

# HOW TO BE BLESSED

SERIES ON THE LIFE OF ABRAHAM

## BE TOUGHER THAN YOUR TOUGHEST TIMES (Week 2)

**OPENING:** What parts of or points in the sermon this past Sunday stood out for you? Why?

**PRINCIPLE:** *BE TOUGHER THAN YOUR TOUGHEST TIMES.* Let us learn some aspects of this principle based on this part of Abram's story.

**READ:** GENESIS 12:10-13:1-4

### DISCUSS:

- What does the word "tough" mean to you? What did you remember from Sunday's sermon what toughness means biblically (James 1:12)?
- What disappointing situation did Abram find out when he reached the Promised Land that caused him to move to Egypt (Genesis 12:10)?
- How would you feel if you were Abram? Would you honestly have done the same thing?
- Pastor Jon said that a majority of us have the proclivity to run away from difficult situations instead of facing them? Why do you think so?

### DIG DEEPER:

#### 1. We can't experience \_\_\_\_\_ if we resort to \_\_\_\_\_.

When God said to Abram, "I will bless you" (Genesis 12:2-3), God used the word *barak*, which means "to praise" or "to elevate." We learned last Sunday that God wants to elevate us. He wants to raise us up. Pastor said that we can't experience elevation if we resort to desertion.

- What did Abram choose when he literally deserted Canaan in exchange for Egypt?
- What was God's expressed will for Abram (Genesis 12:1)? What did Abram do when he left Canaan?
- In a spiritual sense, when do we abandon God's will in exchange for something else we think is better?
- What did Abram feel when he took himself out of the will of God? What did Abram say to Sarai out of what he felt?

Pastor said that when we take ourselves from the will of God, insecurity sets in; fear sets in; which leads us to find safety and stability someplace else.

#### 2. When you face a difficult situation, don't \_\_\_\_\_ it, \_\_\_\_\_ it.

Another Hebrew word for blessing is *esher*, which means happiness. In the book of Job (5:17) the word *esher* is used. What does the verse say and how did Job relate *esher* to discipline? Pastor said that it is in difficult seasons—the toughest times, when God is most at work in our life—developing us, preparing to launch us to a much higher plain. We must never doubt the plan of God to take us higher through trials. Even an airplane won't take off unless it runs against the wind. We can't take off unless we're willing to face the wind that could actually take us higher. Facing difficult situations is designed to help us launch, that is why we must not run away from difficult situations. Instead, we run over them.

- Are you facing a crisis right now that is testing your faith? What are doing with it (how are you responding to it)?
- Some crises come as consequences to our actions. Some crises come as tests to help us go higher.
- Is the current crisis in your life as, a) a consequence or B) as a launch pad?

#### 3. \_\_\_\_\_ God's \_\_\_\_\_ of the word blessed.

A Greek for blessed is *makarios*, which also means happy! Read Matthew 5:3-11.

When Jesus preached his Beatitudes in, he used the word "makarios." It is obvious that the Lord Jesus is giving the word "blessed" or "happy" a whole new meaning. Jesus is disconnecting the popular idea of blessedness from the real meaning of the word. He is saying that happiness is not "achieved" or "measured" in the amount of money you have or the number of places you've traveled, or the string of properties under your name. Having a lot of money and properties is good, but it does not mean that you're blessed. We find that truth in Abram's situation in Genesis 12:14-16 (read).

- Abram experienced increase in property, but was he happy knowing that he was living a lie?
- Can you name famous and rich individuals/celebrities who died unhappy?
- Is there anything wrong with being rich or dreaming of a better life?
- Read Ecclesiastes 2:22-25 and 12:6 & 13. What were Solomon's conclusions about life, riches and man's greatest duty?

#### 4. God does not want us to \_\_\_\_\_ the blessing.

Read Genesis 12:17-13:1-4. Pastor said, "Enduring is tough, but losing the blessing is tougher." God did not want for Abram to forfeit the blessing so God sent plagues to Pharaoh in Genesis 12:17 to redirect Abram back to His will. Instead of becoming a blessing, Abram became a jinx.

- When you take yourself outside of the will of God, it is possible that you will JINX everyone! Who can recount the story of Jonah the prophet?
- Abram's life was spared. They were just thrown out of Egypt. They didn't belong there in the first place. God's promise was clear—He was going to bless Abram in Canaan, not in Egypt—regardless of the condition in Canaan. He found himself back to square one.
- When you find yourself in a difficult situation, don't second guess the plan of God by thinking of other options. Stick to God's promise.
- Even when we stray away from His will, God will make sure that we find our way back. God gave Abram a reboot. Do you need a reboot?

Do you want to be blessed? **Be tougher than your toughest times.**

**ANNOUNCEMENT: SUMMER BAPTISM BASH – AUGUST 7** (Right after Sunday worship. BBQ Lunch party)  
If you have received Jesus as Lord and Savior and you want to take your next step of faith, SIGN UP FOR BAPTISM!