

## The Uncertainty of Faith: Notes and Study

### Sermon Notes:

**Texts: Genesis 11:31-12:7, Hebrews 11:8-12, Hebrews 11:1-3**

There is little certainty in life. There is no guarantee of what tomorrow will bring.

Part of us longs for certainty and we do whatever we can achieve that. The world around us tells us that we need financial security, do the right things for our health, don't take risks, play it safe.

Faith has nothing to do with certainty. Faith is a response to uncertainty.

### **Genesis 11:31-12:7**

Abram's father Terah had set out for Canaan from Ur of the Chaldeans but settled in Haran (Abram was later given the name Abraham).

Haran is understood to have been in what is now southern Turkey near the Syrian border.

Abram was told by God to pack up and head to Canaan where God would make a great nation out of him which would be a blessing to the whole earth.

Abram had to leave the comfort and safety of Haran to head to a place somewhere in Canaan. He didn't know exactly where he was going or who he would find there. It was dangerous and a difficult journey. It was only when he got to Shechem that the Lord told him that he had arrived. (The travelling distance from Haran to Shechem is similar to from Kamloops to Edmonton.)

When he got there he encountered a famine and headed to Egypt to survive, hardly what he likely thought he had signed up for.

The years that followed were full of challenges and misadventures. Though his wealth grew and eventually he had an heir to pass on the task of building a nation, there was little certainty along the way. In a sense, he never saw the fulfillment of the promise (one son does not count as a nation).

### **Hebrews 11:8-12**

Abraham obeyed God and stepped out into what was (from a human perspective) uncertain (perhaps even appearing foolish). For that reason, we know him as a man of faith.

Yet, Abraham's "faith" was not always lived out as we might think it should have been. He is applauded for his faith despite of making some questionable choices and doing some 'peculiar' things...including having a child by his wife's servant. (As perplexing as this might seem to us today, the Old Testament record suggest that this was an acceptable practice at the time to ensure the survival of the family line.)

We know Abraham as a man of faith because he put his conviction into action.

### **Hebrews 11:1-3**

Faith..."assurance of things hoped for and the conviction of things not seen."

The examples that follow in Hebrews 11 are all known for their faith because they acted on that assurance and conviction.

"Faith is belief in action."

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### Life Group Discussion

#### Warm Up:

1. What comes to your mind when you think of faith? If appropriate, share an example of when you acted on your conviction that God prompted you to do something.
2. What stood out to you about Sunday's sermon? What was interesting? Confusing? Weird? Thought provoking?

#### Study & Discussion:

##### Read Hebrews 11

What stands out from the examples of people of faith?

Why do you think that it was so important for the writer of Hebrews to encourage people this way?

Do you think those people thought of themselves as men and women of faith?

Do you think they had doubts?

##### Read Galatians 3:1-8

Discuss the roll of faith in obedience to Spirit as opposed to the law -- living right (remember that Abraham didn't do it all "right").

#### Application:

What holds you back from putting belief into action?

Are there areas of your life that you need to grow in faith?

Are there things in your life (past or present) that you feel are unworthy of faith? (Don't feel that you have to share details unless appropriate in the situation).

Is the Holy Spirit prompting you to do some?

How can we encourage one another to step out in faith?

#### Prayer:

1. Ask for individual prayer requests/
2. Is there someone outside the group you would like prayer for?