

Abraham: Encounter

Genesis 12-22

- I don't consider myself a very controlling person overall.
 - But there is one area where I can confidently say that I have some control issues. And that is behind the wheel of a car.
 - I don't like NOT being the one driving.
 - I feel useless if I'm sitting shotgun.
 - And when I'm driving, I need to know exactly where I'm going and the fastest way to get there
 - If I'm going somewhere I'm not familiar with, I need the GPS clearly in view because
 - I need to know where I am going,
 - how far till the next turn,
 - and when we are supposed to arrive.
- So if Rachel has the directions to where we are going in her phone, and I can't see the phone, I'm gonna be a little on edge. We could be going somewhere, and I would have just made a turn, but then she's doing something on here phone.
 - 'Uh, hey babe, when's the next turn?' "Oh, you're going straight for a while," THAT DOESN'T REALLY HELP ME MUCH! "How long is a while?!" "A WHIIILLLEEEEE" So i'll be petty, and just ask her every 30 seconds, "How far now, how far now, "until I annoy her enough to allow me to see the GPS.
 - I know it's something that I need to work on, and I probably need some counseling. But there is something within me that goes crazy if I don't know where I'm going.
 - So whenever I read about Abram and God's initial interaction, I start to go a little crazy FOR Abram.

- **Genesis 12:1 (ESV) Now 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.”**

- This is pretty drastic! In those days, large families and land meant everything. This was like the equivalent of leaving you career and support system to go *somewhere*.

- Where exactly? He doesn't know!
- But I believe that God is open ended with His directions because...

- **THE JOURNEY IS NOT ABOUT WHERE YOU ARE WALKING, BUT WHO YOU ARE WALKING WITH**

- I bet it would go a long way in our marriage if I would stop freaking out about the directions and just took the time to enjoy the road trip with my wife

- If you look throughout the book of Genesis so far, there's seems to be a sub theme of “walking with God.”

- ENOCH

- **Genesis 5:24 Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.**

- NOAH

- **Genesis 6:9 Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation. Noah walked with God.**

- ABRAHAM

- **Genesis 17:1-2 When Abram was ninety-nine years old the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless, that I may make my covenant between me and you, and may multiply you greatly.”**

- God is telling Abram, “I want to make you a promise, to give you all of the land you could

ever need, and give you a humungous family line, that can't even be counted. And all I need from you, is to walk with me.”

- The promise that God makes with Abram can be summed up in this: *If you just make me your God, and walk with me, I will take care of everything that you need*
- This seems like an easy sell, but even back then, this would be completely counter cultural for Abram
 - If you go back to Genesis chapter 6, we see that things had gotten so bad on the earth that God regretted even making man. There was only one person left on the planet that God could see as blameless
 - And that was Noah. Why was he seen as blameless? Because he walked with God
 - Even when the entire earth had forgotten Him, Noah remembered the God that had created everything.

- So God had him build an ark, take his family and two of every kind of animal, and God flooded and cleansed the earth. Now, God took no pleasure in this, and promised to never punish the earth in this way again.
- To signify this promise, God says, in **Genesis 9** ***“I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth... When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.”***
 - This term bow was the same term used for the weapon of war, so God is saying I am hanging up my weapon of war
 - and if you see the way the bow is positioned, it could signify that God is saying that I will no longer shoot my punishment down upon the earth, but rather one day heaven will absorb the punishment for the earth.

- *Now that might be a stretch, but whether or not that was what God was specifically signifying, that would eventually happen when God, who SO LOVED the world, sent His only begotten Son, to absorb the punishment of sin FOR us, so that we could live eternally with Him.*
- But let's not get ahead of ourselves, going back to Genesis...
 - After the Flood and the promise to never flood again, God tells Noah and his family to be fruitful and multiply, and the earth begins to fill with people once again
 - But the disease of sin is so deeply seeded within humanity, that the same problems begin to arise again.
- By the time we get to chapter 11, things get so dark, that we read about mankind showing a complete rejection of God by trying to build a tower they called Babel, in order to make their own way to heaven.
 - But God remembers that He isn't going to wipe out the earth with floods anymore, so He instead confuses their speech, and everyone began to speak different languages....now everyone is confused and can't understand each other anymore, so they end up scattering all around the world
 - But there is one family line that still seems to have some promise. And these are the descendants from the line of Shem. These descendants, somewhere down the line, end up settling in an area called Ur that is a very pagan culture.
- Ur was known as being the central hub for "moon worship"
 - This family had began to get sucked into this pagan culture of idolatry
 - So here you have the last hope for a Godly family, they begin to get swept up into a pagan culture, and then a man named Terah, has a son he names Abram.

- His name Abram, which means 'Father', seems to be a cruel ironic joke because he ends up marrying a woman who can't have children.
- The last hope for a Godly family seems to be flickering out...
- That is, Until God encounters Abram when he was 75 years old, and tells him, ***“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.” -Genesis 12:1-3***
 - So Abram begins this journey of walking with God.
 - The older he gets the more confident he becomes in his walk with God, and sets a new legacy for his entire family line
- In Genesis we see Abraham giving instructions to his son when he says... ***‘The Lord, before whom I have walked, will send his angel with you and prosper your way.’ -Genesis 24:40***
- And we see that legacy being passed down because in Genesis 48, we see Abraham's grandson, blessing his great-grandson, when it says, ***“And he blessed Joseph and said, “The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked,” -Genesis 48:15***
 - What this tells me is that it is never too late to start a new legacy for you and your family. A legacy defined by walking with God.
 - I'll tell ya, if my gravestone read the same as Enoch's obituary I'd be ok with that! “Here's lies Kenny, he walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.”
- What more would my life need to be remembered by? Because I know that if I walked with God while I was on this earth, that

means I allowed Him to set the tone for every area of my entire life.

- Then I know that I lived a life that He blessed, and because of that, my life was a blessing to others. Therefore I know that I lived a life that had eternal significance and that's a life worth living!
- The question is, **What does it look like to walk with God: Believe Him, Trust Him, and Move**
- You may not move your physical living location, but you still have to act on what you believe about him.
- When God said, "Go to a land that I show him you, and I'll bless you," Abram didn't say, "Sweet! I trust your promise to bless me!"... and then stay right where he was
- No, he had to move in obedience
- Just like today, we need to move in obedience

- So often, *we say "Oh God I trust your promise to provide!"*
 - But then we refuse to be generous.
 - Which actually says, "God I DON'T trust you to provide."
- *We'll say, 'God I trust your promise to never leave me or forsake me!'*
 - But then we get caught up in living lifestyles that act like His presence in or lives is dependent upon our performance
 - Which actually states, "God I DON'T trust you not to leave me"
- We'll say, *"God I trust your Word is true!"*
 - But then we don't read it
- We'll say, *"God I trust you're All Powerful!"*
 - But then we don't pray about things we actually need
- Many say, *"I Trust that Jesus came!"*

- But then never actually accept the offer of eternal life for themselves
- Many people have a very hard time moving in obedience because they have a hard time trusting the promises of God but...
- **YOU CAN TRUST THE PROMISE IF YOU KNOW THE PROMISER**
 - You get to know Him by walking with Him
 - God take's Abram to the land of Canaan and tells him, "I'm going to give this land to your offspring"
 - So Abram sets up a tent and an alter for the Lord.
 - A famine hits and he has to detour to Egypt for a while, but then he ends up right back at the spot where he received the promise.
- Now in Genesis chapter 13, we're told that Abram has become very rich with silver and gold and livestock. And his resources have

been so blessed that he and his nephew had too much to be able to live together, so they split up.

- But keep in mind, that what meant the most, and was most valuable at this time, was land and family, and he still doesn't have any land that is actually his own, and he still doesn't have any children.
- In chapter 15 God can sense that Abram is getting anxious, and He comes to Abram and says, "***Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.***" ***But Abram said, "O Lord God, what will You give me, for I continue childless...And [God] brought [Abram] outside and said, "Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them." Then He said to him, "So shall your offspring be." And he believed the Lord, and He counted it to him as righteousness.***" -Genesis 15:2 -6

- He believed God, even in the midst of it making no logical sense. He and his barren wife are WAY too old to have children. He has no idea how any of this could be possible, but yet HE BELIEVES God, and THAT was counted to Him as righteousness
 - NOT making all of the right decisions
 - NOT never making a mistake...which he made many
 - Not having a perfect performance
 - But BELIEVING GOD
- Your walk with God starts with believing Him. Our belief in Him must turn into Trust in Him, and we show our Trust by Moving in Obedience.
 - Hebrews tells us that without faith, without BELIEVING HIM, it is impossible to please God
- Abram's belief of God was counted to him as righteousness, which means to be right-with-God.
- Not only was Abram made right-with-God because of his belief in Him, it also created a friendship with God.
- *2 Chronicles, Isaiah, and James all refer to Abram as "God's Friend."*
- Do you want a friendship with God? Do you want a true walk with God? Believe Him, even when the promise seems to be outrageous, too good to be true, impossible, or taking a lot longer than you thought.
- In Genesis 17, God comes again to Abram, who is now 99 years old. This is now 24 years after he initially received the promise.
- ***"When Abram was ninety-nine years old the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless, that I may make my***

covenant between me and you, and may multiply you greatly.” Then Abram fell on his face. And God said to him, “Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations.” -Genesis 17:1-4

- Then God changes his name from Abram which “father” to Abraham, which means “father of many”
- And then he tells him that his wife will have a son the next year. Then God says, “...***You shall call his name Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring after him.***”
-Genesis 17:19
- It’s interesting to me, that God tells Abraham, I will make my covenant with you, but then says, I will establish my covenant with Isaac.”
- I read this and it made me ask myself, “what if God wants me to move toward the promise

so that my children could live out the promise?”

- It’s never too early or too late to ask yourselves these questions...because you may still be young, but the type of husband, wife, mother, or father that you’re going to be one day actually starts now
- You have the opportunity to set the spiritual tone for your future starting now
- What if the main work that God wants to do in and through your life is to set the tone for the generation that comes after you?
 - Would it still be worth it?
 - What if the promise, the dream, the vision God has given you is less about you, and more about those who will come after you? Would you still go after it?
- Abraham was promised two big things from God: Family and Land

- The family he doesn't get until 25 years after he was promised it
- The land, he never even gets to possess
- ***“By faith [Abraham] made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise... All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth...Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.” -Hebrews 11:9***
 - Abraham knew that there was something bigger than land at stake
 - He was setting a legacy for his family that would come after him
- Can you imagine how crazy it looked?
 - Coming from a family that is caught up in pagan culture, almost nearly forgetting all about God...
 - He tells them, “I’m leaving!”...”where ya going?”...”I don’t know!”...”why you leaving?”...”Uhhh, God told me to”...” God??...Abram, be sensible, think this one through!”
- Then he leaves following directions in a way that would drive me crazy!...cuz he definitely doesn't see the GPS!
 - Then they finally get to a land, that is occupied by another people group. And he's like, THIS IS IT! This is the land God has given us!
 - Uhhhh, it doesn't look like God has given it to us
 - But they set up their tents anyway

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- And his descendants won't even obtain the promised land until over 470 years later!
- But that didn't matter to Abraham, because the destination didn't matter as much to him as walking with God
 - He could trust the Promise because he was enamored with the Promiser
- And he wasn't fixated on what God WASN'T doing
- *Which we would be wise to learn from...*
 - He didn't sit around and complain that God wasn't giving Him land whenever God was doing so many other things
- God was taking care of him every step of the way.
 - It made no logical sense, that in a culture where land and large families meant everything, a man who had no land and no

sons, was still becoming rich and growing in resources.

- Only God could do that
- Everywhere he went, it was evident that he was blessed to the point that Kings were partnering with him.
 - Only God could do that
- And then when his barren wife is 90 years old, she bears him a son
 - Now definitely ONLY God could do that
- The longer he walked with God, the better he got to know God, the more he saw God work, the more he understood how unsensible it would be NOT to trust God
- Growing up, I got to see this lived out first hand...
 - My parents, very early on, had decided to WALK WITH GOD. Early on in their marriage,

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my dad went through Bible college and mom had 4 kids.

- While they were pregnant with the 5th, me, they obeyed the Lord's call to go start a church in Northern Ireland. So they packed up their 4 little children, all under the age of 6, and moved.
- Now I'm not sure if you're aware, but there's not much money in Church planting, especially in that part of the world.
 - So my parents didn't have the money to afford Christmas presents, they were scraping by to get food on the table. There were times that my parents had to scrounge through couch cushions trying to find some spare change to get milk.
 - But you know what, I never knew it! It wasn't until I was much older and was told how hard things were that I ever realized my parents were struggling at all,

- why? Because all I ever saw was God PROVIDE. All I ever saw were presents under the tree, food on the table, and milk in the fridge. I never went without, I never went hungry, and always had more than I needed.

- MY parents believed God, they trusted God, and they moved in obedience to Him . And God always made sure they had everything they needed.
- And Little did they know, that their WALK WITH GOD would set the tone for their boy who would much better understand what it meant to live by faith because he had seen it lived out in his parents his entire life.
- You might say, well Kenny, that's good for you, but I didn't have that example growing up... well neither did they!
- STOP MAKING THAT EXCUSE! You don't have to be bound by your upbringing or a product of your environment

- You have a God, who is not the reflection of your earthly father, but the Perfection of your earthly father
- HE can set the tone for your life, your faith, your love, and set a new legacy for your life and the lives of those who come after you
- A legacy defined by walking with God
- The longer you walk with God, the more you'll understand...
- **WHERE GOD GUIDES HE PROVIDES**
 - Abraham learned this first hand
 - Even when the requests and commands of God seemed to get out of hand
 - He still Believed God, Trusted God, and moved in obedience, no matter what
 - In Genesis 22, we see God tell Abraham to do one of the most mind boggling things we could ever read...and its one of the most misunderstood passages of scripture

- ***Genesis 22:1-2 After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." He said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you."***
 - Abraham's head has to be spinning.
 - He's gotta be thinking, you promised me that through this son, the whole world would be blessed, I waited 25 years for this son, and now that he's healthy and growing and the whole plan that you promised seems to be going the direction you said it would, you want me to sacrifice him?!
 - Many people will react to this passage saying, "How could a supposedly Good God ever ask such a thing?? How cruel and disgusting could this God be??"

- But we don't have to react that way, because Abraham didn't even react that way and HE was the one in the situation!
 - And he didn't act anything like that because, he had learned to trust the Promiser
 - He knows His Character. He knows that God always has a bigger plan than his human mind can realize
 - Hebrews 11 recounts this scene “**By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had embraced the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son... Abraham reasoned that God could even raise the dead...**” -Hebrews 11:17, 19
 - So Abraham doesn't know what God is going to do, but He knows that God always provides
- So he got up early in the morning, chopped the wood for an offering and began the journey with his son and a few servants.
 - After traveling for 3 days, Abraham sees the mountain
 - He gets off his animal, and tells his servants to stay there with the animals.
 - He gathers the wood for the offering, gives it to Isaac to carry and they walk up the mountain.
 - Isaac gets confused, and says “Dad? Uh, we have the wood and the stuff for the fire, but where's the animal for the offering?” God will provide it son, “Ok”
 - Then they get up to the place of the offering, they build the alter, then Abraham binds up the son that he loves, but before he takes the knife out, God stops him... **He said, “Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing**

you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.” And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him was a ram, caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called the name of that place, “The Lord will provide”; as it is said to this day, “On the mount of the Lord it shall be provided.” -Genesis 22:

- God did not just provide a way for Abrahams son to be saved, but he was providing a way for the entire world to be saved.
- God told Abraham in their very first interaction that he would be blessed in order to be a blessing and that through him, all of the families of the earth would be blessed
- Matthew, in the beginning of his Gospel, tracks the lineage of Abraham.
 - A man, who Hebrews says was as good as dead, by a miracle of God has a son when he

was 100 years old, and 42 generations later, we see another miraculous birth

- The birth of Jesus Christ, who through His life, His death, and Resurrection, all of the families of the earth found their ultimate blessing.
- And now at the end of Jesus’ life, the picture of Abraham almost sacrificing his son, comes full circle.
- 2000 years later, God would provide His Son, on the same exact Mountain, and bring about the realization that ALL of this was pointing to a Truer and Greater Sacrifice
- *Abraham made a choice, in obedience, to be willing sacrifice his son.*
 - *God made a choice, in love, to actually sacrifice His.*
- *The wood for the burnt offering was laid on Isaac for him to carry.*

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- *The wood of the cross was laid on Jesus for Him to carry.*
- *God provided the ram to take the place of Isaac.*
 - *Then He provided the Lamb of God to take away the sins of the world.*
- *Abraham waited three days to sacrifice his son and see what God would do.*
 - *God waited three days after His Son was sacrificed to show the world what He would do.*
- It is also interesting to note, that the first time we see the word LOVE in the bible is in Genesis 22. "Take your son, whom you love, and offer him up."
 - God wasn't being cruel, He was pointing toward the greatest act of Love that would ever happen in human history
- No greater love than this, than a man would lay down his life for his friends
- And that's exactly what Jesus did for you and me.
 - Where sin separated, Jesus covered
- Because Jesus moved in obedience, He allowed Himself to be put on the cross. His body, beaten to a pulp, His flesh mutilated. Buried in an unmarked grave.
- *But then came the morning that sealed the promise*
 - His buried body began to breath
 - And He rose, showing the ultimate display of power and authority
- He conquered death, He took upon Himself the punishment that the earth deserved, and in doing so conquered sin

- Then He took His place, sitting at the right hand of the Father, taking the ultimate position of Power, Authority, and Completed work
 - Then He imparted His Holy Spirit to us so that now, we get to walk in the promise and the blessing that He gave to Abraham all of those years ago
- ***“Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “In you shall all the nations be blessed.” So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.” -Galatians 3:7-9***
 - So now, through Jesus, the blessing and promise that Abraham moved toward, we now have the opportunity to walk in
 - The blessing of eternal life and an unhindered relationship with God the Creator is now offered to us freely.
- We are blessed to be a blessing
 - We have inherited the same call to bless all of the families of the earth with the news that Jesus, God in flesh, came and died and rose again, so that anyone who would call upon the Name of the Lord would be saved
 - We get to walk with God
 - We can know the Promiser
 - We get to live in His provision
 - *We get to Believe Him, Trust Him, and Move in Obedience*

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- What God promised Abraham, is still being lived out in us
- ***“Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “In you shall all the nations be blessed.” So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.” -Galatians 3:7-9***
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- We get to walk with God
- We can know the Promiser
- We get to live in His provision
- *We get to Believe Him, Trust Him, and Move in Obedience*
- Because Abraham moved in obedience, we now get to inherit the promise
- Because Abraham moved in obedience, we now get to inherit the promise
 - Living freely as sons and daughters of God
 - Walking with the God who spoke creation into existence
 - Living in the Love that was put on display through His one and only Son
- Through WHOM Our Hope is Alive

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- Our Hope is Victorious
- Our Hope is Never Ending
- BECAUSE OUR HOPE IS IN THE PERSON
OF JESUS CHRIST
 - Come on lets stand to our feet and sing about
our true and ultimate Living Hope
-