

06.06.2010 (Sun)

Blessed with Man of Faith Abraham (Gal 3:6-9)

The Word is God (Jn 1:1). Therefore, if you do not believe in the Word, you believe in an idol. Like Lot, there is a faith that wavers. Even when he was told the city would be destroyed, Lot hesitated and procrastinated in his actions (Gen 19:16). And though God who remembered Abraham showed grace and saved Lot, he continued to hesitate until the very dawn of destruction (Gen 19:15, 16, 29).

There is a faith like that of Lot's wife who looks back (Gen 19:26). It is a faith unable to rid itself of lingering attachments to this world. Although these kinds of useless attachments must be resolutely thrown away, we become reluctant to give them up due to immature thoughts. If we are unable to give them up through faith, thoughts of the past, old habits, and ways of the past will continue to arise. It is a faith without self-restraint.

There is a faith like that of Lot's daughter who got together with men of Sodom. It is faith of syncretism. It is fusion of everything mixed. It follows by sight. It will not hesitate to become one with the earthly people and give up faith for the good looks and good qualifications. It is a faith and it is a way that does as he or she sees fit.

There is a faith like that of Lot's sons-in-law who regarded the Word of God as a joke (Gen 19:14). Their faith was like that of Esau, who so lightly regarded the firstborn birthright and thought it to be so unimportant. Esau could not overcome physical hunger and so he threw away his soul. Gen 25:34 shows us how Esau despised his birthright.

How then must we have faith? *True faith is to give not only your first, but your very best.* Ex 13:2 shows us that faith is to give first to God. "*Consecrate to me every firstborn male. The first offspring of every womb among the Israelites belongs to me, whether man or animal.*" It is not giving yourself later, but giving yourself to God *first!*

And, faith is to give your very best to God. Ex 23:19 teaches this to us. "*Bring the best of the firstfruits of your soil to the house of the Lord your God.*" Here, the Hebrew term from "firstfruits" is *reshith* which comes from the word *rosh* meaning *head*. *Reshith* means the *choicest and finest*. So we must give the first and the very best.

Abel had this kind of faith. Heb 11:4 says, "*By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith he was commended as a righteous man, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith he still speaks, even though he is dead.*" Abraham had this kind of faith as well. Was he not willing to sacrifice his own son, Isaac? He offered to God what was impossible to offer. And that is why God recognized Abraham's faith (Gen 22:12).

We won't die through a faith that gives the first and the very best. Enoch had such a faith by which he lived by and went straight to heaven. *"By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death. He could not be found because God had taken him away. For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God"* (Heb 11:5).

Beloved friends, faith is thought of the Spirit (Rom 8:6). It is faith because it acts upon the Word. That is how it overcomes death. Only in faith with action is there no death (Jas 2:17). The promise of God's word did not come to Abraham by chance (Gen 12:1-4), and it was not a covenant made accidentally. Abraham had shown a faithful heart and the utmost devotion to God (Heb 11:8, Ne 9:8).

Gal 3:9 proclaims, *"So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith."* Gal 3:8 tells us that those who believe will be blessed. It is the blessing of eternal life which comes from the Gospel. That is why those who believe are considered children of Abraham (Gal 3:7). We must believe in the Gospel to get rid of our sins!

Through the Gospel that empowers us of Jesus Christ's crucifixion and resurrection, all sins are gone. Whether it is sins of the past or of the present, no matter how evil or shameful, if we repent in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, our sins will be completely washed away! If we repent by faith, God will forgive us for everything. So do not look to anything else but put your faith in the Word!

Dearest friends, Abraham was considered a righteous man because he believed God (Gal 3:6). Have a faith that breaks down arrogance and stubbornness. David had killed Goliath near an oak tree. 1 Sam 21:9 tells us that Goliath was killed in the Valley of Elah which had many oak trees and *Elah* itself means *"strong tree"*. Absalom too was killed right by an oak tree (2 Sam 18).

The oak tree symbolizes the man's hardened mind of security, abundance, arrogance, and idolatry (Isa 2:13-14, Hos 4:13, Jer 2:20, Dt 12:2, 1 Ki 14:23). However, Abraham changed this place of sin to a place of worship (Gen 12:6-7, 13:18). In Gen 18:1, where does it say God appeared? Near the great trees of Mamre, and it was here that God planted the seed of His promise, the Christ (Gen 18:10, 22:18, Gal 3:16)!