

MESSAGE

GOD CALLING

FAITH LIFE | GENESIS 11:27-12:9 | SEPTEMBER 13/14, 2014 | PASTOR MATT ERICKSON

"The LORD had said to Abram, 'Go from your country, your people and you father's household to the land I will show you.'" (Genesis 12:1)

The Backstory of Faith (Genesis 11:1-9, 27-32)

- The human story: Babel (Genesis 11:1-9)
- The family story: Terah (Genesis 11:27-32)

The Voice that Births Faith (Genesis 12:1-3)

- A calling to go
- The decisive pronoun
- Sevenfold blessing
- Threefold implications: the land, the name, the nations

The Shape of Faith (Genesis 12:4-9)

- The decision: hearing & acting
- The way: journey & lifestyle
- The orientation: differentiation & worship

STUDY GUIDE

1. How would you define the word 'faith'?
2. We are beginning a new series at Eastbrook called "Faith Life," in which we will explore what it really means to be a person of faith. We will follow the life of Abraham – called Abram at this point in our journey – in Genesis 11:27-25:12. This week, we are studying Genesis 11:27-12:9. Stop and ask God to speak to you before reading that portion of Scripture aloud.
3. Abram's journey begins in Mesopotamia (present-day Iraq) and moves toward present day Israel and Palestine. What do you observe about Abram's family background and history from Genesis 11:27-32? What stands out to you? What is confusing to you?
4. Genesis 12:1-3 is perhaps the most important passage in the entire Old Testament. Here, God speaks to Abram with a decisive command and specific promise. What is the decisive command God speaks to Abram in verse 1? What do you think this would have meant to Abram?
5. When have you experienced God speaking to you decisively? What happened? How did you know it was God?
6. In verses 2-3, God speaks seven promises of His overall covenant – or agreement – with Abram. What are those seven promises and what is their significance both for Abram now and for others later?
7. How would you describe the response of Abram and others in verses 4-7? What is surprising and what is not surprising?
8. One thing to note in verses 6-9 is that Abram journeys to "the site of the great tree of Moreh at Shechem." This was a recognized center for pagan religion in the ancient near east. What does Abram do at this site? Why do you think Abram did this and what would it have communicated to others around him?

RESPONSE—LISTENING TO GOD



This week we focused on how faith begins by listening to God. In response to the study, we want to encourage you to take time with the spiritual practice of listening to God. Set a specific time this week where you can be in a quiet, undistracted place with God. In that time and place, invite God to speak to you as you begin to meet with Him. Slowly read Abraham's story in Genesis 12:1-9 three times. Quietly reflect on what is happening in the story. Next, listen for how God is speaking to you about your own journey of faith. You may become distracted. That's to be expected. Just take those distractions and release them into God's hands. Listen for God for an extended amount of time. As you conclude this exercises, write down anything you sensed God speaking to you and then thank Him for His presence in your life.

[Next week we continue our "Faith Life" series by looking at two parallel situations in which Abraham struggles to obey God. To prepare you could read Genesis 12:10-20; 20:1-18 in advance.]