My Shepherd Will Supply My Need 3) Faith

Genesis 12:1-18 ● March 1, 2026 ● Lent Series

Some decisions are really hard to make. Others are not. You might have seen the commercial that depicts two people incapable of making any decisions. Instead of coming up with their own words they just ask an AI app what to do and say. The funny thing is the person at the store counter and the clerk are both letting AI do all the talking for them. We're not that far gone yet, but it feels like a lot of people have put too much faith in this type of decision making. The AI app can help us decide things as inconsequential as the shoes we buy to as weighty as where we might live, study, or work. Decisions, especially the big ones, require some type of faith. When we make decisions, we are always forced to ask, "who or what do I trust?" Today we look at a man who did not struggle to make a life-altering decision. And we see just why he was able to do it. His name was Abram. In God's dealings with him we see just how easy it is for us to make the big and difficult decisions in life.

The account of Abram is at a pivotal point in the book of Genesis. Genesis records many origins, beginning with how God created all things. It records the origin of sin. Sadly, after the account of God's perfect created world comes the account of humankind turning to evil. The first parents chose to doubt God's goodness; they turned down a dark path for humankind. The first brothers ended up in a mess as one was beaten down in a pool of blood. The first inhabitants of the world soon made swords and threatened each other for power. We see how the world became so wicked it that had to be destroyed in a great flood. Even then the first new civilization after the flood gathered in defiance of God instead of worship. The world was full of those who continually made decisions against God.

But then we read how Abram, the son of Terah, played a role in one of the largest turning points in history. The Lord said to Abram, "*Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you."* Abram's father Terah and his family worshiped false gods. The Lord called Abram to break away from this culture. So, Abram, a prophet, had a directive from God. But this was no easy thing to do! Talk about a big change! Abram was to leave behind his homeland and family ties. Who could easily make such a big decision?

Following God will involve making hard decisions and big changes in life. The believer often hits a fork in the road when forced to ask: "Which choice is the one that is in line with God's will?" And the path God would have us take is not always the easy choice! "Do I go to that college with its great programs and prestigious status, or do I avoid it since it is promoting an anti-Christian philosophy? Do I continue dating this woman when things are getting serious or do I leave her when I see she disrespects my God? Do I purchase this house or take this job, or do I look for another less desirable one closer to a church home and fellow believers?" Many of us are blessed to have Christian families. But some have had to struggle with the very same hard decision faced by Abram: stay with family and a culture that worships false gods, or do whatever is necessary to worship the Lord God. A choice has to be made. These are all hard choices!

It's especially hard when you have to fight the normal flow of this world. Do you think Abram's family thought he was making the right choice? His father Terah went with him. But Terah didn't want to go too far, so he stopped in Haran – short of where God wanted. "We'll go on this little journey with you, Abram, but let's not get too carried away."

Consider what Jesus says about breaking ties for his sake. "*If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters—yes, even his own life—he cannot be my disciple. And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple."* (Luke 14:26-27) Hate even those who we ought to be the closest to in this world and love the most? Jesus doesn't mean we have to hate others, but we need to be willing to put the Lord first and follow him even if it means breaking all other ties. Abram was called to live with this mindset.

We've mentioned some big decisions. What about the smaller ones? "Do I stay home with my visiting children and grandchildren, or do I leave them early on Sunday morning to go and worship? Do I join my son or daughter in a worship service when out-of-town visiting? Do I still join them when they attend a church that teaches false doctrine or do I tell them I'm going to the nearest church that I know is sound in teaching?" Even these smaller choices can be difficult.

If even in the small things we have difficulty, how can we possibly do what God called Abram to do: leave all behind if it comes between us and our Lord? I know I've failed in so many of the smaller things that I ought to have left behind to better worship the Lord. My heart doesn't always want to give up comforts if it comes between me and serving God. Making such decisions is what Abram was called to do: leave all behind to worship the Lord. God called him to faith. I can't imagine I'd easily pass any test like Abram and leave behind my country and family ties. Would you?

Why can't we always give up everything to follow and worship our God? Why is this abrasive sounding to us and sometimes a struggle for us? Because we can't make the right choices. Not on our own. By nature, we all cling to our comforts and cultural securities. We sometimes even might make the choices based on the least we can do in a life of discipleship rather than what we should leave behind. How much more difficult to make the hard choices! In fact, on our own we only make the damnable choices. And were this world left to itself it would ever increasingly approach and surpass the evil seen in the book of Genesis. And on our own we'd be participants in that evil. Back at square one, in

rebellion like Babel, worshiping false gods. And with each damnable sin comes the price: eternal punishment in hell and forever leaving the loving presence of our Creator God. This is where Abram and all his family was headed if he didn't listen to God and didn't leave everything behind. And our hearts would at times all too willingly join him!

Abram would not have made the right decision if left to himself. But the Lord would not have the entire world leave him, so he intervened. He told Abram to leave. But he did more than that. He gave a promise to act on. Abram obeyed God because the Lord's promises moved him to leave all behind. This life-changing promise for Abram includes you and me. *"I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."*

We don't have time today to discuss every aspect of this bundle of promises. But there are seven things God promised to do for Abram –all centered on what the Lord would do for him and give him. God promised to do much for Abram. He would make Abram's name great. He would bless him and make Abram into a great nation. And that last promise is what it all centered on. It's what made Abram's name so great: "*All peoples on earth will be blessed through you*."

Abram, later named Abraham, became the father of the nation of Israel. Through him came Isaac, Jacob, and the twelve tribes of Israel. From Abram and from the nation of Israel would come one who would bring blessing to all the earth, the man born of the line of David. He was born a descendent of Abraham: Jesus of Nazareth.

Jesus made the biggest choice ever. It was one that no other man could ever make. He chose to be the one who would redeem the world from rebellion and wickedness. He chose to rescue all the world from the damnable sins committed by us all. To carry out this task he chose to leave behind not just family, but the eternal glory of heaven. He left behind the place of honor and majesty with the Father and Holy Spirit. He left behind all comforts and set aside all his divine power. He took on human flesh and humbled himself. The very Son of God left all behind to live as a lowly man. And he perfectly obeyed the Father's will. Every choice, every step he took was the best way to serve him. At one time his own brothers ridiculed him, but he continued without their support. He lived the life of perfect choices that we could not.

And Jesus chose to take the path of greatest pain. He faced the damnable price that we earned for our choices against the will of God. Once and for all he brought us eternal blessing by suffering and dying as a man in our place. God credits this suffering and death as ours. Jesus died for the sins of all the earth. He chose to do this trusting the Father's plan.

Through that descendant of Abraham, the whole world is blessed. Jesus rose to life. He pours out blessings forever! He is not the God of the dead but the living. He is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He would bless them with new bodies and life! And he blesses us with the same promise of new life! We are promised all this from God through Jesus!

You see, God didn't just tell Abram to do something, it was connected with a promise which God would carry out for Abram and for the whole world. The turning point we reach in the book of Genesis is found here. God indicates that through Abram's offspring, through Jesus the Son of God and Son of Man, the whole world would be blessed. With that promise Abram acted in faith. God supplied just what Abram needed: a promise of blessing to cling to in faith.

With the promises of God in hand, Abraham easily made the biggest decision of his life. He left his home, his country, his relatives, and went to a strange land. "*So Abram left, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Haran. He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated and the people they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan, and they arrived there*."

Whatever you may face in life, whatever decisions you must make, they can be made according to God's will. You can now leave all to follow him, because you know God has promised great blessing to you. You don't act without his promise in hand! This is the promise that we now live by! We have faith because we have God's promise. Consider how all the promises given to Abram had to be simply trusted. Abram could do nothing to give his descendants the land of Canaan. As he traveled through the land, he saw that it was already fortified and occupied by the Canaanites. Abram could do nothing. But he had a promise from God. And how could this already 75-year-old man with his 65-year-old wife have any descendants? It once again depended on God's promise. It never depended on Abram, always on God.

And Abram did more than just leave his homeland. Wherever he went, his faith went. There he built an altar to the Lord and called on the name of the Lord. As he traveled through the unbelieving lands of the Canaanites he built altars to the Lord. Then the Canaanites saw a man who left everything to worship his God and wait on the promises of his God. Abram built altars and called on the name of the Lord. To "call on the name of the Lord" is to proclaim what is behind that name: the God who gives in grace and blesses. It is to spread the name of Christ our Lord and what he has done.

Abandoning all else to follow Christ is not a hard decision. That goes for the little choices and the big ones. When Christians today build beautiful churches, when they park their cars regularly in the churches parking lot, they too are letting all know just who they follow. When a job offer is turned down "because it's too far from worship," when a scholarship is declined because a Christian must say, "it's not what I'm looking for," or even when a grandparent says, "I've got to go, there's church to attend," others will see it. They see that someone has not only been brought to faith but has been led by the promises of God to leave all to follow him, and to let all know it.