Faith Between the Encounters

“By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.”

Hebrews 11:8, ESV

A hundred years can pass in a few pages.

Abraham was seventy-five when he left Haran and one hundred seventy-five when he died. We can read those years in a single sitting. Abraham had to live every day of them.

He tended his household, settled disputes, traveled, grew older, and waited. What we encounter as the next paragraph may have come to him years later.

At the end of Genesis 16, Abraham was eighty-six when Ishmael was born. When the Lord next appeared in the narrative, Abraham was ninety-nine. Thirteen years lie between those statements.

Scripture does not say God was silent throughout those years. It gives us selected encounters, not a complete record of Abraham’s prayers or fellowship with God. Still, the distance between those ages reminds us how much living took place between the events we read.

Abraham lived largely among people who worshipped other gods. His own family came from that background. Genesis describes no congregation gathering around him each week or established sanctuary where he regularly received instruction.

Yet there were witnesses to God’s presence. Melchizedek blessed him. Abimelech recognized that God was with him. And Abraham built altars at Shechem, near Bethel, and at Hebron. After his troubled journey into Egypt, he returned to the altar near Bethel and called upon the Lord again.

That return matters. Abraham had concealed his marriage to Sarah because he feared for his life. Later, he repeated that deception before Abimelech. His decision to have a child through Hagar also brought suffering into his household.

The man remembered for faith knew fear and made painful mistakes. Yet he continued turning toward God and living with a promise he could not fulfill himself. His failures did not end the story. God remained faithful, and Abraham continued learning to trust him through the years.

Twenty-five years passed between his departure from Haran and Isaac’s birth. Twenty-five years of growing older while waiting for a child. The promise remained, even as its fulfillment seemed increasingly beyond their reach. Then came the test of offering the son through whom God had promised descendants. Hebrews 11:19 tells us Abraham considered God able even to raise the dead.

His confidence rested in God’s ability to keep his word when Abraham could not see how. We begin to understand why he is called the father of all who believe.

We, too, live through ordinary days when little seems to change. A prayer remains unanswered. A responsibility continues. A sorrow does not quickly lift. We open our Bibles, care for those entrusted to us, and take another step without knowing what tomorrow will bring.

Abraham’s particular promises do not guarantee that every outcome we desire will arrive. But the God he trusted is the God revealed to us in Jesus Christ. His faithfulness gives us reason to continue when our circumstances remain unresolved.

Abraham did not possess the completed account we hold. He knew what God had said; he did not yet know all God would do.

Faith between the encounters is lived one ordinary day at a time, trusting God beyond what we can presently see.

Father, forgive us when fear directs our choices. In seasons of waiting, remind us of your faithfulness. Help us trust what you have spoken and walk with you through the ordinary days. Amen.

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