

Out of Egypt

Introduction

We are in a series about faith. Looking at our mentors from the Old Testament. People who did extraordinary things as God worked through and around them. Just regular folks who had an encounter with God that transformed their faith.

These people are considered superheroes of the faith. People with supernatural powers that can change the world. As we study them, we see ourselves. Why did they have so much faith? Why did they do exactly what God told them to do? I mean Abraham was ready to sacrifice Isaac....just because God told him to.....We look at them and wonder if we have that much faith...But Abraham built that faith over time.

Each experience built a foundation of trust Every time God told him something- it happened Abraham learned over time to trust not only the promise- but the One who promises He learned to trust and follow even when he did not understand, feel like it or agree with it.

Last week we looked at Abraham and Isaac. We learned that the events of the Old Testament often foreshadows and points to future events and Jesus. We will continue to see throughout this series that God loves to foreshadow future events. In fact, this book from beginning to end.....first foreshadows Jesus and then tells His story. Abraham's near sacrifice of his son Isaac is a direct reference to God's sacrifice of His Son 2000 years later. A substitute was found for Isaac, but Jesus was the sacrifice.

My prayer is that we will see the Faith of these incredible people and begin to have a deeper faith and trust in the promises that have been given to us. Today we are going to take another look at Abraham in what is not one of his shining moments of faith. This is my favorite story about Abraham because he reminds me of me...but we will get to that.

My Superhero story IMAGE 1

When I was 5years old I loved Superman. I thought I had the same powers as Superman...no really.....I really thought that if he could do it...then I could too. I had unwavering faith in Superman.

I loved that Clark Kent was just a normal guy who held a huge secret. IMAGE 2 He was invincible...unafraid...unwavering...He held supernatural powers....at any moment he could do anything....He had no fears...no anxiety...no concerns....He was well, "Faster than a speeding bullet, more powerful than a locomotive....able to leap tall buildings in a single bound...Truth, Justice and the American Way!" That was superman. I loved everything about him. I mean if I could grow up and be superman.....nothing could be better.

Why not? If Clark Kent could do it...so could I. I truly believed that I had incredible powers that just needed to be released...you know like flying. I didn't have a phone booth so I used my closet. On minute 5 year old Frank...Next minute superman costume superhero.

So why not test my cape right? I climbed up on top of the bunk bed and fully expected to fly...no hesitation...no fear...my only concern was to contain my flight to my room so as not to reveal my powers yet.

After a trip to the emergency room to get stitches above my eye, I began to realize that perhaps I was not a superhero after all.....It was devastating to come to that truth, but the desire to be a superhero never faded from my desires....even to this day...Something in me said it was possible to live with supernatural powers and be unaffected by the world and the events in it.

IMAGE 3 What I didn't realize at age 5 is that the desire to be a superhero was placed in me by God. I have always had a desire to live a life of supernatural powers.

I think that is why I love the stories in the Old Testament

Normal people.....messed up people....who are transformed into superheroes of the faith.

Not because of an encounter in a phone booth but rather an encounter with a very real and very incredible God. He takes the ordinary and through a series of encounters- begins to build incredible faith.

They become faith superheroes....invincible, unafraid, supernaturally gifted and forever changed. They truly believed in the promises of God and had unwavering faith. If God said to do it, they did it. God made promises to them and they lived in that faith.

By studying others of incredible faith, my prayer is that we will see our faith in a new way. These men of the Old Testament were just normal folk...each with incredible flaws and sins...lying, murder, and others who God used to change the world. And if we will allow it, He desires to do the same thing for you and me too.

Abraham

Let me tell you about Abraham A descendant of Shem, one of Noah's Son's who lived in a place called Ur- MAP He had two brothers one of whom died Abraham and Sara took in their nephew as they were without children. His name was Lot. God spoke to Abram and told him to leave Ur and go to a place that God would show him.

God promised to bless him and make his descendants not only great but a great multitude who would be blessed by God.

Genesis 12:1–3 (ESV) — 1 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. 2 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. 3 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.”

So Abram leaves it all behind.

Genesis 12:5 (ESV) — 5 And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people that they had acquired in Haran, and they set out to go to the land of Canaan.

So God shows Abram the promised land and just when Abraham and his family are getting ready to settle in to the promises of God- disaster strikes.

Genesis 12:10 (ESV) — 10 Now there was a famine in the land.

Imagine what Abram must be thinking.....Great, we left home- to come to a barren land that can't even produce food. My family is going to starve and I brought them here. It had to shake his faith a bit. Why would God bring him here, say he would be blessed and then allow this to happen

Genesis 12:10 (ESV) — 10 Now there was a famine in the land. So Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there, for the famine was severe in the land.

Abraham takes everyone to Egypt MAP Egypt could survive famines because of the Nile River. So when the trial comes- Abram flees to Egypt.

Do you remember when I said that sometimes our Biblical Heroes do some incredibly stupid things? Abraham is going to reveal his lack of faith in God and this is actually reassuring to me in many ways. Of all the Abraham stories, this is my favorite. He is about to do something so stupid...so incredibly dumb...particularly after encountering God...that it makes me feel good. I hate to say it but I cherish the failure of these men. Because it makes them...well...human. It gives me hope that God can use me too...in all my stupidity.

Genesis 12:11–13 (ESV) — 11 When he was about to enter Egypt, he said to Sarai his wife, "I know that you are a woman beautiful in appearance, 12 and when the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife.' Then they will kill me, but they will let you live. 13 Say you are my sister, that it may go well with me because of you, and that my life may be spared for your sake."

Genesis 12:15–16 (ESV) — 15 And when the princes of Pharaoh saw her, they praised her to Pharaoh. And the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house. 16 And for her sake he dealt well with Abram; and he had sheep, oxen, male donkeys, male servants, female servants, female donkeys, and camels.

Do you remember when God promised to bless Abraham regardless of what he did? I think Abraham is testing that promise right here. The covenant of God was unilateral. I am going to bless you. Even if you do something this stupid. Because Abraham didn't trust God and chose to act on his own...His wife Sara, who God had promised to bless, was now the property of Pharaoh and she is his slave. Imprisoned in a life of luxury, but imprisoned nonetheless. Even though Abraham put her there with his own stupidity, God was determined to rescue her and keep His promises and covenant. In the meantime, Abraham really prospered while in Egypt...

Genesis 12:17 (ESV) — 17 But the LORD afflicted Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife.

Note that the plagues here are plural.

Genesis 12:18–20 (ESV) — 18 So Pharaoh called Abram and said, "What is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife? 19 Why did you say, 'She is my sister,' so that I took her for my wife? Now then, here is your wife; take her, and go." 20 And Pharaoh gave men orders concerning him, and they sent him away with his wife and all that he had.

Doesn't really seem fair does it? Don't you feel sorry for Pharaoh a bit? Abraham lied.....Sara went along with it.....Pharaoh didn't know.....and he is the one who suffered plagues. In any event- Pharaoh sends Abraham his family and all of their possessions out of Egypt.

Genesis 13:1–2 (ESV) — 1 So Abram went up from Egypt, he and his wife and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the Negeb. 2 Now Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold.

Abraham take his family and all of his many possessions and heads to the Negev----...The Negev is the desert on the way to the Land God had promised. Eventually they reach their destination

Genesis 13:3–4 (ESV) — 3 And he journeyed on from the Negeb as far as Bethel to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai, 4 to the place where he had made an altar at the first. And there Abram called upon the name of the LORD.

Does this story sound familiar?

God's family.....in the land He had given them.....experience a famine.....have to flee to Egypt to get food....Pharaoh enslaves someone- living in luxury but enslaved nonetheless.

They prosper in Egypt and become wealthy. They are enslaved and God uses Plagues against Pharaoh to free them The entire family leaves Egypt with Pharaoh's permission and flees to the Land God promised through the desert.

Abraham's story is a foreshadowing of the story of Abraham's future family. This time it is the Mother of the Jewish people who is enslaved, the next time it will be Joseph (Israel's favorite son) and eventually the entire Jewish family of God.

Next week we will look at the Story of Joseph- Multicolored Coat Joseph- not Joseph the earthly surrogate father of Jesus.

But we will see that Joseph is sold into slavery.....becomes part of Pharaoh's servants and a severe famine brings his family- God's family to Egypt to survive.

They prosper and are so blessed (God's promise) that they begin to outnumber the Egyptians and thus are enslaved. God told Abraham the this was going to happen--- another promise of God that would come true.

Genesis 15:13–14 (ESV) — 13 Then the LORD said to Abram, “Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years. 14 But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions.

God telling Abraham and us---what just happened to you in Egypt.....is a foreshadowing of what is going to happen to the entire Jewish nation. They too will be in Egypt because of a famine. They will be enslaved by Pharaoh (a new Pharaoh) for 400 years....then God says I will bring judgment on that nation (Egypt) and they shall all come out with Great possessions (God promised to bless them)

And like Abraham, they will have a desert experience the way to the promised land. Pretty cool....right?

It gets better. Turns out this story is not just foreshadowing the Jewish Exodus. This story of Abraham and Sara in Egypt is really pointing to the story of Jesus. All of the OT stories seem to point to the Messiah Lets look at how Matthew describes it.

When Jesus was about 2 years old, the wise men came to worship Him They brought Gold, Frankincense and Myhrr. You probably remember the story.. Herod killed all the babies under 2 years old in the city of Bethlehem.

Matthew 2:13 (ESV) — 13 Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.”

This time it is not a physical famine that drives Jesus to Egypt but rather a Spiritual famine has occurred in the Land God Promised. Just as Jesus was born, just as things seemed to be getting started, God reveals to Joseph that they must flee to Egypt. The Gifts of the wise men likely helped fund that journey- God not only provided the passage but also the provision. Remember they are on the mountain of the One who provides.

Matthew 2:14–15 (ESV) — 14 And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt 15 and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, “Out of Egypt I called my son.”

Hosea 11:1 (ESV) — 1 When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.

Next week we will look at the story of Joseph and see how he foreshadowed the life of Jesus.

So the Father of the Jewish nation, Abraham flees to Egypt...The Son Joseph flees to Egypt and The Messiah God flees to Egypt. Each on foreshadowing what is to come. Egypt was a corrupt godless nation and God rescues His people from there...One day representing how God will rescue all of us from this world.....God equates Egypt with some of the most sinful places on earth...Look at what He says in Revelation regarding the two witnesses. Jerusalem the City of David and of God has at this point become a symbol of sin.

Revelation 11:7–8 (ESV) 7 And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that rises from the bottomless pit will make war on them and conquer them and kill them, 8 and their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city that symbolically is called Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord was crucified.

God will one day in our future, finally call all of His people out of Egypt and completely destroy all that it stands for. Themes run through the Bible...from Genesis to Revelation...incredible.

That is God's promise to all of us. And I believe what God wants us to embrace today.

Every detail in Abraham and Sara's life is carefully orchestrated for a specific purpose. These ordinary people were used by God, despite their mistakes, weaknesses and sins to become His super heroes of the faith.

God wanted us to see in their lives that He not only had control of the past and present, but he knew the future too.

It is difficult to read the Old Testament and not see that we serve a sovereign God who has everything under his control. Nothing happens that He doesn't allow and when things happen- they are exactly the way He designed them- even down to the smallest detail. Can I remind you of one of God's promises?

Malachi 3:6 (ESV) — 6 “For I the LORD do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed.

Hebrews 13:8 (ESV) — 8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

James 1:17 (ESV) — 17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

So God promises that He never changes.....The same thing He did in Abraham's time- He is doing now. Taking ordinary people who are messed up and gradually building them through experiences to begin to understand a truth about God

God is who He says He is and He will do what He says He will do Just as God was building Abraham into a Spiritual Superhero.....He is doing the same thing to you and me today.

He may not take you and I to Egypt to escape the famine and be refreshed in the waters of the Nile... But He does take us from the Spiritual famine and the evil one who desires to kill us and brings us to a place of Spiritual food and the refreshing waters of the Holy Spirit.

God used Abraham to rescue Sara- the Mother of the Jewish Nation God used Joseph to rescue the brothers of the 12 tribes of Israel God used Moses to rescue the Jewish nation God used Jesus to rescue the World And God wants to use each of us to rescue each other.

God has entrusted the message of Jesus to us-- to rescue others. He found each of us.....just like he found Abraham.....He revealed Himself to us---gifted us, empowered us, and made promises to us--promises He will keep. He is intimately involved in the details of our lives.....just as He has always been Can you imagine how differently we would live if we could actually embrace this truth?

What is we could really grasp that we are working out and participating in a plan that God has had from eternity. That what He has already deemed best will happen.

That He will use the events of the past to point to events in our lives and will use the events of our life today to foreshadow what is to come in the future.

Everything we are seeing in our world today....was...in detail....foreshadowed or specifically stated in Scripture. Can you imagine how differently we would live if we could embrace the promises of God?

I loved the superheroes who were normal people one moment and then instantly transformed into Superman. It think the reason is that I could see that happening to me. One minute normal....well relatively normal 5 year old- next moment---Superman.

IMAGE....LEAVE UP UNTIL END>>>Normal people.....messed up people....who are transformed into super heroes of the faith. Not because of an encounter in a phone booth but rather an encounter with a very real and very incredible God. He takes the ordinary and through a series of encounters--begins to build incredible faith. Do you know what makes someone a Superhero of faith? Someone who actually believes that what God says about them is true. All of us how the power of God in us. All of us have promises from God that are true and never changing. Super heroes of faith....believers used by God...just believe.

They become faith superheroes....invincible, unafraid, supernaturally gifted and forever changed. I don't know about you....but that is how I want to live. I have wanted to live in that freedom and invincibility since I was a small child. I want to live knowing the promises of God---knowing the One who promises and living in the freedom of that reality. Unafraid and invincible.

For years, I didn't know that the desire to become a superhero was given to me by God because that is my destiny. I am in possession of great super powers that did not come from this world. I am just a normal flawed human who carries a truth...I am invincible...I am eternal...I am always victorious...I am fearless....I am bullet proof....I am in this world but not of it....

My home is far away and I have been sent here on a mission....Everything I ever need will be provided to me when I need it. I cannot fail at my mission as God has already

completed it.Nothing can happen to me today or tomorrow or ever that can change any of it....the only thing that determines how I live as the superhero that I am...is my confidence in the promises of God's Word.

Can you imagine how terrible it would be if Clark Kent never realized that he could transform into superman? If he lived his entire life not realizing the potential and supernatural powers that he already possessed?

Imagine how terrible it would be to never experience all that God had in store for us...just because we didn't have the faith to believe Him...God has made his promises clear...let me remind you of them.....You and I are spiritual beings from another home sent here to show others the way...and it all is based on our faith in these promises....

Scripture Slides...