

# HEROES OF THE FAITH, THEN AND NOW

## Abraham, Sarah, & Amy

TEXT: Heb. 11:8-16

**INTRODUCTION: Probably no Old Testament man is more foundational to New Testament doctrine than Abraham.** This morning I want us to talk about Abraham, Sarah, and Amy. You may be thinking, “Now I know who Abraham is, and I believe Sarah was his wife. But who is Amy? I thought they had a baby boy!” Well, they did. And Amy is not their child, at least not according to the flesh. But you will see soon enough why I have called this message Abraham, Sarah, and Amy.

Heb. 11:8-16 <sup>8</sup> By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. <sup>9</sup> By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as *in* a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; <sup>10</sup> for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God. <sup>11</sup> By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised. <sup>12</sup> Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born *as many* as the stars of the sky in multitude--innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore. <sup>13</sup> These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced *them* and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. <sup>14</sup> For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. <sup>15</sup> And truly if they had called to mind that *country* from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. <sup>16</sup> But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly *country*. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.

### I. ABRAHAM WENT WHERE GOD TOLD HIM TO GO.

11:8-9 <sup>8</sup> By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. <sup>9</sup> By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as *in* a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise;

#### A. Consider Abraham.

1. **Abraham literally “marched off the map.”** He did not know the uncharted lands to which God was leading him.
2. He went to a foreign country.

**3. Where God sent Abraham turned out to be the place of his inheritance.**

**4. Abraham took the kids and grandkids.**

- a. They were in his loins, not yet born.
- b. But he knew he was moving them permanently.

**B. Consider yourself.**

**1. God sometimes calls us to march off our maps.**

- a. Maybe to a foreign land.
- b. Maybe to a new ministry, or new area of service.

As a church, God has marched us off our maps a few times lately, has He not?

Joining Him in building 2 new buildings during an economic recession?

Did God know where He was leading us?

Yes He did!

Three years ago, some of you thought we were going to fall off the edge of the world as we did a night, whole church VBS – off the map!

Did God know where He was leading us?

Yes He did!

Isn't marching of the map with God exciting?

Isn't marching of the map with God exhilarating?

Do you want to keep marching off the map where God tells us to go?

Let me give you a quick preview of where I believe God is telling us to go next.

1. We are already embracing many of the poor of our city through our helping ministries.
2. We are already reaching out more and more to families with children as through VBS and KidZone Live.
3. But I believe God is telling us to embrace more of our community than we ever have before.
  - a. God has given us all this new space.
  - b. You are a warm, loving, embracing people. I love you. I am so honored to be your pastor. It is God who has made you like you are, and it is for a reason. To reach out and embrace more people in our community.
  - c. And most church people do not know what I am about to tell you. And at first, you may not believe it. But the research has been done, and what I am going to tell you is absolutely correct. Now sit up and listen to this.

**83% of our un-churched neighbors are somewhat likely to attend church... if they are invited.** Repeat that last part with me. "If they are invited"

- d. So this fall, we are going to invite them. We are going to plan a special Sunday, and we are going to call them on the telephone and invite them to come. And we are going to ask them if they have something that they want us to pray about. And when they do, we are going to have a prayer team that prays for their need the very night we hear about it. Then we are going to

- have intercessors who will pray for that need throughout the week and write that family a note telling them we have been praying for their need,
- e. Now I am not going to go into all the details now; I just want you to get the big picture. There plenty of time to explain the logistics in weeks to come. Right now, I just want you to begin to hear God's call to us again to march off our map, to do something we haven't done before because He wants us to.
  - f. Now while this will be new territory on our SABC map, there have been some pioneers in doing exactly what we are going to do. Around 100 churches spread over the nation have done this, and we are learning from their methodology, so we don't have to reinvent the wheel. So don't worry about "what about this?" or "what about that?" **God has the "what abouts" covered.**
  - g. **The larger question is will we once again respond to the call of God to go to uncharted territory.**
  - h. God is telling us to further embrace our community. And what will our answer be?
- c. While God calls our church as a whole to walk off the map in new ministry, He may call some of you to literally go to places on the map you have never thought of going before. Increasingly, I believe God is going to call members of our congregation to go and live on mission fields to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ. He is going to call us to march off the map.
    - 1) Every significant work God has done in my life has taken me into uncharted territory.
      - a) My call to ministry
      - b) My marriage to Karen
      - c) My call to ministry through the church
      - d) My conviction concerning inerrancy
      - e) My ministry in the Louisiana Baptist Covention
      - f) My call to missions
      - g) My call to SABC
- 2. The new terrain may be foreign to us.**
    - a. Things will not be the same.
    - b. There will probably be some pleasures and comforts you have to give up.
  - 3. But if this strange territory is where God calls us, that is where we inherit the blessings.**
    - a. **Anything we leave to follow the Lord, He restores 100 fold.**  
**Matthew 19:29 And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life.**

- 4. If God calls us, He calls those with us: spouse, kids, grandkids, and it is the place of God's blessing for them as well.**
  - a. Too many use their kids as an excuse to disobey the Lord.
  - b. "Well I would do it if it was not for the kids."
  - c. You think God forgot you had kids?
  - d. You think you care more about your kids than God does?
  - e. You think you know more about what is best for your kids than God?
  - f. Many a child has been robbed of the blessing of being parented by a parent who is obedient to God because they were used as the excuse for ignoring the call of the Master.
  
- 5. If you sense God's calling to a particular place or type of ministry, but you have somewhere between 1 and 1,000 reasons that you cannot do it, you need to get on your knees at the altar today and tell God you will obey.**
  - a. Leave with Him the reasons you cannot.
  - b. They are His responsibility to handle!

## **II. ABRAHAM LIVED AS A SOJOURNER - A TEMPORARY RESIDENT.**

11:9 By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as *in* a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise;

**A. He lived in a tent.**

**B. He never owned the land.**

**C. He knew what Paul was talking about in**

Philippians 3:20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,

**D. Where is your citizenship? Where is your home?**

1. If someone analyzed how you spend your time, what would they say?
2. If someone analyzed how you spend your money, what would they say?
3. If someone analyzed what brings you pleasure, what would they say?

**E. Abraham looked for the payoff in eternity.**

Hebrews 11:10 for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God.

## **III. SARAH RECEIVED POWER FROM THE LORD.**

Hebrews 11:11 By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised.

**A. Sarah conceived Isaac by the *dunamis* - power of God.** This was a miracle.

**B. The same word is used in Acts 1:8.**

Acts 1:8 “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

**C. Why did Sarah receive such power?**

1. Because she believed God!
2. She judged Him to be faithful.

#### **IV. AMY CARMICHAEL LIVED A LIFE LIKE BOTH ABRAHAM AND SARAH.**

**Amy Carmichael was a down-to-earth mystic whose beautiful writings captivated the imagination.** She had gone first as a missionary to Japan, where in her room she had two words written on the wall: *Yes, Lord.*

**In the providence of God she went then to South India, where, as an itinerant evangelist,** she soon discovered the evils of the Hindu temples where little girls and boys were used in unspeakably wicked ways. At first she could not believe such treatment of innocent children but soon discovered that things were far worse than she had imagined. She prayed earnestly for their deliverance and was able, over some fifty years, to make a home for many of these children.

**She wrote, “I would never urge one to come to the heathen unless he felt the burden for souls and the Master’s call, but oh! I wonder so few do. It does cost something. Satan is tenfold more of a reality to me today than he was in England, and very keenly that awful home-longing cuts through and through one sometimes—but there is a strange deep joy in being here with Jesus.** “Praising helps more than anything. Sometimes the temptation is to give way and go in for a regular spell of homesickness and be of no good to anybody. Then you feel the home prayers, and they help you to begin straight off and sing, ‘Glory, glory, Hallelujah,’ and you find your cup is ready to overflow again after all.”

**She wrote fifty or more books and stayed in India without a furlough until she died.** Many of Amy Carmichael’s books, were bound in blue cloth with beautiful sepia toned photographs of the picturesque Dohnavur compounds and the happy little children—few of whom can have any notion of what would have been their fate had the Lord not sent them to this place of safety, quietness, and overflowing love. (By Elizabeth Elliot, used with permission)

CONCLUSION: God's first call is to salvation. Some were saved during VBS and need to come for baptism and church membership. Then as God calls us to service and mission, it may involve a call to change and discomfort. What has been your answer to God's call. For each of us, God calls us to live for Him and serve Him empowered by His Holy Spirit. Is that how you are living for and serving God?