

## “The Step of Faith”—Genesis 12:1-4

The text for this sermon, the theme of which is, “The Step of Faith”, is Genesis 12:1-4 → *The LORD said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” So Abram went, as the LORD had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.* This is the text.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus:

Decisions! Decisions! What process do you use to make decisions in your life? When children pick someone to “go first” or be “it” when playing a game it’s not uncommon to use decision making “tools” like “one-potato-two-potato-three-potato-four”; rock, paper, scissors; drawing straws; flipping a coin; eeny-meeny-miney-moe; and so forth.

However, such decision-making processes are rather ridiculous when it comes to making major life choices. This is because the consequences of such decisions can affect more people and have far reaching implications. It becomes even more difficult when the decision

“costs you” something. What will be required of you and what will you have to sacrifice to implement the decision? Even if you feel confident with your decision it takes a step of faith to begin its implementation.

However, what happens when the decision is made for you? Do find it more difficult to accept? While some people may like it when they don't have to make decisions they still feel very uncomfortable when a **life changing decision** is made for them. Every action requires you to take a step of faith because you do not know for sure how it will work out.

When the LORD appeared to Abram his life changed drastically and that not by Abram's own choice. As the LORD placed His promises before Abram He re-directed his faith and gave it new meaning. God actually changed Abram from an idolater worshiping false gods into a man **of faith in Christ** based on His promise in verse 3 of our text. The LORD said that *all the families of the earth would be blessed* through him. To what was the LORD referring?

It was the continuing of the promise when Adam & Eve fell into sin of the “seed” or offspring from the woman of the Savior Who would crush satan's power once and for all. With Yahweh's decision to appear to Abram He was choosing a family and nation through whom He would bring about the fulfillment of His promise to save the world from the power of sin, death and the devil.

Conversion happens when God takes an idolater and changes him

into His faith instrument to bring His gracious promise to all people. The LORD choose a guy who worshiped idols and false gods to be His faith instrument to bring His gracious promise to all people? Absolutely! The point of God's revelation of Himself is not to find the person who is worthy to be blessed. If that were the case, no one would experience His blessing since no one is worthy. The LORD's desire is to take sinful idolatrous people and give them faith to follow Him alone! That's you and me.

When the LORD gave Abram the command to leave his people He promised him growth, honor and spiritual blessings in the midst of this call to faith. However, the blessings would not be free of suffering and struggle as he took the steps of faith. These promises actually posed a faith challenge to Abram. Abram was seventy-five years old and now God was going to make him into a great nation? What about the fact that his wife, Sarai, was not able to have children? How can one become a great nation when his wife is barren? He was going to receive honor and blessing as an "intruder" in a foreign country? And what about the promise of receiving material blessings, especially after leaving the comforts of his homeland? Abram certainly needed to *walk by faith, not by sight*. (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:2)

The LORD told Abram to go to the land He would show him. But where was the map? Abram was expected to simply follow his GPS—

that is, “**G**od’s **P**ositioning **S**ystem”—which included the recalculations of his route quite often. There were many apparent obstacles which would have been faith challenges for Abram and his family.

Faith is defined in Hebrews 11:1 as *the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen*. The nature of faith is seeing what is hoped for and acting with certainty **on the basis of God’s Word**. Taking the step of faith means that you consider your decision by seeking the LORD’s guidance in His Word, praying about it and moving forward certain that the LORD will work things out under His providence and guidance. Thus, in the midst of decisions in our lives our faith is placed in the LORD, not in our own decision-making abilities. The object of our faith is always Jesus, not “chance” or “wishful thinking.” Even when we cannot see the outcome we move forward in *assurance* and *conviction* recognizing that Yahweh is in control.

The faith which the LORD created in Abram was followed by outward obedience. He took the step of faith and left **as the LORD had told him**, leaving his country, his people and his father’s household. The only recorded “map” in our text was the promise of the LORD to guide and provide for him every step of the way. Hebrews 11:8 says *by faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going*.

I stated earlier that this step of faith on Abram's part was focused on faith **in Christ**. Such faith given to us by the Holy Spirit is meant to be acted upon in our daily lives. Obedience to the Lord Jesus is the fruit of faith based upon God's Word. Thus, you may not know where you are going but you know Whom you are following. Even if you feel you know where you're going you may not know exactly how to get there. Even if you know how to get there it is likely that getting there will involve many more steps of faith as your route is "recalculated" by your GPS—"God's **Positioning System**"—requiring more steps of faith.

Taking the steps of faith is very important for us because we too are people of the promise. We are people who have experienced the fulfillment of God's promise given to Abram in the Person & Work of Jesus Christ. Romans 4:16 says your righteousness *depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring—not only to the adherent of the law but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham.*

Abram's faith was not some "leap into the unknown" or "blind faith." Rather, it was walking into the land of Canaan **which was known by God**. What's most important is that **God knows** where you are going. Faith may not know what is coming ahead of you yet it moves you to action because God knows. It trusts Him every step of the way! By faith

you are certain about where you are going because the One Whom you follow has it all under control. He empowers you by His Holy Spirit to take those steps of faith as you follow Him.

The LORD's leading Abram to the promised land was a picture of your journey of faith today. Hebrews 11 says that he *died in faith, not having received the things promised*. The most he could do was see *them and greeted them from afar, and acknowledge that he was a stranger on the earth*. With Abram we too *desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one* where God has prepared an eternally permanent residence for us in Christ Jesus. (cf. Hebrews 11:13-16) We are heirs of all God's blessings given to Abram through faith in Jesus Christ! So let's take God at His Word. Let's take the steps of faith. Let's follow Him daily and see how His Holy Spirit will produce His results in the midst of our daily lives! After all, as Jesus says about our salvation in Mark 10:27 → *With man it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God. Amen.*

*Go in peace.*

*The journey on which you go is under the eye of the LORD.*

(Judges 18:6)

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