



Rock Creek Baptist Church
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Faith and Doubt In Tension: Genesis
12-13

Haver other believers had doubts? What
do I do with mine?

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Belief is being of one mind accepting the truth, unbelief is being of one mind rejecting it. Doubt is wavering between the two and is double minded - Os Guinness

Doubt is standing in two boats with a foot in each - Chinese proverb

Our doubts are traitors, and make us lose the good we oft might win by fearing to attempt. - Shakespeare

James 1:6-8

But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do.

Do you ever doubt?

We can identify with Abraham who had great faith, but also struggled with doubts
We often believe God, but seek to change His plans. We try to modify them or rush them along because we also have doubts.

“Doubt is the ants in the pants of faith. It keeps it moving.” - Fredrich Boechner

Doubt is a normal tool that the devil uses against us to paralyze us, stop us in our tracks. Instead of giving in, we should let our doubts spur us to lean upon God instead of our own understanding.

2 Corinthians 5:7

For we live by faith, not by sight.

Proverbs 3:5-6

Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.

Reminder: God had made several promises to Abraham that were impossible without God

- 1) I will make you into a great nation
- 2) I will bless you
- 3) I will make your name great
- 4) You will be a blessing (be seen as blessed)
- 5) I will bless those who bless you
- 6) I will curse those who curse you
- 7) All people on the earth will be blessed through you

Abraham uproots and follows God's will without a lot of context but with a lot of faith. So far in chapter 12 he's doing great!

Can you relate? You have unstoppable enthusiasm...until something tries to stop you? They you make excuses, exceptions to the rule?

Story: Stranded in temptation

Genesis 12:10

Now there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to live there for a while because the famine was severe.

It is hard for us to judge whether Abraham should have stayed or not, the Scripture doesn't put a positive or negative statement on this. What we CAN identify with here is the concept of postponing the dream, the commands from God, until a time that is more convenient, safer.

Next, fear continues to drive Abraham and this time into a game of deception

Genesis 12:11

And it came to pass, when he was come near to enter into Egypt, that he said unto Sarai his wife, Behold now, I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon:

Genesis 12:10-20

Now there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to live there for a while because the famine was severe. As he was about to enter Egypt, he said to his wife Sarai, "I know what a beautiful woman you are. When the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife.' Then they will kill me but will let you live. Say you are my sister, so that I will be treated well for your sake and my life will be spared because of you." When Abram came to Egypt, the Egyptians saw that Sarai was a very beautiful woman. And when Pharaoh's officials saw her, they praised her to Pharaoh, and she was taken into his palace. He treated Abram well for her sake, and Abram acquired sheep and cattle, male and female donkeys, male and female servants, and camels. But the LORD inflicted serious diseases on Pharaoh and his household because of Abram's wife Sarai. So Pharaoh summoned Abram. "What have you done to me?" he said. "Why didn't you tell me she was your wife? Why did you say, 'She is my sister,' so that I took her to be my wife? Now then, here is your wife. Take her and go!" Then

Pharaoh gave orders about Abram to his men, and they sent him on his way, with his wife and everything he had.

Abraham is being deceptive here to Egypt, and that country is the one in the Bible with the reputation for being deceitful! Abraham is sinking to new lows.

Abraham believes the promises of God, but he also acts in ways that looks like he doesn't. He's wavering. A foot in each boat. Between faith and doubt. A descendant from Abraham and Sarah can't happen if Abraham gives away his wife out of fear.

Pharaoh wins the moral victory here, not only sparing Abraham's life but letting him leave with all of his undeserved riches.

Do you ever do something out of fear, to prevent an outcome, and your mistakes actually cause what you were afraid of?

If God hadn't intervened with the sickness on Pharaoh's household, we wouldn't have an Abraham story to tell.

Husbands, do you ever fail to protect your wives? Make concessions and compromise her and your family? Put her in a bad place because you are protecting yourself?

You would think Abraham would learn his lesson and not make this same mistake again...but he does the very same thing to the king of Gerar in chapter 20

Do you ever find yourself repeating the same mistakes out of fear and doubt? We are fearful that God is holding out something from us that we want/need, the same misconception that happened early on in Genesis

Genesis 3:4-5

"You will not certainly die," the serpent said to the woman. "For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

After Abraham escapes with his wife and life and possessions he returns to the spot where God gave the promises and calls on the name of the Lord. Now, he hears the promise again with new details

Genesis 13:16-18

I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted. Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you." So Abram went to live near the great trees of Mamre at Hebron, where he pitched his tents. There he built an altar to the LORD.

Abraham get's back on track here and obeys God's next commands

God can get you back on track too. He can still use you despite your past. Just like He did Abraham. You can have a great faith, just like Abraham.

Romans 3:10

As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one;

We can't get there on our own, we might start off with enthusiasm but when hard times come we will fail. We're prone to doubt and try to modify or rush God's plans. If this was dependent on our righteousness we'd be doomed! We NEED the grace of Jesus!

Philippians 2:8

And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross!

Thanks be to God for the example Jesus set:

He obeyed the Father's plan, all the way to the cross, without modification.

So that all who put their faith in Him and His saving work on the cross may be considered righteous before God.

Like Abraham, we walk away with undeserved riches - a relationship with God.

We can all relate to Abraham's mistakes, let us also relate to his faith