

Chapter One

Hearing the Call of God

Have you ever heard God speak to you? Likely none of us have heard God speak like Abraham did. In the heart of every man, woman, and child there is a longing for God. Yes, there is. Some try to tell themselves there is no God. However, the Bible calls such a person a fool.

A fool is somebody who hasn't really thought about the issues. I believe the restless spirit in our world can be traced to the failure of men to find God. They don't hear God for they don't listen to Him. They don't think about Him. So this message from Genesis 12:1-5 is to show you how to find God, how to hear God.

1. Now the LORD God said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee:

2. And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:

3. And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

4. So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him: and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.

5. And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son,

and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.

Our father Abram demonstrates what it takes to hear God. In this Scripture there are three distinct **OUTCOMES** that will affect us once we hear God's call. They spring out of Abram's experience.

Separation is the moving outcome to hearing the call of God. God had come to Abram and said, "Get out of your country and from your kindred and from your father's house." With some this would have been a severe blow. Was it so to Abram?

Consider Abram's background. In the previous chapter of Genesis we are introduced to his family. Nothing very glorious is said about them. Our extra Biblical history tells us that Abram lived in a land where they worshipped idols. A legend tells us that he was working in his father's idol shop when God spoke to him.

Consider Abram's location. He was located in one of the areas of the world where civilization began, in the cradle of civilization.

Now consider Abram's kindred. All of us have some ties to our family, some more than others. But this was to Abram a separation.

The call of God may require such a separation even today. Some of my friends had to leave all: home, family, loved ones, all that we normally call precious, when they heard the call of God. They had to leave it behind. They had to move sometimes out of the country in which they were born; sometimes from the home that had sheltered them as children. Yes, the call of God may require a separation. One certainty we discover is that God will not take a second seat.

What hope is there in this? Let me tell you. The hope lies in the presence of God in your life. I know for some it meant to go back home but not for Abram. For this man of God it meant a separation when he heard the call of God.

Identification is the holding outcome of hearing the call of God. The Lord said to Abram, "I will make of you a great nation." There are advantages when you listen to God's call. Abram was elevated to a special role, "I will make of you a great nation." He was

called to a special walk because, you see, God had chosen him to be the father of a great nation.

His identification also included a great name. Today millions look to him as their forebearer in the flesh. You may be able to trace your family lineage back to Abram. I would like to say there are Gentile Christians as well who consider him their father in the faith. In fact the Apostle Paul writing to one of the churches said we who believe in Jesus Christ are spiritual children of Abraham though we may not have been born in the family line.

He had another identification. Through Abram a great blessing was to come. All families of the earth are blessed by Abram. There are very few nations today that have not felt the impact of Abram's descendants. All over the world blessing has come to people because of the seed of Abram. This is what God said would happen. There is one important seed, Jesus Christ, from whom all blessings flow.

Preparation is the acting outcome of hearing the call of God. There was separation, there was identification and there was preparation. With Abram it was an immediate departure. In Genesis 12: 4 these are three important words: "So Abram departed."

Delay sometimes is very expensive. When Abram heard God's call he moved at once. Promptness wins God's favor. For Abram it meant to become a wanderer. He took all he had: all their substance that they had gathered, his wife, his nephew and all other people that they had brought together and he started out. His preparation was an immediate departure to become a wanderer.

My friend, no one can expect God's blessing by partial obedience. Abram went all the way. My friend, I want to speak very personally to you. We find in our father Abram an ideal to follow. How is it with you? Are you hearing God's call and what is He saying to you? Could it be He's asking you to separate yourself? Is He asking you to become what He wants you to be? Are you ready now to take that step of faith? You see, Abram our father left his country, his kindred, his father's house to do what God called him to do. That is what all of us must be willing to do.

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