

Sunday Morning Message

September 16, 2018

Temporarily Off Course – A Detour from the Will of God

Topic – Moving Away from the Will of God

Text – Genesis 12

Congregational Reading – Genesis 12:7 - 10

Introduction

Illustration – Tell the story about our trip to Florida. Made it all the way to Clermont without a hitch; but got lost at the very end, and refused to get directions. As a result:

We lost time

We wasted resources

We started fighting amongst ourselves

That story perfectly illustrates what happens when people get off course, even temporarily.

Abraham's life, generally speaking, was a life that was yielded to God. Abraham truly was a man that loved the Lord, and served Him in obedience. However, the passage we will examine today will also reveal that Abraham, like the rest of us, had his seasons of weakness; his moments when he was not acting in faith, where he was no longer following God, but rather where he was leaning unto his own human reasoning and understanding:

"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." - (Proverbs 3:5-6)

We are not beating up on Abraham this morning by focusing on one of the few times in his life when he failed. On the contrary, knowing that all men, even great men fail at times encourages us. Why? Because we fail also. Abraham, with all of his failures was still considered a friend of God. (James 2:23)

We also want to study the passage so that perhaps it will keep us from failing the same way. Maybe by observing Abraham's mistake here, we will be challenged not to make the same one.

In this message, we will examine three observations regarding Abraham's detour from the course that God had charted for him:

I The Place of God's Will (vs. 1 – 7)

Illustration – In my Florida trip illustration there was a time when I was right where I needed to be. I was following the directions that I had printed out to the tee. I was where I was supposed to be.

Abraham arrives in the land of Canaan, which is the geographic place of God's will. It is the geographic location that God was calling Abram and Sarai to. Understand, though, that the will of God is not limited to, nor does it always refer to a geographic location as it did in Abram's case. **The will of God is living in obedience to God in submission to His will. It is living in the**

place of His choosing, for the particular purpose of His calling, while obeying His principles and precepts of His commandments (The Word of God).

Illustration – The place of God’s choosing for my life at one time was Texas Baptist College; now it is Galloway, New Jersey. The purpose of His choosing for me while I was at Texas Baptist College was training. My purpose today is teaching and preaching the Word of God.

The Bible obviously says a lot regarding God’s will:

Jesus said:

*"For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother." -
(Mark 3:35)*

We are to live according to the will of God:

"That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God." - (1 Peter 4:2)

The Book of Acts refers to the ministry of David:

"For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption:" - (Acts 13:36)

Paul obeyed the will of God in his ministry:

*"Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother,"
- (1 Corinthians 1:1)*

The Bible teaches us to follow the will of God:

"Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;" - (Ephesians 6:6)

The Bible will show us much of what the will of God is for our lives. Sometimes, we refer to this as the revealed will of God:

"For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication:" - (1 Thessalonians 4:3)

Other examples of the revealed will of God include – attending church, reading your Bible, winning souls, giving, etc.

Being thankful to God:

"In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." - (1 Thessalonians 5:18)

It may be the will of God for you to suffer in life:

"For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing." - (1 Peter 3:17)

"Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator." - (1 Peter 4:19)

Illustration – Job; Melissa Dilley

In our passage, up until verse 9, Abraham is right where God wants him to be.

It is a place of purpose

It is a place of power

It is a place of provision

It is a place of protection

Why would Abraham want to leave? Why would you and I want to leave? Why then are so many of God's people leaving?

II The Pressure to Wander Away from God's Will (vs. 8 – 10)

Illustration – Again, referring back to our family vacation. Somewhere along the line I got messed up. What should I have done? Asked directions – call my brother-in-law. Do you think I would do that? Nope. I was calling my own shots. I was doing it my way. I was full of pride.

However, in Abraham's case, there was some pressure put on him to leave **the place of God's will**. There may have been other reasons, but for Abraham it seems that the temptation was particularly in the area of provision. There was a famine in the land.

Practical Observations Regarding the Temptation or pressure that we often feel to wander out of the will of God:

Fleshly Pressure – the fleshly desires that are in you. Man is carnal by nature, and unless he is redeemed and walking in the Spirit, his flesh (his carnal desires) will lure him out of the will of God.

"For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not." - (Romans 7:18)

Financial Pressure – Sometimes, God will allow a time of testing financially, as He did here with Abraham.

- . The Lack of Finances
- . The Lure of More Finances

Illustrate – The grass is always greener somewhere else

Illustrate – People stop giving because they are struggling a little financially.

Illustrate – People take jobs, or more hours that keep them from worshipping and serving God.

Female Pressure / Male Pressure (Relationships)

I have seen many good men and good women get out of the will of God because of a bad choice of boyfriend or girlfriend.

Illustrate – It is better to not have a wife or a husband than to have the wrong one.

Formula for determining God's will:

- Bible Principle
- Bathed in Prayer
- Counselors

If you follow that formula, you cannot help but succeed. If you ignore that formula, know this: you are basically telling God that you can do it on your own, and you are not operating in faith; and anything that is not of faith is sin. You are guaranteed failure.

III The Problems of the World (vs. 10 – 20)

Abraham eventually ends up in Egypt.

Egypt, in the Bible is always symbolic of the world. To Abraham, it was a geographic place: to you and me it is anything that deviates from God's principles, purpose, and plan for our lives.

When we say the world, we are not talking about people. God loves the people of the world. He sent His Son to die on the cross for the people of the world so that they might be saved:

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." - (John 3:16-17)

When the Bible speaks of the world in a symbolic sense, it is referring to the world system that is under the control of Satan. It is speaking of a godless culture that surrounds us. As the time of Christ's return gets closer the world will become more worldly; more godless; more self-centered.

"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away." - (2 Timothy 3:1-5)

The world is one of the three main enemies of the will of God, along with the flesh and the devil. These three enemies all work together to lure us away from God's plan and purpose for our lives. Too many Christians are falling prey to the temptations of the world, because their flesh is craving them.

The Bible tells us that we must not allow the world to lure us in:

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." - (1 John 2:15-17)

In the parable of the sower:

"And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful." - (Mark 4:18-19)

The Problems Abraham Encountered:

- He is in a godless culture, and knows he is no longer in the will of God. Instead of trusting God, he is forced to do things the world's way – He lies to Pharaoh.
- He influences Lot – Lot develops an appetite for the big city.

- He picks up a little handmaid for his wife (Hagar)
- God does not speak to him until he gets back to the place of the will of God

Conclusion

So what's the solution? How can we keep from falling prey to the same trap that seduced Abraham? How can we stay in the will of God? How can we keep all of those blessings in this life, along with the rewards (crowns) that God has reserved in Heaven for those who stay in His will on earth.

*"And be not conformed to this world: but **be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind**, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."* - (Romans 12:2)

Renew your mind by flooding your mind with the things of God.

You know what they are:

The Bible

Prayer

Soulwinning

Service

Simple isn't it?

You say, I have heard that before; but have you done it?

You say, preacher, I have already fallen out of God's will. Then get back in it. Come back in the boat. We've got plenty of room for you. It's your choice.

Know this, however: There are really only two choices. You will either follow God, or you will call your own shots and do your own thing. But by doing your own thing, you have left the will of God and are out in the world, which is controlled by the devil.

Christian, I am begging you to wait on God. Don't take matters into your own hands. Follow God – wait on Him. He has a wonderful plan for your life that you will miss if you do not follow His will, even when His will seems like it makes no sense at all. You have to trust Him.

Closing Illustration – The Three Trees

Once there were three trees on a hill in the woods. They were discussing their hopes and dreams when the first tree said, "Someday I hope to be a treasure chest. I could be filled with gold, silver and precious gems. I could be decorated with intricate carving and everyone would see the beauty."

Then the second tree said, "Someday I will be a mighty ship. I will take kings and queens across the waters and sail to the corners of the world. Everyone will feel safe in me because of the strength of my hull."

Finally the third tree said, "I want to grow to be the tallest and straightest tree in the forest. People will see me on top of the hill and look up to my branches, and think of the heavens and God and how close to them I am reaching. I will be the greatest tree of all time and people will always remember me."

After a few years of praying that their dreams would come true, a group of woodsmen came upon the trees. When one came to the first tree he said, "This looks like a strong tree, I think I should be able to sell the wood to a carpenter", and he began cutting it down. The tree was happy, because he knew that the carpenter would make him into a treasure chest.

At the second tree a woodsman said, "This looks like a strong tree, I should be able to sell it to the shipyard." The second tree was happy because he knew he was on his way to becoming a mighty ship.

When the woodsmen came upon the third tree, the tree was frightened because he knew that if they cut him down his dreams would not come true. One of the woodsmen said, "I don't need anything special from my tree so I'll take this one", and he cut it down."

When the first tree arrived at the carpenter's, he was made into a feed box for animals. He was then placed in a barn and filled with hay. This was not at all what he had prayed for.

The second tree was cut and made into a small fishing boat. His dreams of being a mighty ship and carrying kings had come to an end.

The third tree was cut into large pieces and left alone in the dark.

The years went by, and the trees forgot about their dreams. Then one day, a man and woman came to the barn. She gave birth and they placed the baby in the hay in the feed box that was made from the first tree. The man wished that he could have made a crib for the baby, but this manger would have to do. The tree could feel the importance of this event and knew that it had held the greatest treasure of all time.

Years later, a group of men got in the fishing boat made from the second tree. One of them was tired and went to sleep. While they were out on the water, a great storm arose and the tree didn't think it was strong enough to keep the men safe. The men woke the sleeping man, and he stood and said "Peace" and the storm stopped. At this time, the tree knew that it had carried the King of Kings in its boat.

Finally, someone came and got the third tree. It was carried through the streets as the people mocked the man who was carrying it. When they came to a stop, the man was nailed to the tree and raised in the air to die at the top of a hill. When Sunday came, the tree came to realize that it was strong enough to stand at the top of the hill and be as close to God as was possible, because Jesus had been crucified on it.

The moral of this story is that when things don't seem to be going your way, always know that God has a plan for you. If you place your trust in Him, He will give you great gifts. Each of the trees got what they wanted, just not in the way they had imagined. We don't always know what God's plans are for us. We just know that His ways are not our ways, but His ways are always best.