

The Son of Abraham
Matthew 1:1-17, Genesis 11:27-12:3

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We're currently in a series of sermons called, "*Bloodlines: The Genealogy of Jesus*" from Matthew 1:1-17.

What, at first, seems to be just a list of names is really important in helping us understand the person and work of Jesus.

Today, we're going to see that Jesus, "*the son of Abraham,*" was the fulfillment of God's call to Abraham.

In Matthew 1:1, Matthew calls Jesus "*the son of Abraham*" because Jesus fulfilled God's call to Abraham that one of his descendants would bless the whole world.

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Matthew 1:1, "*This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham.*" Matthew wanted his readers to know that Jesus wasn't only a descendant of David but also Abraham.

It may surprise you to know that adherents to each of the three major world religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, all consider themselves to be children of Abraham.

Therefore, to understand world civilization, one has to know the story of Abraham and to do that we must go back, again, to the very beginning.

After God created Adam and Eve, sin entered the world, and God banished them from the Garden of Eden. But, as the population grew in numbers, so did wickedness and sin.

Genesis 6:5, *“The Lord saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time.”*

God sent a flood and wiped out the entire human and animal population, except for Noah, his wife, his three sons, their wives, and some select animals and birds.

Once the flood subsided, Noah and his family began to re-populate the earth. Their progeny spread throughout the earth, but as the population increased throughout the earth, so did sin.

Now, at that time the Bible tells us that the whole earth only had one language.

For some reason, probably because of their arrogance, some people decided to build a tower with its top reaching to the heavens.

This, in reality, was an act of rebellion against God, therefore He “confused their language” and dispersed these people from Babel, scattering them throughout the earth.

Reading through these first eleven chapters of Genesis is a description of the human race spiraling into increasing depravity, sin, wickedness, and violence.

Then, at the end of Genesis 11, there is a short genealogy that takes us from Shem, Noah’s son, so a man named Terah, who lived in Ur of the Chaldeans.

Terah had three sons named Abram, Nahor, and Haran. Haran had a son named Lot but then Haran died. Abram and Nahor each got married.

For some unstated reason, Terah took Abram, Abram's wife Sarai, and his grandson Lot and headed west to the land of Canaan.

But about halfway there, he decided to stop and settle at a place he most likely named after his deceased son Haran. Eventually, Terah died and Abram, Sarai, and Lot continued to live in Harran.

Then Abram receives his call. Genesis 12:1, *"The Lord had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you."*

This is where we see that God's call is necessary, because Abram was a pagan who didn't know God.

He had probably never heard of God. He most likely worshiped the same gods that the people of Terah and the people of Ur of the Chaldeans did.

If God had not intervened, Abram would've carried on with his life, never knowing the God of the Bible.

Abram was living in a way that he thought suited him. He may have been moral. He may have been upright. He may have been religious, but he was utterly lost.

There're people in parts of the world who've never heard of God or His Son, Jesus. In fact, there're some people who've grow up in churches just like ours and have heard of God or His Son.

However, God's call is necessary to bring each one to Him. God's call is necessary to give new life. God's call is necessary to bring about change.

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According to the website, *Our World in Data*, the population at the time that God called Abram was about 72.59 million people.

How they can be so precise? I don't know. My point is that there were millions of people in the world at the time that God called Abram.

Now, God didn't look all around and say to Himself, "*Who's searching for me?*" or "*Who's a nice man whom I like?*" No. God looked around and saw that there was no one righteous, no not one.

God didn't call Abram because he was trying to live a good life. God didn't call Abram because he was faithful. God didn't call Abram because he was deserving.

God called Abram because God's call is gracious. Abram deserved God's wrath. Abram deserved to go to hell, but God's grace is to extend mercy to the undeserving.

That's what grace is. Grace is unmerited favor. No one deserves God's favor. In reality, everyone deserves God's wrath, but grace is receiving God's unmerited favor.

Alexander Whyte, a noted Scottish preacher, once stood up in his pulpit in Edinburgh and said, "*I have discovered the most wicked man in Edinburgh.*"

Then he paused, while the congregation eagerly awaited the name. Then Whyte continued, "*His name is Alexander Whyte.*" God's grace comes only to those who know that they don't deserve His favor.

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It seems that Terah, Abram, Sarai, Nahor, Milcah, and Lot were very comfortable in Harran. They enjoyed living there. Then Terah died.

Sometime later, God said to Abram in Genesis 12:1, *“Go from your country...”* The Hebrew language here is emphatic. It’s a command. God was telling Abram, *“Get yourself out of this country.”*

Perhaps Abram was thinking, *“I like it here. It’s a comfortable place. I know my way around. I’m with my family.”* But God insisted, *“Abram, you must go!”*

Do you know what we learn here? It’s not enough to say, *“I’m from a Christian family”* or *“I’m a Southern Baptist,”* or *“I like hanging around with other Christians.”*

God encountered Abram personally and called him to go from his country. In the same way, each one of us must personally encounter God.

We can’t get into God’s kingdom on the coattails of our family. We don’t get to heaven because we belong to a church, even a Southern Baptist church!

We don’t become God’s children because we hang around with His children.

In *The Christian Reader*, Paul Francisco wrote: *“When I was a child, our church celebrated the Lord’s Supper every first Sunday of the month. At that service, the offering plates were passed twice: before the sermon for regular offerings, and just before Communion for benevolences. My family always gave to both, but they passed a dime to me to put in only the regular offering.”*

One Communion Sunday when I was nine, my mother, for the first time, gave me a dime for the benevolent offering, too. A little later when the people in our pew rose to go to the Communion rail, I got up also. “You can’t take Communion yet,” Mother told me. “Why not?” I said. “I paid for it!”

No one buys his or her way into God's family. No one is a member of God's family without a personal call from God. God's call is personal. You must encounter God for yourself.

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If you invite someone to come over to your home for a visit or a meal, you usually give them your home address.

Almost everyone today has a smartphone. So, they plug in the address and use their Maps app which gives them instructions on how to get to your home.

They'll know right from the start that it's so many miles to your home from their current location and see turn-by-turn directions.

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

Perhaps Abram may have wanted to ask God for the address so he could plug it into his Maps app! But no, God just said, *"Abram, you get up and go, but I'm not going to tell you where you are going."*

There was no negotiating with God. Abram couldn't say, *"Well, God, what's it like there? Will I have to face difficulties? Will I like it? Will it be better for me there than it is here?"* God simply said, *"Go!"* and Abram had to obey.

Many people today want to negotiate with God. They say, *"God, I'm interested in becoming a Christian, but will I have to give up my lifestyle? Will I face difficulties if I become a Christian? Will I like being a Christian? Will things be better for me as a Christian?"*

When a person says that they'll only follow God if God first shows them where He'll take them, then that person isn't answering God's call. That person is negotiating with God.

That person is like the person with the bumper sticker that says, “*God is my co-pilot.*” Think about that for a minute. A co-pilot is not in charge. A co-pilot assists the pilot. God’s call is non-negotiable.

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In his call to Abram, God went on to say in verses 2b, “*I will bless you.*” Why? “*...so that you will be a blessing, and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.*”

Did you hear that? God said that He would bless Abram, but Abram was to do something with that blessing.

He was to pass the blessing on to others. That blessing was to be passed on to all the families of the earth.

God didn’t call Abram to a life of ease and comfort and safety and security. God called Abram to first experience the blessing of God in his own life.

And then, having experienced the blessing of God in his life, Abram was to pass that blessing along to others.

When God calls you to become a Christian, God isn’t calling you to a life of ease and comfort and safety and security.

You don’t go about your Christian life by asking, “*What is the best for me?*” or “*What will keep me safe?*” or “*What will make me most comfortable?*”

No, you and I have experienced God’s amazing grace in our lives. So, we need to ask ourselves, “*How can I bless others? What can I do to help others find the amazing grace that I have found in my life?*”

So, to be “*missional*” is to live your life with purpose. It’s to live in such a way that you’re blessing others with the good news of the Gospel. God’s call is missional.

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Abram never saw the fulfillment of God’s call in his life. In fact, Abram had to wait twenty-five years before God gave him and Sarai a son, whom they named Isaac.

Matthew went on to record the genealogy from Abraham onwards in Matthew 1:2, “*Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers.*”

This genealogy continues for forty-two generations until it gets to Jesus. It’s in Jesus that all people come into a right relationship with God. Even Abram was declared justified before God by faith in Him.

Romans 4:3, “*Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.*”

Paul later wrote to the Galatians 3:13-14, “*Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a pole.” He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.*”

God’s call to Abram was fulfilled in Christ.

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Conclusion

Since Jesus is “*the son of Abraham,*” He calls us to Himself to bless us and for us to be a blessing to others.

The story is told of a man named Yates. Mr. Yates, who owned a farm in Texas. The Great Depression came, and he was having trouble keeping up with the mortgage payments.

The bank began to press him and gave him thirty days to pay his back payments or face foreclosure.

With three weeks left to go, a man came to Mr. Yates's door. He worked for an oil company.

He asked Mr. Yates to give the company a lease to drill on his farm for oil. Yates knew he was going to lose the farm anyway, so he decided that it couldn't hurt.

Well, that oil company drilled and hit a gusher—eighty-two thousand barrels of oil a day. Mr. Yates immediately became a multi-millionaire, many times over.

So, let me ask this question. Exactly when did Mr. Yates become a millionaire? Did he become a millionaire when the oil company struck oil or did he become a millionaire when he bought the farm?

Mr. Yates was a millionaire the moment he purchased the farm, but he lived in poverty because he didn't know what was underneath the ground.

When God calls you to Himself in salvation, the moment you become His child, you're blessed.

Ephesians 1:3, *"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ."*

But like Mr. Yates, some of you are living in the Great Depression. You're living spiritually poor, spiritually defeated, spiritually weak, and spiritually anemic lives.

You don't know that you're sitting on top of this incredible blessing, because you don't know that it is yours.

A story is told that in the early 1800s in Scotland, during worship in a little church, as the ushers were returning to the front with the offering, a small boy tugged at the sleeve of one of the men, whispering, *"Please put the plate down on the floor."*

Shocked and perplexed, the usher obeyed and to further complicate matters, the boy stepped into the offering plate.

It was his way of saying, *"I give my whole life to you, Lord. Not just the coins in my pocket, but my time, strength, and all the days of my life."*

Who was that little boy? Robert Moffat. A man who became a pioneer missionary to Africa and father-in-law of the well-known missionary, David Livingstone. Moffat understood that his life was to be a blessing to others.

If God has called you to Himself in salvation, you're incredibly blessed. You're blessed in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, but that blessing is to be passed on to others.

So, let me ask you, *"What are you doing to pass the blessing on to others?"*

God may be calling you, like Robert Moffat, to go and serve Him in another culture, but God is calling most of you to serve Him right here, right now.

Get involved in Sunday school. Get involved in VBS. Get involved in hospitality. Get involved in evangelism. Get involved in serving others.

Become active in some ministry so that you can be a blessing to others.