

Life of Abraham: When Famine Tests Your Faith

Key Scriptures: Genesis 12:10-20

Now there was a famine in the land. So Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there, for the famine was severe in the land. ¹¹ When he was about to enter Egypt, he said to Sarai his wife, "I know that you are a woman beautiful in appearance, ¹² and when the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife.' Then they will kill me, but they will let you live. ¹³ Say you are my sister, that it may go well with me because of you, and that my life may be spared for your sake."

¹⁴ When Abram entered Egypt, the Egyptians saw that the woman was very beautiful. ¹⁵ And when the princes of Pharaoh saw her, they praised her to Pharaoh. And the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house. ¹⁶ And for her sake he dealt well with Abram; and he had sheep, oxen, male donkeys, male servants, female servants, female donkeys, and camels. ¹⁷ But the LORD afflicted Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife. ¹⁸ So Pharaoh called Abram and said, "What is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife? ¹⁹ Why did you say, 'She is my sister,' so that I took her for my wife? Now then, here is your wife; take her, and go." ²⁰ And Pharaoh gave men orders concerning him, and they sent him away with his wife and all that he had.

Romans 4:18-22 ¹⁸ *Against hope Abraham believed in hope with the result that he became the father of many nations according to the pronouncement, "so will your descendants be."* ¹⁹ *Without being weak in faith, he considered his own body as dead (because he was about one hundred years old) and the deadness of Sarah's womb.* ²⁰ *He did not waver in unbelief about the promise of God but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God.* ²¹ *He was fully convinced that what God promised he was also able to do.* ²² *So indeed it was credited to Abraham as righteousness.*

Philippians 1:6 *For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.*

Key Point: My failures don't cancel God's faithfulness!

TALK IT OVER

Start talking: Pick a conversation starter for your group.

- Have you lived in a different country? If yes, what were the biggest challenges during your transition there?

Reflect, Think, & Share: Read through the key scriptures and share any observations or questions with the group.

- When Abram chose to go down to Egypt, do you think his decision was right or wrong? Is there evidence for either? What are the positive and negative outcomes from this stay in Egypt?
- Sometimes we think we can sin and get away with it. The price for sin may not come as an instant debt, but with a payment plan of bills in the future. One of the servants Abram acquired in Egypt was named Hagar. What is the significance of this maidservant?
- Have you ever made a wrong choice and had to pay for it in the future? What did you learn?
- In times of pressure, certain character qualities come to the surface. What qualities do you see in Abram?
- Were Sarai's actions a good example of submission to her husband?
- Have you ever strayed from a godly path because you thought you had to take care of yourself? What do such choices say about your perspective of God?
- Humanly speaking what is the worst possible outcome that could have happened if God hadn't intervened? Could Abram's failures ruin God's plan? (Isaiah 14:26-27)
- If you were to describe Abraham's faith in this chapter, how would you describe it? What grade do you give Abram and Sarai (A-F)? How is it that in Romans 4, it seems like Abraham is a different man? How does Phil 1:6 play in to this transformation?

Note: this event foreshadows a parallel in future, when Israel is in slavery in Egypt. In both stories there is a famine that forces the family to go to Egypt; death is a danger to the males while the females are preserved alive; great plagues bring about their departure, there is a summons to stand before Pharaoh, and there is a return to the land of Canaan with great wealth.

Start doing: How do you know where do you need to trust God's promises? The most obvious areas are where you are tempted to compromise because of fear. How will you walk in faith this week instead of fear and compromise?

Prayer: Do you have any specific areas where you are facing difficulty or crisis and you have to make some decisions? Would you share them with your study group so that they can pray with you and for you?

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