved unto. Romans 12:1 and 2 is a good example of both the positive and the negative. If you were saved in a non-Christian family, you know that there can be no real fellowship between light and darkness. Abram's call was both positive and negative.

Look in verse 2 and 3 at the promises which God gave to Abram.

12:2 The first is really at the end of verse 1: "unto a land that I will show thee." Note the I will's in verse 2. But notice the fruit of a life lived in fellowship with God: "and thou shalt be a blessing." Now the Lord had a special blessing for Abram, but before we get to that, please notice that the way to be a blessing to others, the way a Christian is a blessing to other Christians and to non-Christians, is by being separated from the world and separated unto God.

It is very popular among many professing Christians to believe that the way to be a blessing to the people of the world, is by doing what they do, and trying to live like they live. You can't find that kind of teaching in the Bible! The child of God who walks with the Lord is the one who is going to be a blessing to the unsaved even when he talks to him.

Now the blessing that the Lord was talking to Abram about was not just personal, but over the years it was to become national. Abraham was the first Jew of what was to become a Jewish nation. That nation was to have a great name and to be a blessing. The Lord was talking to Abram about great things to come. The Lord doesn't have such great blessing for all of us, but He does want us to be a personal blessing to others.

2:3 Now the blessing that the Lord continued to speak about was to be not only personal, but national.

Now in connection with this verse I was you to turn with me to Gen. 18:17-19; 22:15-18.

Remember that the revelation of the truth of God is progressive. Any doctrine of Scripture begins at a point (<), and then continues to its completion. We have learned that Abraham was saved before he ever left Ur of the Chaldees. But now we learn that the promises that God gave to Abraham actually had to do with salvation from sin. And Abraham was not saved because he was Abraham, nor was he saved because anything that he did for God so that God rewarded him with salvation. That would have been salvation by works. But in Gen. 15:6 we learn that Abraham was justified by faith, and by faith alone. He was saved because he trusted in the Lord and in the promises of the Lord. This is what we are told in Gen. 15:1-6. (Read.).

But now let me take you to Galatians 3 to show you how far-reaching the promises were which God gave to Abraham.

Now please turn to Gal. 3:5-9, and here we see the full extent of our Lord's word to Abraham that "in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:3b). (Read Gal. 3:5-9.)

This means that salvation in the OT was the same as it is now in the NT. They looked ahead to a Redeemer Who was coming; we look back on a Redeemer Who has come. Abram was saved by faith; we are saved by faith. The same truth applies to both Jews and Gentiles.

Early in the history of the Church there were some Pharisees who were teaching that if Gentiles were to be saved they had to be circumcised and keep the Law. After the apostles and elders discussed it thoroughly, Peter announced their decision. And we read about it in Acts 15:6-11:

6 And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter.

7 And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe.

8 And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us;

9 And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.

10 Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?

11 But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.

So, without knowing what his destination would be, Abram followed the Lord. He had no son, so how could he ever hope to be a nation. All he had to go on was the promise of God.

2:4 Abram left Haran. We are told in this verse that "Lot went with him." Was this in disobedience to the command of the Lord. Subsequent events seem to indicate that it was. Abram was 75 year old when he left Haran. At that age his ability to have a son was questionable, especially since he had had no child up to that time.

2:5 In addition to Lot we read here about "the souls that they had gotten in Haran." These probably were relatives and servants, but we are not told exactly. Calvin says this is probably the first mention of servants, bond servants. The Lord had specifically told Abram not only to leave his homeland, but his kindred and his father's house. It looks like Abram's obedience was not complete. But let us not be too hard on Abram because our obedience is rarely complete. We all have a lot to work on. That is the way it usually is with us. God is a very patient and gracious God. It is interesting to read in the following pages how Abram's faith grew, and his obedience was more pleasing to the Lord.

2:6 We don't know how the Lord was leading Abram, but He had to be giving him some kind of guidance. Perhaps Abram felt that Canaan could not be the land because of the statement, "And the Canaanite was then in the land." This was several hundred years before Moses was called to lead the people into Canaan, and we know how fearful the Jews were at that time, refusing to go into the land because they felt that they could not possibly drive the Canaanites out. Such a statement even in Abram's day meant that the Canaanites constituted a major obstacle standing in Abram's way.

This is probably the place to mention one outstanding characteristic of the life of faith for all of us. It is this:

it is a life of testing and trials. But the trials that the Lord puts in our way, are not to destroy our faith, but to strengthen our faith. Peter told us that we are to be “casting all of your care on Him, for He careth for you” (1 Peter 5:7). He may show us what we need to do, but we must learn to come to him first. Isaiah was led to write in Isa. 26:3 and 4.

3 Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.

4 Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord JEHOVAH is everlasting strength:

One of the most tragic things that can be said about a person who does not know the Lord is, “God is not in all his thoughts” (Psa. 10:4).

What were Abram’s trials at this point in his life?

- 1) He didn’t know where he was going.
- 2) I mention this with reservations – some of his family members went with him.
- 3) The death of his father, Terah.
- 4) He had no son, so how could his family ever become a nation.
- 5) The Lord evidently had him walk through most of the land before he said to him the words found in Gen. 12:7.
- 6) “The Canaanite was then in the land” (Gen. 12:6). This fact along was going to keep the whole nation from going into the land under the leadership of Moses.

So verse could have been the biggest trial of all. The worst was saved until the last.

But what can we say in Abram’s favor?

- 1) Verse 6 tells us that Abram went where the Lord somehow led him to go. Two other blessings are found in verse 7.

12:7 Continued from verse 6:

- 2) The Lord appears to him assuring him that he was in “the land.”
- 3) The first thing Abram did was to build an altar to the Lord.

What a testimony this was to Abram’s faith! Abram did not yet have “the seed,” and he didn’t really have “the land,” but he knew that he was in the land that the Lord had promised him. And this would have been the first step in encouraging Abram that the other parts of God’s promise to him would be fulfilled.

Building the altar showed that Abram thought of the Lord first, and that he wanted to thank the Lord, and to let the Lord know that his heart was prepared to worship the Lord.

Notice from this verse that it was the Word of God to Abram at this time which prompted Abram to build the altar. This has an important bearing on our walk of faith. It seems like we are taught here that prayer should always be preceded and prepared for by the Word of God. Bible reading and meditation should precede and be interspersed with prayer.

There is a lesson here also for husbands, and then also for the family as the Lord blesses us with children. The husband should take the lead. With the example of a godly husband, the wife will learn to worship. And when the children come along, they learn from both of their parents. This was probably not the first altar that had been built in the land, but it was the first altar to be built for the worship and praise of the one, true God. Calvin said in his commentary that Abram knew that the blood of animals could never appease God, and so his thoughts must have been directed to the future when the blood of Christ would be shed to atone for all sin.

12:8 We need to remember that Abram in moving from Ur on to Haran, and then to the promised land, moved from one heathen community to another. Luther expressed the fact that Abram and those who were with him were being persecuted in some way by the people near Moreh, and so they moved on for their own safety. Not only was Abram new to the Canaanites, but he was introducing a God and a new form of worship that was alien and offensive to the Canaanites. The world even then was not receptive to the truth, and we know that the same is true today. Nevertheless, Abram moved and built another altar “unto the Lord, and called upon the name of the Lord.” Abram obviously felt that his greatest security was in recognizing the Lord first wherever they went. But their introduction to “the land” was daily a trial to Abram and his family, but they continued to recognize the presence of the Lord wherever they went in the land.

12:9 Evidently the Canaanites kept them on the move. But Abram refused to give up. But then trouble of a different kind altogether arose. It is stated in the first words of verse 10. And so with this we come to trial #7.

12:10 “There was a famine in the land.”

Some writers say that at this particular time in the history of the world, Chaldea, where Abram had come from, was consistently fruitful in producing great harvests of food. And regardless of how strong Abram’s faith might have been, it would never have occurred to him that in the promised land he would experience a famine. After all, who controls the weather? We are not told what thoughts went through his mind, but we can imagine that it must have been a severe test for him. And even here in the text it indicates that he did not go down into Egypt to stay, but simply to sojourn – that is, to stay until the famine was over in Canaan. I believe there is a twofold meaning in this verse to the way that the verse begins: “And there was a famine in Egypt, and Abram went down . . .” He went down geographically, but he also went down for a time spiritually.

What is missing in this verse so that we can be helped by it because things are always happening to us that take us by surprise, and are totally unexpected. One thing that is missing here is prayer. And along with it we see that Abram did not wait on the Lord. I am not criticizing Abram because I have failed in the same way more than once! Things were not going well for Abram in Canaan. The Canaanites by their opposition and persecution of him had been a constant trouble. Nevertheless, he had maintained fellowship with the Lord, and had taken a strong stand for the Lord before the Canaanites. So he could have been expecting that at last they would find a safe place to dwell in the land, but then this happened! A famine? What would come next? Do you feel what Abram was feeling as you read this passage.

Years ago when I was teaching at Multnomah, one of my assignments was to teach the book of Genesis to the freshmen students. The class was too large for one class, and so the class was divided and I taught Genesis twice each year for over ten years. This book really became a part of me. Each year I got a little more out of my own teaching. I don’t remember what year it was, but the thought occurred to me, “You know, there is a chapter missing here in Genesis, or possibly the twelfth chapter would have a different ending from what it has. What is missing? It is this: *we will never know how God would have provided for Abram’s family if they had stayed in the land.* As we are going to learn Abram picked up some problems in Egypt that are still affecting Israel today. How careful we need to be because even a short time away from the Lord can carry a high price with it. Verse 11 tells us the first thing that Abram began to worry about. Do you see what it was? He began to worry about his own safety. But it all had to do with Sarai. We are going to learn more about this when we get to chapter 20 and find Abraham, as he was then, doing the same thing in Gerar that he did here in Egypt.

This is the first time that it is mentioned in the Word that Abram worried about anything. But it is also the first time it is recorded that he did anything without the leading of the Lord, without prayer, and without waiting on

the Lord. Is there a connection? How much of our worrying is due to the same reasons?

12:11 As Abram began to approach Egypt, having acted on his own instead of seeking guidance from the Lord, he began to worry about himself. He realized that Sarai was a very beautiful woman. We have here an illustration in the verses before us of how one sin leads to another. Going down into Egypt was a sin on Abram's part, not just a case of mistaken judgment. Worry set in, which is also a sin. Then instead of turning to the Lord he began to figure out how he could protect himself from being killed by the Egyptians. That was another sin. And then he got Sarai involved by asking her to tell the Egyptians that she was his sister to cover up the fact that she was his wife. So the ditch gets deeper and deeper.

12:12 He realized that when the Egyptians saw her that they would plan to kill Abram so that they could take her. Later on in the story of Abram we are going to find out that he had anticipated this before they ever left Ur of the Chaldees. See Genesis 20:1-13. So we can see that when we speak of Abram as a man of faith, that there were areas of his life which he had not entirely committed to the Lord.

What a lesson this should be to us! *The Lord wants us to trust Him in everything and with everybody and in every situation and all of the time.* It is easy to say that we do, but it is only as we face people and situations in the day by day, that we learn for ourselves just how complete our surrender to the Lord is. And so new trials call for the renewal of our commitments to the Lord.

12:13 It is interesting and very profitable for all husbands to take into consideration at this point what the Apostle Paul was directed to write thousands of years later about the responsibilities of a husband toward his wife. Please turn with me to Ephesians 5:25 through 29 and follow me as I read those verses:
25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;
26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,
27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.
28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.
29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church (Eph. 5:25-29).

The Devil is also aware of the access he has to the hearts of men because of the way men love themselves. The Devil failed to get Job to curse God when he took away all that Job had, even his children. But then the Devil said this to the Lord: "Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. But put forth thine hand now, and touch his gone and his flesh, and he will curse Thee to Thy face" (Job 2:b-5).

Now the Lord tells us in the beginning of the book of Job that Job was probably the wealthiest man in the east, and the most godly on the earth (as we learn from Job 2:3), since the Lord said about him that he "was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil. So there are exceptions to what we see in Abram at this point in his life. Abram was a man about whom we can say many good things at this point in his life, yet he was not of the same caliber as Job. And although Job was the godliest man on earth in his day, the book of Job shows that he was not yet without his flaws.

Many there have been throughout history who have given up their lives rather than to deny the Lord, but they are all exceptions to the general rule of human beings. What Abram did to Sarai at this time, and what he said about her, shows that this man of faith needed to grow in his faith. Trials often show us that same need that we have, the need to trust God fully, with our very lives.

There is a lot of discussion today among wives about what it means for them to be submissive to their husbands and many Christian wives are inclined to believe that these words from Paul were a carryover from his days as a Jewish rabbi, and that they do not apply to wives today. Submission is looked upon as being inferior, but it is not inferior! And I am speaking about Christian husbands and wives. There is an order in creation that has to do with our working together, and living together. A wife has everything in Christ that her husband has. I couldn't begin to count the times when some godly woman has ministered to me, and I would include Lucille on that list many, many times. But it is amazing to me that the Spirit of God led the Apostle Paul to write as much as he did about a husband should love and care for his wife! There is always a tendency on the part of a man to look out for himself first. In fact, that is a characteristic of human nature.

It is hard for us to believe that Abram would do this to his wife, isn't it? But he did!

Now we are not given Sarai's response, but we can tell from what followed that she must have submitted herself to her husband, and did what he said. Now we can't say that she was stupid, or that she had no backbone. At this point I am inclined to believe that she had more faith than Abram did. She knew that what Abram wanted her to do was not right. And he knew that it was not right. But it seems to me that Sarai knew enough about the Lord to know (although it had not been written yet) that "if we believe not, yet He abideth faithful; He cannot deny Himself" (2 Tim. 2:13). So we have one of the last revealed truth in Scripture proven by one of the earliest recorded events of the people of God.

What happened?

2:14 Things developed just as Abram thought that they would. And from verses 18 and 19 we find that Abram had told the Egyptians that Sarai was his sister, and apparently she had agreed.

2:15 Evidently the coming of Abram and all of his relatives and servants had attracted so much attention that even Pharaoh's sons, the princes, had taken notice of Sarai, and she was taken into Pharaoh's house, evidently with the intention that Sarai should become a part of their father's harem.

2:16 Abram seemed to come out the winner. Look at the gift of animals and servants that the Pharaoh gave to Abram. We don't know how long Abram and Sarai were separated, but I am certain that it was not very long. However, it was long enough for Sarai to have gotten into some moral difficulties. It is hard to think that a husband could do to his wife what Abram did to Sarai, and especially since they were believers.

However, it was not long before the Lord took action. After Abram went down into Egypt there is no evidence of his having any fellowship with the Lord, or that he had even been praying that the Lord would protect his wife. He really had no right that the Lord would intervene in any way, but that is exactly what happened. Notice how verse 17 begins.

2:17 "And the Lord plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife." I don't think that Pharaoh knew that it was the Lord, but somehow he had been made to realize that he had done something that was terribly, terribly wrong. And he knew what it was. It wasn't wrong according to the way they did things in Egypt, but God may have been giving Pharaoh his first lesson in the reality of sin.

What the plagues were, we do not know. What we do know is that the Lord was taking action to protect the virtue of Sarai, his child by faith.

2:18 We need to realize that Pharaoh had the power, the authority, to put Abram to death. But from what

happened we can also see that Pharaoh was afraid to do any harmful thing to Abram. Somehow he was afraid to do anything to Abram. That had to be of the Lord too. He obviously was angry, very angry. And Solomon said that “the king’s wrath is like the roaring of a lion” (Prov. 19:12). Abram did not know what was going to happen, but he had every reason to fear the worst. Pharaoh was full of questions, and they probably came out of his mouth like bullets out of a machine gun. They were all either “what” or “why.” But instead of saying that he was going to kill him, Pharaoh said in so many words, “Take your wife, and get out of Egypt. Chapter 13 tells us that that is exactly what Abram did, and one thing you want to be sure to notice is that in chapter 13 there is no more said about the famine. It was over.

But how sad it is that this incident has to be added to Abram’s biography.

A. W. Pink has a commentary on Genesis which he called, *Gleanings in Genesis*. He wrote several books to which he gave the title, “Gleanings.” This means that he did not write on the whole book, but wrote on selected passages which he had chosen to comment on. Fortunately chapter 12 of Genesis was one of those chapters, but then he jumped to chapter 18. Why he did this, I do not know. But he was a great expositor, and he had the God-given ability of drawing from Scripture some practical applications which are most valuable for us to consider. From chapter 12 he mentioned four things for all of us to apply to ourselves. The main points are here, but I have added a comment here and there. This is what we all ought to do in all of our Bible reading and Bible teaching. What did the Lord intend for me to learn from whatever verse or chapter or book of the Bible that we happen to be reading? Sometimes a verse, or a part of a verse, will seem to have been written for me, or for you.

First was that the call which God gave to Abram was primarily a call for absolute confidence in God. It was a call to go from Ur to the promised land, but there was much more. Was a call to a life of complete dependence upon the Lord – every day and in every thing. We need to ask ourselves, How completely am I trusting the Lord?

Second, our faith is always going to have times when God is testing it. And the testing which He gives us are never to destroy, but to strengthen. What is said in Scripture concerning Abram’s arrival in the land, can often be said of us: “There is a famine in the land.” It is usually when we are in a situation that is too much for us that we are inclined to fail, and see where we need to trust the Lord more completely.

Third, Dr. Pink mentions that many Bible teachers look upon Egypt as a type of the world. It surely had that place in Abram’s life, and even in the lives of the children of Israel in their deliverance from Egypt four or five hundred years beyond Abram. There may be a famine where we are, but we need to avoid going to the world for help. When I was in Baylor University I had a friend who was also studying for the ministry, and he told me that when he got discouraged in his work, he went to a movie to forget it all and to get refreshed. That is going down into Egypt for help. But we all have some ways of looking somewhere else for help instead of to the Lord.

Fourth, Dr. Pink said as you see Abram’s failures and place your own experience along side of his, marvel with Abram anew at the long suffering and patience and grace of God’s dealings with you. So even when we consider our sins, may we marvel and worship at the Lord’s feet that He keeps us as well as saving us in the beginning. This will humble us, but in turning to the Lord it will revive us. I hope my friend learned that the cure for discouragement is not in forgetting the Lord, but in turning to the Lord with greater love and devotion.