

I'm just a passn' trough. My treasures are laid up somewhere beyond the blue. The angels beckon me from heaven's open door, and I can't feel at home in this world anymore."

- 5) God wants us to live as pilgrims and strangers in this world. **Do your ambitions and goals in life reflect that of a pilgrim and stranger?** What have you accomplished so far in this life that will last for eternity? **Are you fulfilling God's will for your life?** If you died today, will God be able to reward you for faithful service?

☞ *We do not find God's will by convincing God to approve our desire, but by yielding our will to anything God desires.*

#### **b. Their faith was steadfast, v.15-16**

- 1) They took their eyes off their former homeland and stayed focused on God's promise (v.15).
- 2) They desired a better home in heaven (v.16). Because of their faith in God, God prepared for them a city in heaven.

**Conclusion:** By faith, Abraham and Sarah had a heavenly focus. In this life, they lived as pilgrims and strangers. They never received God's earthly Promised Land, but when they died, they received God's eternal city. Their lives are a challenge to you and me to set our affection on things above and not on things of this earth.

When we stand at the Judgment Seat of Christ, the Lord will not be looking at our earthly success, our business title, our popularity, our talents, our sporting achievements, or our possessions. He will be looking at our spiritual service record, our yieldedness to His will, our obedience to Him and our treasures laid up in heaven. Jesus gave us God's perspective of earthly success in (Luke 16:15) "*...that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.*"

Have you answered God's call for your life? **Have you answered first His call to salvation?** Once saved, what does God want you to change that your life might count for eternity? Do you need to follow the Lord in baptism? Do you need to join our church and get involved? Do you need to obey the Lord in some area? Is God calling you to be a missionary or one of you men to preach? Whatever it is that you need to do, yield to God today. Be like Abraham and obey God's call.

**Song:** I Surrender All - 394

# A Heavenly Focus

22 September 2019 AM – Hebrews 11:8-16 – Heb19 – Scott Childs

**Introduction:** My good camera has a setting that I used recently called spot focus. It forces the camera to focus on a spot in the centre of the view and to ignore the surroundings. That is helpful for taking a picture of a single object like a bird in a tree or a bee on a flower.

In a similar way, Abraham and Sarah had a spot focus on a heavenly city that enabled them not to focus on the things of this life.

**Transition:** God wants our faith, like that of Abraham and Sarah, to have a heavenly focus. Let me show you three elements of their faith that we need in order to gain a heavenly focus.

## 1. Like Abraham, we need Faith to Live Unsettled

### a. By faith Abraham left home, v.8

- 1) Abraham heard God's call.
  - a) We do not know how Abraham became a believer. He was born about 350 years after the flood and about 250 years after the tower of Babel. Noah's son, Shem, was still alive. Perhaps he influenced Abraham. However, believing Abraham heard God's call.
  - b) God called him to move. Genesis 12:1) "*Now the LORD had 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 shew thee.*" This was also a call to separate. According to Joshua 24:2, Abraham's father and family were idol worshippers.
  - c) **Does God still call men and women today? Yes!** God has a plan or will for your life. He calls every Christian to be baptised and to join a local church. He calls every Christian to separate from sin and follow Him. (Luke 9:23) "*And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.*" He has a plan for every part of your life. God may be calling some of you to be pastors, teachers, and missionaries. (Romans 10:14-15) "*How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall*

*they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!"*

- 2) Abraham obeyed God's call. He left Ur and then later he left Haran and moved to Canaan. God had not yet told him where he was to settle, but he followed God's directions. As the hymn writer said, God reveals His will "just one step at a time." <sup>Hymn 305</sup> **God will reveal more of His will when you obey what He has already revealed.**

### **b. By faith Abraham sojourned, v.9**

- 1) To *sojourn* is to reside in a place as a foreigner. Though he lived in Canaan, God never gave him property of his own.
- 2) He lived in tabernacles or tents, travelling from place to place, as did his son Isaac and grandson Jacob.
- 3) Life is not about success, prestige, pleasure, or pleasing self. It is about living for eternity. **You will never find true fulfilment in life until you get your eyes off the things of this life and focus on eternity.** (Colossians 3:2) "*Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.*"
- 4) Abraham exhibited four marks of a person God can lead.
  - a) He was right with God (unlike his father).
  - b) He was willing to do anything God asked.
  - c) He obeyed God's word not his feelings.
  - d) He followed God's call by faith.
- 5) Abraham looked for God's eternal city, v.10. Evidently, God revealed to him information that He did not detail for us until the last two chapters of the Bible.

## **2. Like Sarah, we need Faith in God's Promises**

### **a. Sarah's faith had been weak**

- 1) When she got impatient waiting for God, she tried to help God out by giving Hagar to Abraham so that she could have a child through her (Ge 16:2). That was not God's will. God would give her a miracle son.
- 2) God promised a son, yet He was waiting until Sarah was physically incapable of bearing a child (Ge 17:19).
- 3) When that time came, God again said that she would have a son and she laughed (**Read** Ge 18:11-14).

### **b. By faith Sarah conceived and bare a son**

- 1) Evidently, after God rebuked Sarah's laughing lack of faith, she chose to believe God.
- 2) She did miraculously bear a son just as God had promised.
- 3) When God says something in the Bible, we must believe Him. Do not fear to trust God. Our God is a miracle-working God. (Psalms 34:10) "*The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the LORD shall not want any good thing.*"
- 4) If God calls you to serve Him in a full-time ministry, you may not understand how you will manage, but God will provide. God will never order something that He cannot pay for. (Proverbs 3:5-6) "*Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.*"

## **3. Like Abraham and Sarah, we need enduring faith.**

### **a. At death, their faith was still just hope, v.13-14**

- 1) Abraham and Sarah were pilgrims and strangers (foreigners) on earth until their death. They lived as nomads. God provided abundantly for them, but they did not own the land.
- 2) When Abraham and Sarah died, they still had not received the land God had promised on this earth, but they looked beyond this life into eternity.
- 3) By living as pilgrims and strangers, they declared plainly that they looked for another country (v.14).
  - a) If we are wise, we will obey Jesus' words in Matthew 6:20, "*But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.*" (Matthew 6:33) "*But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*"
  - b) The apostle Paul wrote, (1 Corinthians 15:19) "*If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.*"
- 4) While we live IN this world, we are not OF this world. The songwriter put it this way, "This world is not my home,