

The Call to Let Go and Come Out (Supplement)

Delivered - 6 March 2024

Scriptures - [Genesis 12.1](#)

The Passage:

1 Now the LORD said to Abram,
“Go from your country,
And from your relatives
And from your father’s house,
To the land which I will show you;

v1 - Go from your family

Why did God ask Abraham to leave his father's house? There’s a couple reasons...one of which is given to us in the book of Joshua. This is Joshua recounting Israel’s history to them before he dies. This is [Joshua 24.1-3](#),

1 Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel at Shechem (*interesting...Shechem is where God appeared to Abraham and said “to your descendants I will give this land” - [Genesis 12.6](#)*), and called for the elders of Israel, their heads, their judges, and their officers; and they presented themselves before God.

2 Joshua said to all the people, “This is what the Lord, the God of Israel says: ‘From ancient times your fathers lived beyond the Euphrates River, namely, Terah, the father of Abraham...and they served other gods.

3 ‘Then I took your father Abraham from beyond the Euphrates River and led him through all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his descendants...

Abraham’s family served other gods—Abraham and his father and grandfather and uncles and cousins were all pagan idolator. For God to bless Abraham and make his name great, for God to take that individual man and make him into a nation, a nation that will be the blessing of all nations, Abraham had to come out from the life he had inherited from his fathers.

This is the call of all who would follow God. Jesus says in [Matthew 10.37](#),

“He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who

loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.

This is the call of the gospel; nothing, not even our nuclear family, is worth more than following Jesus. We may not have grown up worshipping idols and participating in demonic practices of worship, but sin is sin...and prior to Jesus inviting us to follow him we were just as lost in our sin as Abraham was in his. A total separation from that life is required to follow Jesus. Before we can come into the land that He wants to take us, we have to come out of the life that used to define us.

Whatever we bring with us from the old life into the new is going to create problems. Remember, I said Sunday night that bringing things from the old life with us may not disqualify us, but it will slow us down...it will distract us...it may even harm us. Abraham's father, kept him from fully obeying the Lord and delayed him for a season outside of the land God called him to. **Genesis 11.31** tells us that Abraham, and his father with him, left Ur to go to the land of Canaan and,

"went as far as Haran and settled there."

Haran is not Canaan. Haran is not the land that the Lord was going to show Abram. It was only after Abram's father died that the Lord was able to show him the land and bring him into that land. What Abram brought from his old life slowed him down.

And his relative, Lot, who he wrongfully brought with him...Lot created serious problems for Abraham that could've gotten him killed. Abraham ended up going to war with 4 kings who had conquered the city Lot chose to live in and kidnapped him.

And it wasn't just people that Abraham brought with him from the old life that were an issue for him, it was old ways of thinking and dealing with difficulty that Abraham brought with him. He brought fear and a willingness to lie when he was in a difficult situation. What do I mean by that? Abraham had no problem lying about who his wife was when he was afraid that Pharaoh would kill him to take his wife. In fact, he did this twice, (**Genesis 12:10–20; 20:1–18**).

The life of faith demands a total separation from the way we used to do things so that we can devote ourselves to a life of holiness that shows the world who God is.

This is why Scripture encourages the believer to

“Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean and I will receive you.”

Paul quotes that passage to the church of Corinth in [2 Corinthians 6.14–17](#). He is telling them that they are not to be “unequally yoked with unbelievers.” We hear that phrase and assume it only applies to marriage. It doesn’t. In fact, that’s not what Paul is talking about at all in that passage. He is admonishing the church to live holy lives in absolute surrender to the gospel, cleansing yourself from all filthiness of the flesh and the spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God ([2 Corinthians 7.1](#)),

14 “For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?

15 And what harmony has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?

16 And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people.”

17 Therefore come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord.

Come out from among anything that would keep you connected to the world, to your old habits, to the flesh. Pursue the life of holiness that is now available to anyone who is in Christ. Jesus paid for you to be free from the old life of sin, and all of its ripple effects, so that you can now follow Him into a Promised Land. Don’t settle for Haran when Canaan is your inheritance. Don’t fight Lot’s battles when peace is now your environment.

Glorified in Surrender

Jesus says in [John 17.10](#) that He is glorified in us as we become surrendered. This is the Passion Translation of v10,

“And all who belong to You (Father) now belong to Me as well, and My glory is revealed through their surrendered lives.”

The reason for you and I to live surrendered lives is for the glory of Jesus. Jesus' glory shines through our weak, frail, jars of clay...but those jars have to be emptied so they can be filled with eternal, glorious treasure.

How was Jesus able to receive His glory? Philippians 2 tells us,

“although existing in the form of God, Jesus did not consider equality with God something to be used for His advantage, but He emptied Himself by taking the form of a bond-servant and being born in the likeness of men...for THIS reason God has exalted Him and given Him the name that is above every other name.”
(Philippians 2.6-7, 9).

So, Father, because of My emptying and the complete surrender to Your will,

“...glorify Me with Yourself with the glory that I had before the world was”
(John 17.5).

He only fills empty things. He can only use surrendered things.

Corrie Ten Boom used a simple illustration to make this point (using an empty glove).

Jesus lives His life through us. It's [Galatians 2.20](#),

“I have been crucified with Christ. It's no longer I live but Christ who lives in me...Christ who lives through me.”

When Paul is empty, Jesus can live His life through Paul.

Surrender is not an act of discipline or works or effort. Surrender is necessary before there can ever be an exchange. There is a yielding that takes place on behalf of the believer that says, “I am insufficient in myself to live this Christian life...so I must empty myself of the things I used to trust in and depend on to function, those must be emptied so that an exchange can happen...the things I used to hope in are surrendered for His glory working through me, the empowering of the Holy Spirit, God filling my life with Himself. And now, the consequence of that exchange is God is animating my life and living His life through me.

Intentionality of Surrender

It's important to point out that there must be an intentionality on our part when it comes to surrender. The call and invitation comes to us from God completely exclusive of anything that we deserve or could have earned. We are undeserving of God coming to us and inviting us to walk with Him. It's all by God's grace in the form of an invitation by Jesus to come follow Him. But what happens next must be intentional surrender on the part of the follower. People don't just stumble their way in to passion. No one accidentally finds themselves burning on fire for God. There is an intentionality that necessitates the burning. Some things have to be removed, and other things have to be put into place so that you can burn. Surrender and letting go of the things that you used to burn for is an act of volition and violence. The call is not, the call is grace. But what you do with it is a choice. Abraham packing up his stuff and leaving was an intentional act. We have to make room in our theology for human responsibility. "One thing I desire, and that will I SEEK" (Psalm 27.4). Desire is good, but if it never moves into seeking it's just curiosity. "SEEK and you shall find." No one is going to burn by accident.

We understand these things when it comes to most areas of our lives; you want to succeed in business, in sports, in physical fitness, in your marriage? That won't happen by accident. There is an intentionality in going after the things you desire. My marriage is awesome because Lindsey and I intentionally prioritize it, we pursue one another. A body builder doesn't stumble into 5% body fat...there is a violent pursuit of his desires being fulfilled.

But so often we think our relationship with Jesus and a mature, spiritual walk is something that should just happen. Jesus' indictment against the church of Ephesus in Revelation 2 was they had left their first love. That didn't happen because they stopped believing...it happened because they stopped seeking, they stopped burning, they stopped living a life of surrender. I can still be married to my wife but if I stop seeking her and surrendering my life to her, then our love is going to stall out. We'll still be married, but the reality will be that we left the love that we had at first.

Here's another example for you to help understand the difference in the invitation and the surrender required to come out from what we've known and follow Jesus; when I was

born I was born as a son into my father's house. I didn't do anything to earn that sonship. But now that I am a son, the act of maturing into a grown man requires intentionality. Maturity doesn't just happen...sonship does, but maturity requires intentionality.

Paul tells Timothy in 1 Timothy 6.12,

“Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold of eternal life.”

The Greek word that we translate “lay hold of” is a violent apprehension. It's the same word Paul uses in Philippians 3.12,

“Not that I am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.”

Jesus laying hold of you is unmerited grace. That's the invitation you don't deserve. But the response of you laying hold of Him is an intentional act of surrendering your life so He can live His through you. And to do that, you have to let go of everything else you're holding on to,

“Brethren...one thing I do, forgetting what is behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3.13-14).

So come out from your old ways, surrender to the invitation to come follow Jesus to a land He will show you, and spend the rest of your days burning.

Why Abram?

One more thing I want to point out; when God called him, Abram was a 75 year old man, married to a barren woman, living in a godless, pagan city. Why would God call such an unlikely person to be the father of nations? Listen to what Paul says in [1 Corinthians 1.26-29](#),

26 For consider your calling, brothers and sisters, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble;

27 but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong,

28 and the insignificant things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are,

29 so that no human may boast before God.

We see the nature of who God is in this calling of Abraham. The age, the barrenness, the lost depravity of idol worship that had deceived him...Abraham was just the man who God could use to show the world what He can do with an empty vessel of yielded obedience and faith. Are you empty and surrendered to God? Perfect. You have the qualifications of a world changer.

God is not looking for the most talented, the smartest, the most beautiful, the most powerful, the wealthiest...He is looking for the yielded, the trusting, the faithful, the obedient, the empty. He desires all to be saved, but there is something about this gospel that is often rejected by the comfortable. To prove my point just to go to the wealthiest neighborhood you can find, knock on doors, and share the gospel. Do the same in the poorest neighborhood in your city and note the difference in the reception this gospel receives. Jesus Himself said how difficult it is for the wealthy to inherit the kingdom of heaven ([Matthew 19.23](#)). Why? Because they are already full. God only fills empty things. God uses the weak things of this world to demonstrate that He is all sufficient in doing the impossible through anyone who has faith to believe that He is who He says He is.

So come out from among anything you have taken from your old life into the new. Come out from your old ways of thinking. Come out from fear, come out from shame, come out from anxiety and worry and enter into faith and hope and surrender in this God who humbles Himself to call the weak and foolish to become kings and priests in His kingdom.