

MESSAGE

FUMBLING WITH FAITH

FAITH LIFE | GENESIS 12:10-20; 20:1-18 | SEPT. 20/21, 2014 | PASTOR MATT ERICKSON

"If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot disown Himself." (2 Timothy 2:13)

Faith Fail

- When circumstances diminish faith (12:10; 20:1)
- When fear overtakes faith (12:11-13; 20:11-13)
- When compromise threatens others
 - Sarah (12:15-16; 20:2)
 - Pharaoh in Egypt (12:17)
 - Abimelek in Gerar (20:3, 9-10)

Faith Full

- The justice of God to uphold right (12:17; 20:3)
- The grace of God in the face of human failure (12:16, 20; 20:14-18)
- The providence of God in His promises (12:1-3)

STUDY GUIDE

1. When was a time that you most struggled to be obedient to God in your faith? How did you grow through it?
2. We continue the "Faith Life" series at Eastbrook by looking at two episodes in Abraham's life found in Genesis 12:10-20 and 20:1-18. Ask God to speak to you before reading those two portions of Scripture aloud.
3. What is it that leads Abraham to begin traveling in both of these stories?
4. As they travel into the land of Egypt (12:10) and the area around Gerar (20:2), what motivates Abraham to tell the half-truth about his relationship to Sarah? How do you think Sarah felt about this?
5. Abraham specifically mentions his anxieties that "there is surely no fear of God in this place" (20:11). How does Abimelek actually act in response to God's words (20:3-16)? How does the character of Abimelek and Abraham compare in this situation?
6. Have you ever been surprised to find a God-fearing person, like Abimelek, in an unexpected place like? What happened?
7. God protects Abraham and Sarah, even bringing greater blessing upon them (12:16; 20:14-16), despite the failure. Why would God do this?
8. In Genesis 12:1-3 God speaks about the promise of a future and in Genesis 21 the child of promise, Isaac, is finally born. There is a lot of distance between God's promise and actual fulfillment. What did the experience of waiting seem to do to Abraham and Sarah? How have you navigated seasons of waiting for God to act in your life?

RESPONSE—SHARE YOUR STORY



An overwhelming theme of these two passages is that God is faithful even when we fail. This week we want to encourage you to respond by reflecting on how God has been faithful in your life, and to celebrate that by writing it down or sharing it with someone.

Every follower of Jesus has a story. Some stories appear more dramatic and sudden, while others appear more basic and gradual. Regardless of appearances, the truth is that every one of us has a meaningful and important story of our life with God. That story is uniquely yours, and writing it down or sharing it will affirm the work of God in your life and often lead others to ask questions about God's Story!

If you have never written down your God Story, take out a piece of paper and organize your story under the three headings: "My Life Before Christ", "Encountering Christ", and "My Life Since Meeting Christ." You could also share your God Story with others by completing the online form at: www.eastbrook.org/godstory.

[Next week we continue our "Faith Life" series by looking at Abraham's radical kindness in Genesis 13:1-14:24. To prepare you could read that passage in advance.]