

How to Walk With Courage When the Outcome Isn't Clear

"Illuminate: Learning to Trust and Surrender Through the Life of Abraham"

Genesis 12:1-3

October 14, 2018

BIG IDEA

Ridgewood Church is about the cause of Christ! God is doing amazing things here. The lanterns on the platform show that people are meeting Jesus. Lives are being changed. And now we have an amazing opportunity ahead of us. We have a chance to restore a building that can serve as a tool, for generations to come, in order to "Make Jesus Known Through Community Impact." Over the next five weeks we'll discover what that means in each of our lives as we study the life of Abraham in a short series entitled *Illuminate: Learning to Trust and Surrender Through the Life of Abraham*.

THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

Context:

Abram (Abraham) had migrated to Haran (northern Syria). The striking thing about this call from God is that Abram had no idea where God would land him. God only described his destination as "the land I will show you."

Genesis 12:1-3

Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. ² And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

MAIN IDEA

This was a stunning ask that could only be answered by a reluctant "no" or unparalleled faith. In similar ways, God calls us to follow him even though we can't see the end-game. Ridgewood Church is at a crossroads. As we listen to God's direction, we can ask: Are we willing to follow him no matter what the cost?



1. God Called Abraham to an Unparalleled Act of Faith

Genesis 12:1 – Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you.”

Leaving one’s home and family was a much greater decision in the ancient near east than it is in the modern individualistic cultures of today. Abraham risked everything he held most dear to follow the call of God, including his family, country, and identity.

- a. **What are some of the preconceived assumptions that you have about money and the Church?**

- b. **What is a negative experience you’ve had regarding giving in a church?**

- c. **What is a positive experience you’ve had regarding giving in a church?**

- d. **God called Abraham to a life he could not yet see to a path that was unknown. Have you given God a blank check with your life? Do you seek his path or your path?**

2. Obedience Was Required to Gain a Blessing

Genesis 12:2-3a – “And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse...”

This section is part of the “Abrahamic Covenant.” God promised that through Abraham’s obedience, Israel would receive many blessings, including Jesus who would come from Abraham’s line. Obedience always leads to blessing. Even if we can’t see the outcome, we know that through our obedience, we are drawing closer to Christ. The



end-game for Illuminate is that we all participate and that we fall more deeply in love with Jesus.

Illuminate is one of the largest things we've ever done as a church. It is literally going to change our church, and it is a risk we are willing to take in light of God's leading.

- a. How would your generosity be affected if you had a full view in mind of what it looks like to truly follow God like Abraham? What would giving generously, in light of God's call in your life, mean to you?**

- b. Do you feel you have already arrived in the area of generosity or do you still have more room to grow?**

- c. What would your story of generosity look like in order to create a witness that honors and draws more people to God during this Illuminate season?**

3. Abraham's Courage Changed the World

Genesis 12:3b – "...and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

This is a forecast of Christ. Jesus Christ would bless all people and all nations. It was Abraham's courage that served as the catalyst. Christ for the nations is the blessing and reward for Abraham's obedience. Literally, when sacrifices for Christ are made, the world changes. Ridgewood can change many lives through obedience.

- a. How can your generosity serve as a catalyst to make the name of Jesus known to our community?**

- b. Do you believe that you can make a difference?**



- c. **God isn't looking for amounts. He's looking for hearts. Have you given yours to him?**

4. **Illuminate Can Change Someone's Eternity**

2 Thessalonians 1:9 – They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might.”

The Bible says that those who don't know Jesus, or have rejected Jesus, face a Christ-less eternity—conscious and in torment. Paul wrote in 2 Thessalonians 1:9: “They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might.” We can't just stand by and let this happen. This is our time to step forward and *Illuminate* our city and the world with the love of Jesus.

- a. **How does the existence of heaven and hell change your perspective on your own life and the importance of entering into the life of others?**
- b. **Illuminate is about reaching our community for Jesus. Please pray regarding your part in this exciting adventure.**

PRAY

Lord, help me to open myself to you. Give me a heart like Abraham. Though I can't always see the outcome, help me to walk in courage and trust you. Help me to be a generous person that lives a life of faith. Amen.

DIG DEEPER

For further study this week:

- [*The Legacy Journey: A Radical View of Biblical Wealth and Generosity*](#) – a book from Dave Ramsey
- [*Experiencing God*](#) – a study from Henry and Richard Blackaby, and Claude V. King

NEXT WEEK'S BIG IDEA

“Illuminate” – Learning to Trust God (Genesis 15:1-6)

