

“By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed” Hebrews chapter 11 verse 8

For the Jews, Abraham, the first of the great patriarchs, is the role model for faith, so he gets a number of mentions in this list of faith heroes. He wasn't perfect, of course, and his faith failed him now and again, but then, as for all of us, his walk of faith was a journey of constant learning.

The first occasion is where he (known as Abram then) first encounters God. He's happily settled and prospering in the city of Haran when God tells him to take all his family and all that he has and leave.

But God hasn't exactly given him an itinerary. He has simply told him “Go to a land that I will show you,” and what will happen as a result. God will make his descendants a great nation, he will bless him, he will be a blessing, anyone who treats him with contempt will be cursed and the whole earth will be blessed through him. Sounds great, but there's no hint about where he is supposed to be going.

Abraham's admiration by future generations of Judaism is probably rooted in the same thought as it is in ours. What would we have done if God had asked us to uproot a happy, settled, comfortable lifestyle and head off into the unknown? How many of us would have obeyed?

But the part of the book of Genesis in which we find this account tells us simply, “So Abram went, as the Lord had told him.”

It's quite natural, of course, that we would want to plan our lives. We want to make sure that we are going to be where we will be happy, where we will thrive and where we can be productive and successful. But that's what we do when we want to be successful in our lives in this world. Success in the kingdom of God is another matter.

When Jesus called people to follow him, he approached people who were going about their everyday business of making a living for themselves and their families. They were fishermen. The call of Jesus to them was “Follow me and I will make you fishers of men.” Without hesitation, they left their nets and followed him, again without any clear indication of where he was taking them.

As a result they grew in faith, continually stepping out into things that they had never experienced before, and their lives bore fruit that blessed others and had eternal significance.

When we hear the call of Jesus to follow him, he may not give us a road map to where he is taking us, but we can guarantee that the journey will be fascinating, exciting, frustrating, joyous, tumultuous, baffling, scary, and ultimately satisfying. And, in the end, Jesus did tell his disciples where they were headed. “You know the way to the place where I am going.” he said. He was going ahead of them to prepare a place for them in heaven, where they would live with him forever, and where we can go too.

## **Prayer**

*Father, thank you that there is no better thing that I can do with my life than follow you. I know that when I do that then the way that I go and my destination in your hands and not in mine, but I know that I can trust you to show me the best way for me, in which I will become the person you plan for me to be. Please grant me the faith to obey your call, for your name's sake and for your glory. In Jesus name, amen.*

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