

WEEKLY REFLECTION

When Abram and his family first appear in Genesis 11, we learn that Abram's brother Haran died in the presence of their father Terah, in their homeland of Ur of the Chaldeans. (v.28) Perhaps as a result of that grief, Terah took his son Abram and grandson Lot to settle in the land of Haran. (v.31) Their destination was meant to be the land of Canaan, but Terah chose to settle in Haran instead.

When the Lord calls Abram in Genesis 12, he has no way of knowing that God means for him to reach Canaan. All he knows is that the Lord called him to leave his country, his family, and his father's house to a land that God will show him (v.2)—and when he gets there, he sees that the Canaanites still inhabit the land as well! (v.6b) The natural thing for Abram to do would be to doubt God, but instead he builds altars to the Lord and worships Him throughout his journey. (v.7-8)

As God calls Abram, He also intends to bless him and make his name great, so that Abram and his descendants can be a blessing to all the families of the earth. (v.2-3) Yet in verses 10-20, Abram is anything but. Worried that Pharaoh might kill him to possess his beautiful wife Sarai, Abram sacrifices Sarai by asking her to lie. (v.11-15) Abram's wealth multiplies greatly because of Sarai (v.16), but Pharaoh is a more righteous man than Abram. Despite the great plagues that were inflicted on him and his family (v.17), Pharaoh simply sends them away after Abram's lie is exposed. (v.18-20)

Abram shows us that no one is righteous, not even one of the patriarchs, the great founding fathers of the faith. Yet Hebrews 11 commends him for his faith and obedience to God (v.8-9), showing us what really matters—for only God alone is truly righteous and good.

QUESTIONS

QUESTION ONE:

If you were asked to leave where you are and move to an entirely unfamiliar country tomorrow, what is the hardest thing—whether it's the cuisine, a certain routine, or something specific that you can only find in Hong Kong—for you to leave behind?

QUESTION TWO:

Abram's story in Genesis 12 is interesting because he obeys God's call to go. (v.4) He shows no signs of doubt and worships Him even when the future looks unclear. (v.6-7) At the same time, when he faces resistance in the form of a famine, he takes matters into his own hands by moving to Egypt and sacrifices his wife's safety for self-preservation. Still, the apostle Paul honors him in the New Testament as "the father of all who believe." (Rom. 4:11)

Why do you think God chose to build His Kingdom through Abram, flawed as he was? What does the Hebrews 11 hall of fame passage say about him, and what does it show you about what it means to be "counted as righteous"?

QUESTION THREE:

As you reflect on God's call to Abram, do you think He's challenging you to take a step of faith into the unknown, to wait on Him and to hear for His voice, or to build an altar of worship despite a difficult situation you might be facing?

How is He challenging your sense of control and inviting you to turn back and depend on Him?