

Transforming Power of God's Presence

How God develops us in the deserts

Guided Growth with Pastor Keith @ CBC Sunday, May 19th

God created us for an "Expected End" (Rev. 4:11) and encourages us to seek it (Him) *Jer. 29:12-14*

Isaiah 51:1-2 *"Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the LORD:
Look unto Abraham... for I called him ..., and blessed him, and increased him."*

Reflection: Notice the Pattern/Process of God's Call:

- 1) God usually finds us busy Pursuing our own dreams. *Gen. 11:26-30*
- 2) He asks us to Prioritize Him and embrace His (Bigger/Better) dreams. *Gen. 12:1-3; Mt 6:33*
- 3) God's Dreams come with His directions. *Ex 19:5-6*
- 4) God's Dreams require our decisions: (We won't "drift" into God's Will! *Ro 12:1,2*)
 - Will we follow him beyond our comfort zones?
 - How will we deal with the border bullies?
 - Will we persevere through the distractions, detours and disappointments of the deserts.
 - Will we cooperate with God as he uses "all things" to reveal and refine our Faith and Character. (*Mt 11:28,29; Ro. 8:28; 1 Cor 3:9*)

Direction: We can't follow Jesus and stay where (*and how*) we are!

Following Him Changes Us! *Mt 4:19,20*

These changes take place because of our time with, and growing relationship to, Him.
(*Jn 14:21; Ro 12:1,2; 2 Cor 3:18; 4:16-18*) Abram's journey illustrates this!

God met with Abram Multiple times!

1. God initiated most of these "encounters".

A. He's the pursuer in this great romance. (*Ez 16*)

- 1) Initially in Ur (*Gen. 12:1-3*)
- 2) At Shechem in Canaan *Gen. 12:6* (5 years later!)
- 3) After Lot chooses Sodom. *Gen 13:14-17*
- 4) After rescuing Lot (and Tithing.) *Gen. 15*
- 5) *Gen. 17* God met with him (after 13 years) to:
 - a) Renew his covenant. *Vs 1-5*
 - b) Change his name from Abram (exalted father) to Abraham (father of multitudes) *6-9*
 - c) Initiate circumcision as sign of covenant. *10-14*
 - d) Promise the birth of Isaac (laughter) at *100. 16,17*
Abram laughs at the thought! *Vs 16*
 - e) Change Sarai (dominative, small) to Sarah (princess). *15-22*
This encounter closes with Abraham's obedience. 23-25

6) *Gen. 18* God meets him at Mamre to:

- a) Enjoy a meal together. *Vs 1-8*
- b) Renew his promise of Isaac. (*vs 9-15*)
 - (1) Sarah was "listening in" and laughed (in doubt, not delight) when she "overheard" God's promise. *Vs 13*
 - (2) God rebuked her with this response in *vs 14* *"Is there anything too hard for the LORD?"*

c) Warn Abraham about Sodom's destruction. 17-19 *"Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all nations shall be blessed in him? For I know him, he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him."*

d) Allow Abraham to intercede for Sodom. 18:23-33

(1) Abraham started with a "deal" to save Sodom if God could find 50 "righteous" people there. 24-26

(2) He concluded when God agreed for 10 "righteous". vs 32,33 *"Peradventure ten shall be found there. he (the Lord) said, I will not destroy it for ten's sake. "*

Why did Abraham stop at 10? 10 would account for Lot's family! 19:12

"Hast thou here any besides? son in law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place:"

Lot's compromise in Gen. 13:10-13 (Valuing Power, Position, Possessions over Purity and principle) cost him his Peace (2 Pt 2:7,8) as well as his Progeny (family)!

Gen. 19:14 *"Lot went and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked ..."*

7) Gen. 22 The Final Test.

a) Return Isaac (the gift) to God! (the giver) 1-12 2 *"Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of...5 Abraham said unto the young me, abide here... I and the lad will go yonder AND WORSHIP, and come again to you."*

b) Provide a Prophetic Picture. 11-15 13 *"And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son.14 And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovahjireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen."* (See also Heb. 11:19)

c) Reward Abraham for his faith. 15-18 *"because thou hast obeyed my voice."*

Conclusion:

God initiated 7 interactions with Abraham for the purpose of transforming him into the "Father of Faith". (Is 50:1,2) At each of these interactions, Abram learned more about God as well as himself. God was willing to meet him in his ignorance in Ur (Gen. 12)

But never in his disobedience (*In Haran, Egypt, or Philistia!*)

Every other interaction God initiated took place in Canaan (*where God told him to go!*)

Application:

1) God meets us in our ignorance and asks us to trust and follow him. (like Abram)

Mt 4:17,19 *"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand...Follow me and I will make you fishers of men."*

Has God revealed himself to you yet? How have you responded?

2) While God meets with us differently than he did with Abram, He does still reveal himself and His will through His Spirit and His Word. John 16:13,14

What are you doing to expose yourself to the word of truth from the Spirit of God?

3) As we Focus on His Word and Will, and Follow (by faith) (aka: trust and obey) we're transformed. (John 14:21; Romans 8:28,29; 2 Cor 3:18)

What are you doing to apply the truths of God's Word to renovate your thinking?

Jn 10:27 *"My sheep here my voice, and I know them, and they follow me."*

(Are You?)

(Will You?)