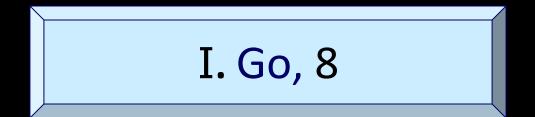
What Does Faith Do?

The faith of the father of the faithful...

- Hb.11:8-19 Abraham admonishes readers
- Abraham's chronology
 - Age 75: left home in Ur of Chaldees forever
 - Age 86: Ishmael born
 - Age 100: Isaac born
 - Age 137: Sarah died
 - Age 160: Jacob born
 - Age 175: Abraham died



Abraham obeyed, 8

- 1. Gn.12:1 (by faith, Hb.5:9)
 - God called; gave Abraham no reason or directions
 - Abraham did not know where he was going.
 How would he know when he arrived?
 An unseen destination requires faith
 - Doing what God said without worry over consequences requires strong faith

I**. Go**, 8

Abraham sojourned: by faith. Gn.12:6

- 9: he inhabited the place as foreigner; *be a stranger*
 - Ur: center of learning, wealth, luxury
 - Abraham left Ur for tents among strangers... no house, electricity, water...
 - Gn.23:4, dress, language, manners, religion, morality...reveal strangers
 - Abraham never fit in; never at home in 'promised land'
- 10: did not look for permanent city in Canaan...

I**.** Go, 8

II. Stay, 9-10

Twenty-five year wait for son

- 11: Sarah: barren; aged. Gn.16; 18:9-15 (21:6)
 - Once she realized the promise was God's, her doubt vanished
- 12: Abraham: *as good as dead* - Ro.4:19-21
- Main focus: faith of Abraham: waited for the city . . . of God (13-16)

Abraham waits...

13: he had descendants as numerous as stars / sand (12): not even death made Abraham doubt God's promise

- These all died in faith. Jn.8:56
- The moment of decision and time of fulfillment
 are most exciting
 - The time in between is when most lose hope and quit
 - Their faith stood test of time and death.
 10:36
- Strangers / pilgrims... (temporary residents)

Abraham waits...

- 13: descendants
- 14: seek homeland (not earth)
- 15: could have returned to Ur...
- 16: desire heavenly country (v.10; Ph.3:20)

I**. Go**, 8

II. Stay, 9-10

III. Wait, 11-12

IV. Obey, 17-19

- Abraham to kill his son Gn.22
 - Too old to have another child
 - Command contradicts promise
 - Faith believed blessing will come even if Isaac is slain
 - Abraham is the real sacrifice. Gave God his best; willing to sacrifice dearest object in loyalty to God
 - Required greatest conviction, costliest surrender, highest fear. Gn.22:12
 - Ro.4:19, Isaac's <u>birth</u> from one as good as dead; now Isaac's <u>life</u>...

Abraham's consistent obedience began with God's command to leave Ur...

- Not knowing where he was going
- Believing in promise of a son at an impossible age
- Killing son of promise...

Abraham's consistent obedience began with God's command to leave Ur...

- 1. Separation, Gn.12
- 2. Famine, Gn.12
- 3. Wealth, Gn.13
- 4. Strife, Gn.13
- 5. Power, Gn.14
- 6. Concern, Gn.14
- 7. Thanksgiving, Gn.14

Abraham's consistent obedience began with God's command to leave Ur...

- 8. Trust, Gn.15
- 9. Delayed fulfillment, Gn.15
- 10. Waiting, Gn.16
- 11. Ignorance, Gn.17
- 12. Hospitality, Gn.18
- 13. Salvation, Gn.18
- 14. **Isaac**, Gn.22

Isaac – Hb.11:17-19, the hardest journey

- Three day journey . . . to kill promised son
- 'The things of God seemed to fight against the things of God, and faith fought with faith, and the command fought with the promise.'
- Hb.11:18, in Isaac your seed shall be called...
- Abraham's faith (11:19): God who miraculously gives a son can just as easily raise him from the dead

God gave a son to two people as good as dead

• Ro.4:19

Isaac – Gn.22:5, the hardest journey

- If Abraham and Isaac do not return, then Isaac cannot not be the son of promise
- Cf. Gn.21:12
- Hb.11, two verbs -

17: By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son...

Perfect tense: expresses permanent result of Abraham's offering <u>in will</u> – in his mind the deed was done – in purpose and intent, Isaac was dead Isaac – Gn.22:5, the hardest journey

- If Abraham and Isaac do not return, then Isaac cannot not be the son of promise
- Cf. Gn.21:12
- Hb.11, two verbs -

17: By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son...

Imperfect tense: his actual readiness in preparing the sacrifice which was not literally carried into effect - in fact [No questions, no debate, no stalling.]

Isaac – Gn.22:5, the hardest journey

- Abraham would give back to God what was most precious to him.
- "It was as though Isaac really had died and had been raised to life again" – Hughes
- Ja.2:21, Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar

Conclusion

- In greatest trial, Abraham trusts and obeys.
- Gn.22:12, 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

The rest of the story

Abraham was a man...with faults and blemishes

- He was subject to repeated deceptions that endangered Sarah's virtue. Gn.12:10-20 [20:11-13]
 - Why? Worried about his own security
- 2. He allowed Sarah to influence him to walk by sight, not by faith
 - He fathered a child with her maid, Hagar...
 - When Sarah acted jealously, he let her drive Hagar out of the house, Gn.16

So what?

- God, in His wisdom, worked with this very imperfect man until he developed strong faith that fulfilled God's purpose in the divine plan
 - Abraham became a new man
- All of us see falls and failures in our past; may assume we are worthless in His plan for our life
 - The good news: like Abraham, we can continue to trust and obey God, and thus become the people He wants us to be.
 - -He can use me . . . He can use you