



# The Footsteps of ABRAHAM

## Out Of Egypt

- Romans 6
- The faith that saved Abraham was the simple act of **believing** what God promised him as he stood there looking up at the stars...
  - We are saved by that same faith as we stand all alone looking up at the body of our crucified Lord... Who justified us with God by his death...
- What we will see next is that this grace we've received does not give us freedom to sin
  - And even though God has saved us through the sacrifice of his only son, we can remove ourselves from the grace of God by leaving His presence...
- There is a tension that naturally exists in our Walk in Christ
  - This tension exists because Human Beings are complex, and things are not ever "Black and White"
- Although we want to see things in the terms of either:
  - ***Walking with God***
  - ***Not Walking with God***
- The reality of the situation is often much more confusing...
  - There are people in the World who have chosen NOT to "***Walk with God***", and yet do good things...
  - Likewise... We are all too familiar with ourselves who have chosen a life of service to God... And yet, occasionally find ourselves sinning...

- What we will see is that it there is a Law that exists in our bodies...
- We commit our lives to serve the Lord in our minds...
  - But, our bodies are prone to sin...
- We dedicate our lives to **“Walk with God”**...
  - Yet, sometimes our bodies do not walk along with us...
- And even though our **Inward Man** and **Fleshly Members** do not always walk in the same direction, that doesn’t mean that we have abandoned our calling to serve the Lord...
- When we look at the Life of Abraham, I think we find the same sort of example...
  - James refers to Abraham as a “Friend of God”, and we know that his life is recorded for us as an example of Faith
  - Abraham chose to follow the One God, and dedicated his life to service of that God...
- And yet, Abraham had his points of weakness...
  - Abraham had **Egypt**...
- Let’s begin the story in Genesis 12
- Genesis 12:1-5
  - 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:
  - 2) And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:
  - 3) And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.
  - 4) So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.
  - 5) And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother’s son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.
- Another of the great acts of Faith Abraham shows in his life...

- Even though he lived in a well developed, and actually very civilized city, Abraham follows God's calling and leaves... Not even knowing where he is going...
- Just trusting that God would provide for him and his family, in this strange land that God was going to show him...
- *And into the Land of Canaan they came...*

- Genesis 12:6

6) And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite *was* then in the land.

- He first comes to Shechem

- God reaffirms His Promise to Abraham at this point, and clearly tells him that this is the land that is promised to his seed

- Genesis 12:7

7) And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him.

- He builds an altar to thank God for his journey

- But, "***the Canaanite was in the land***", so he headed South...

- He continues South into the area of Bethel...

- Genesis 12:8

8) And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, *having* Bethel on the west, and Hai on the east: and there he builded an altar unto the LORD, and called upon the name of the LORD.

- Again, he builds an altar and "*called upon the name of the Lord*"

- Genesis 12:9-10

9) And Abram journeyed, going on still toward the south.

10) And there was a famine in the land: and Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there; for the famine *was* grievous in the land.

- There was a famine in the land...
- So, he continues going further and further South...
  - Abraham goes into Egypt
- This was a challenging time for Abraham
  - Abraham's faith was not up to the challenge
- God had just made spectacular promises to Abraham
  - He was going to make a great nation from Abraham
  - He was going to give the 75 year old man a child...
  - He promised the land around him to his seed...
- God surely wouldn't have let Abraham die of starvation there
  - Abraham had an opportunity to show his Faith in God's Promises...
- Instead he **"goes down"** to Egypt
  - This is never a sign of spiritual strength
  - Egypt is the world in scriptural terms, and almost always involves "going down" to get there... A lowering of our standards and morals...
- This is a bad choice to a tough problem
- There often seems to be disadvantages of taking the "easier" path in life
  - It often appears that God plans it that way
  - A trial to test us... To Prove us...
  - To stretch our faith...
  - He wants us to chose the path of Faith
    - This is often the harder choice
    - But, it brings with it less complications
  - Choosing the easier path often brings with it many complications

- There often seems to be problems that spring up in your life when you try to find your own solution to your problems

- Following God's path is often a more difficult walk... But, much less problems arise

- Almost immediately in Abraham's life things started to get worse... a tell-tale sign!

- Genesis 12:1-15

- 11) And it came to pass, when he was come near to enter into Egypt, that he said unto Sarai his wife, Behold now, I know that thou *art* a fair woman to look upon:
- 12) Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, This *is* his wife: and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive.
- 13) Say, I pray thee, thou *art* my sister: that it may be well with me for thy sake; and my soul shall live because of thee.
- 14) And it came to pass, that, when Abram was come into Egypt, the Egyptians beheld the woman that she *was* very fair.
- 15) The princes also of Pharaoh saw her, and commended her before Pharaoh: and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house.

- He realizes that he has put his life in even more eminent danger due to Sarah's beauty

- Again, he should have been faithful, but you've got to realize that he's already heading down a wrong way road, and it's hard to follow all of the traffic laws when you're already travelling the wrong way on a one-way street

- Once concessions are made to our own worldly self-interests

- Further demands are almost sure to come

- Making further concessions inevitable

- It is really hard to sort out problems when you are in the middle of them

- Envision situations before they arise, in your marriage, ecclesia, work and community

- Trust your Faith in God's ability to save you, and don't put yourself in harm's way

- Sarah is "overpoweringly" attractive to Pharaoh...

- Jewish history says, Sarah, Esther, and Bathsheba are the three most beautiful women ever to live

- But, Sarah is 65 years old now... *A barren old woman?*
- Abraham shifts the danger over to Sarah...
  - In panic and trouble you just don't make good decisions
- How Abraham's conscience must have racked him every time Pharaoh gave him a gift
- God protected Sarah and Abraham... and plagued Pharaoh
- Genesis 12:16-20

- 16) And he entreated Abram well for her sake: and he had sheep, and oxen, and he asses, and menservants, and maidservants, and she asses, and camels.
- 17) And the LORD plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai Abram's wife.
- 18) And Pharaoh called Abram, and said, *What is this that thou hast done unto me? why didst thou not tell me that she was thy wife?*
- 19) *Why saidst thou, She is my sister? so I might have taken her to me to wife: now therefore behold thy wife, take her, and go thy way.*
- 20) And Pharaoh commanded *his* men concerning him: and they sent him away, and his wife, and all that he had.

- Pharaoh figures it out
- Pharaoh acts righteously in this case...
  - And sends him back to the Land that God has promised him
- Abraham goes up out of Egypt

- Genesis 13:1-2

- 1) And Abram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south.
- 2) And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold.

- This is the usual result of "going down into Egypt"
  - But few are able to leave once they get there

- Genesis 13:3-4

- 3) And he went on his journeys from the south even to Bethel, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Hai;

4) Unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first: and there Abram called on the name of the LORD.

- Saved from a terrible situation... Abraham starts fresh again

- Confession of failure... Thankfulness of forgiveness
- Faith is like muscle...
  - Stretched... Broken down... Built back stronger
  - We don't want to do this... but, God does do it to us...
  - We must learn to take advantage of it!
- Lest you think he learns from this situation...
  - Several years later he does the same thing again
    - He ***“goes down to Egypt”*** again...

• Genesis 20:1-2

- 1) And Abraham journeyed from thence toward the south country, and dwelled between Kadesh and Shur, and sojourned in Gerar.
- 2) And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, She *is* my sister: and Abimelech king of Gerar sent, and took Sarah.

- Like all of us... Abraham had moments where his faith was weak
  - Abraham had problems learning a lesson, and he confronted the same mistake more than once
- But, he had dedicated his life to serving his God...
  - He knew that God would justify him...
  - Regardless of his imperfections... He believed in a God of Mercy
- Paul speaks of this same type of situation in Romans 6 and 7...
  - This tension that exists in our lives...
  - The tension that exists when we chose a life of service to God...
    - And yet, occasionally find ourselves sinning...

- In Romans 5, Paul had concluded that...

- Romans 5:1-2

- 1) Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:
- 2) By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

- We are justified and stand in grace before God...

- Christ died for our sins, and we don't need to concern ourselves with them any longer...

- Romans 6:1

- 1) What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?

- But that doesn't mean that we are free to sin...

- And thus comes the confusion...

- Our names are written in the Book of Life

- Our sins do not remove our names from the Book of Life

- We can remove ourselves from the Book of Life by rejecting the gift of God, but it is not our sins that keep us from Eternal Life...

- **BUT!** That doesn't give us license to sin all we want!

- Romans 6:2

- 2) God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

- Romans 6:1-2 - MESSAGE

- 1) So what should we do? Keep on sinning so that God can keep on forgiving?
- 2) I should hope note! If you've left the country where sin is king, how can you still live in your old house there?

- At baptism we enter into a new state...

- We establish ourselves in a new position with God... A new life!



- Our service to God is motivated by thanks for the blessing we've been given
  - Not fear of having to perform the right actions
- This difference is well illustrated by a simple example:
- Two Brethren go to paint a widowed Sister's house on Saturday Morning...
  - One thinks to himself... "I know that this is the right thing to do, so even though I don't really want to spend my Saturday this way, I'm going to do it, in hopes that it will make up for some of my sins."
    - He thinks that his actions will somehow earn him salvation...
  - The other thinks to himself... "God has blessed me with salvation, and washed away all of my sins. Even though I don't really want to spend my Saturday this way, I'm going to do this out of thanks to my God for the great gift of Eternal Life that I have received."
    - His appreciation of the salvation he has received motivates his actions...
- This "new life" calls us to be "dead to sin" and "alive to God"
- Romans 6:11-14
  - 11) Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.
  - 12) Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.
  - 13) Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.
  - 14) For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.
- Paul is not trying to explain to us that once we are baptized we should never sin again...
  - Actually he says quite the opposite
- Paul's message is that we now live for a higher purpose
  - Unlike the millions around us who live for nothing else than the petty, rudimentary, base elements of this world...
  - We have a reason, a meaning, a purpose to our existence!

- We serve the Living God who has saved us by His grace!
- We will continue to fall after Baptism...
  - But, the things we do in weakness do not define us
  - The sins in our lives are not our goal
    - They are simply impediments on the way to our goal
- In Chapter 7 Paul continues to explain the relationship of Sin to our New Life
  - He tries to explain why sin is so alluring...
- Romans 7:7-11 - Message
  - 7) The Law of Moses had a perfectly legitimate function. Without its clear guidelines for right and wrong, moral behavior would be mostly guesswork. Apart from the succinct, clear command, "You shall not covet," I could have dressed covetousness up to look like a virtue and ruined my life with it.
  - 8) Don't you remember how it was? I do, perfectly well. The law started out as an excellent piece of work. What happened, though, was that sin found a way to pervert the commandment into a temptation, making a piece of "forbidden fruit" out of it. The law, instead of being used to guide me, was used to seduce me. Without all the paraphernalia of the law, sin looked pretty dull and lifeless,
  - 9) and I went along without paying much attention to it. But once sin got its hands on the law and decked itself out in all that finery, I was fooled, and fell for it.
  - 10) The very commandment that was supposed to guide me into life was cleverly used to trip me up, throwing me headlong.
  - 11) So sin was plenty alive, and I was stone dead.
- It is the appeal of having things "Black and White" that we find alluring...
  - It's the appeal of having simple commandments to lead our lives, instead of having to simply "live for Christ" that trips us up...
- Paul speaks about this clearly in Colossians 2:
- Colossians 2:20-23
  - 20) Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances,
  - 21) (Touch not; taste not; handle not;

- 22) Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?
- 23) Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.

• Colossians 2:20-23 - NIV

- 20) Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why, as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its rules:
- 21) "Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!"?
- 22) These are all destined to perish with use, because they are based on human commandments and teachings.
- 23) Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining fleshly indulgence.

• The Law was a "Schoolmaster" to bring us to Christ...

- What was the "Schoolmaster" supposed to teach us?

• **That Laws don't have any value in restraining fleshly indulgence!**

- The Law with it's complex nature was supposed to bring us to realize that we cannot legislate righteousness...
  - We cannot regulate sin...
- The Law was to teach us that we all desperately need forgiveness and grace through our Lord Jesus Christ

• Galatians 3:21-29

- 21) *Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.*
- 22) *But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.*
- 23) *But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.*
- 24) *Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we **might be justified by faith.***
- 25) *But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.*
- 26) *For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.*
- 27) *For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.*
- 28) *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.*

29) And if ye *be* Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

- There is a "Law" that still does work in our lives...

- Romans 7:15-25

- 15) For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.
- 16) If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that *it is* good.
- 17) Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.
- 18) For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but *how* to perform that which is good I find not.
- 19) For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.
- 20) Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.
- 21) I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.
- 22) For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:
- 23) But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.
- 24) O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?
- 25) I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

- Paul understood what it is like to desperately want nothing more than to dedicate yourself to service to God... And then find yourself slipping and sinning...

- He felt the frustrations that we feel about our own weaknesses...

- Romans 7:15-25 - MESSAGE

- 15) What I don't understand about myself is that I decide one way, but then I act another, doing things I absolutely despise.
- 16) So if I can't be trusted to figure out what is best for myself and then do it, it becomes obvious that God's commandment is necessary.
- 17) But I need something more! For if I know the law but still can't keep it, and if the power of sin within me keeps sabotaging my best intentions, I obviously need help!
- 18) I realize that I don't have what it takes. I can will it, but I can't do it.
- 19) I decide to do good, but I don't really do it; I decide not to do bad, but then I do it anyway.
- 20) My decisions, such as they are, don't result in actions. Something has gone wrong deep within me and gets the better of me every time.
- 21) It happens so regularly that it's predictable. The moment I decide to do good, sin is there to trip me up.

- 22) I truly delight in God's commands,
- 23) but it's pretty obvious that not all of me joins in that delight. Parts of me covertly rebel, and just when I least expect it, they take charge.
- 24) I've tried everything and nothing helps. Is there no one who can do anything for me?
- 25) The answer, thank God, is that Jesus Christ can and does. Jesus has set things right in this life of contradictions where I want to serve God with all my heart and mind, but am pulled by the influence of sin to do something totally different.

- To want more than anything else to not be distracted in your service to God...
  - To lose yourself deep in prayer, begging God to strengthen you so that you can walk more closely to Him...
- Then to stand up, and walk right into the same sin that you were in yesterday...
  - It's incredible! It's mind-boggling how we can be so contrary...
  - With our heart with desire to serve our Lord, but with our flesh... sin
- Who can deliver us this terrible situation?
  - Praise God that He has given us His Son!
- Remember Romans 5?
- Romans 5:1-2
  - 1) Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:
  - 2) By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.
- We are justified and stand in grace before God...
  - Christ died for our sins, and we don't need to concern ourselves with them any longer...
- Romans 6:1
  - 1) What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?
- But that doesn't mean that we are free to sin...
- Sin no longer has any part of our New Life

- We are to be focused on the good that we can do in this life to thank God for the wonderful gift of Eternal Life that we have received...
  - We have to realize that making all kinds of rules and regulations for our life won't have any positive effect in curbing the desires of our flesh...
  - We have to understand that we are going to have moments of weakness, when like Abraham, our Faith is not up to the challenge, and we "go down into Egypt" to find the solutions to our problems...
- But, the important part is that, like Abraham, we come back up...
  - Out of Egypt!
- Back to the Table of our Lord
  - Back to the forgiveness and the mercy that comes through his sacrifice
- And that we get back on track, and continue in good works...
  - Good works that are motivated by the blessings that we have received!