The faith of Abraham
Hebrews 11:8-10

JUST A THOUGHT
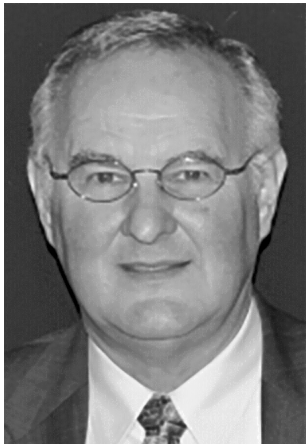
Rev. Tom Mansbarger

Several months ago we began a study on the heroes of the faith in Hebrews eleven. Little did we know that we would be faced with a virtual lockdown because of COVID-19. I sometimes wonder when picking material for messages if they are the right thoughts, but there is no doubt about this one. It is amazing how the Lord leads us in things we know nothing about. Now, bear in mind, Hebrews eleven deals with the invisible and the impossible. Each of the Bible characters are interesting studies. They all have one thing in common, they were common people with great faith.

Today we want to look at the life of Abraham. Like each of the others, Abraham was given an unbelievable task. In Genesis twelve, we read that God wants Abraham to leave Ur. He tells him, "Get thee out" (Genesis 1:1). Remember, God's timing is always perfect. Abraham has just lost his father Terah, and the Lord knows this is the time to act in Abraham's life. The faith exhibited by Abraham in his obedience to the Divine call of God is amazing. It wasn't because of the poverty, restless discontent, monotony of daily life, or persecution. The reason was Divine command.

As God instructed him, He told Abraham that life would never be the same. He would lead him to "The Promised Land." Abraham didn't have a clue where he was going, but he knew that God was leading, and it was time to go. It can be a scary time in life if the Lord is leading and we don't know where. This represents a great principle that we all need to realize - we are not in charge. Life is easy when it goes our way, but that is not always God's plan. We see Abraham packing up and heading out, by faith.

As we try to see the big picture, we see the result of Abraham's faith. First, let's see the work of Abraham's faith. What did he have to give up to follow the Lord? He would have to give up family, familiar environment, and his home. It was a moment of decision. It had to be Ur, his present place, or obedience. Has the Lord ever brought you to a moment of decision?

Secondly, we must see what life would be like if Abraham obeyed the Lord. He would have to leave his life of ease to live in a tent. He would be nomadic. Basically, he would have to leave his comfort zone. Most of us struggle when we are taken out of our comfort zone.

Thirdly, what would Abraham's life be lived for? He would spend his life looking for a city. It would be a city not built by man, but it would be built by God. What is the hope we have in Christ? Aren't we living this life in search of a city? Jesus said in John 14, "I go to prepare a place for you." What a promise!
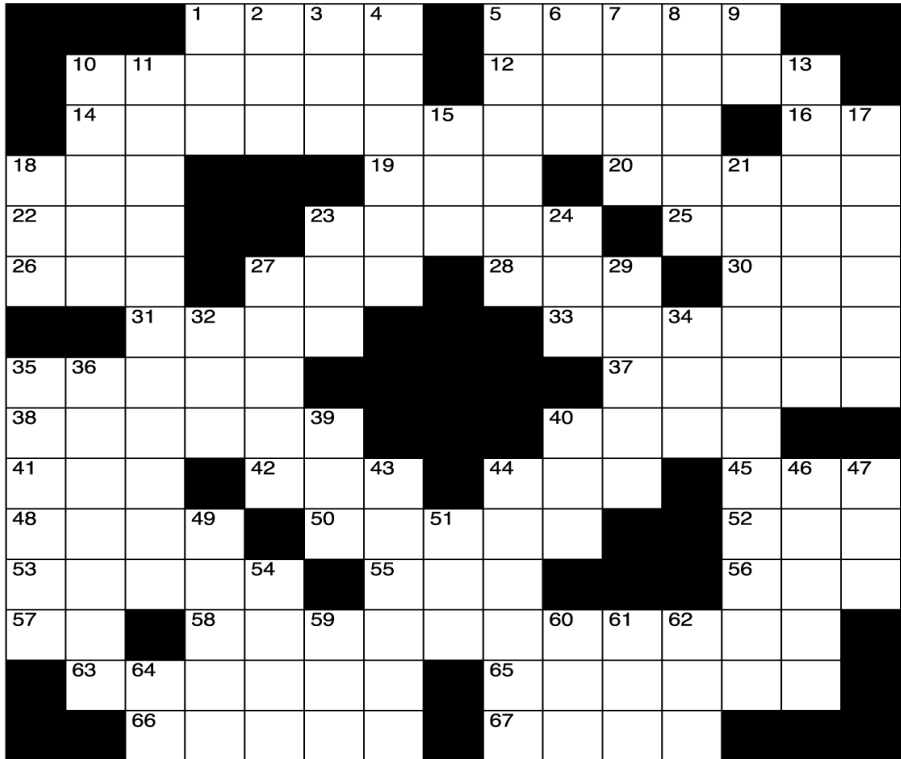
Abraham was willing to leave all behind to do the will of his Lord. He was prepared for risk and loss. He gave up the present for the future. He literally committed his life to God by faith. It seems like a simple story about a common man, but it took great faith to follow God. He left the darkness of the present to walk with God in the light.

We are all faced with many decisions in this life. Each and every decision becomes more meaningful if we walk by faith. Look back at Hebrews 11:6 "Without faith it is impossible to please God."

The Rev. Tom Mansbarger is senior pastor at Grace Community Church. He offers free counseling. Reach him at 765-517-1187 or tom@graceccmarion.org.

Crossword and Sudoku answers, page 12

CLUES ACROSS

1. One-time world power
5. Central Florida city
10. Winged nut
12. Elevate spiritually
14. Creative
16. It cools your home
18. Woman (French)
19. "60 Minutes" network
20. Old World lizard
22. Swiss river
23. Ethnic group of Cambodians
25. Abba __, Israeli politician
26. Tire measurement
27. Affirmative
28. Thrust horse power (abbr.)
30. One point north of due east
31. A type of "pet"
33. Tech giant
35. European nation
37. Fencing swords
38. Acquired
40. Origin
41. Cashless payment interface (abbr.)
42. Pouch
44. Peter's last name
45. Inclined
48. Palestinian territory __ Strip
50. A type of syrup
52. Bravo! Bravo! Bravo!
53. Weather Underground activist
55. Run batted in
56. Frozen water
57. Sodium
58. Philly specialty
63. Cuts the wool off
65. Rules
66. Icelandic literary works
67. Tattled

CLUES DOWN

1. "Pulp Fiction" actress Thurman
2. Actors' organization
3. Conscientious investment approach (abbr.)
4. Ranch (Spanish)
5. Beginning
6. Index
7. Portuguese wine
8. A feudal superior
9. Military brach (abbr.)
10. Lithuanian given name
11. A way to become different
13. Able to be domesticated
15. Defensive nuclear weapon
17. Hosts film festival
18. Shows you how to get there
21. Arranged alphabetically
23. S. Thai isthmus
24. The 17th letter of the Greek alphabet
27. Woods
29. Make yourself attractive
32. Concealed
34. Large primate
35. A favorite saying of a sect or political group
36. Tropical fruits
39. Obstruct
40. Car mechanics group
43. Stroke gently
44. They're in your toolbox
46. Throngs
47. One and only
49. In a way, bent
51. "Downton Abbey" broadcaster
54. Herring-like fish
59. A major division of geological time
60. Vast body of water
61. Cannister
62. Encourage
64. The man

For the latest information on COVID-19, go to IN.gov. The site gives current information about testing, what stage Indiana currently practicing.

SUDOKU

Level: Intermediate

Fun By The Numbers

Like puzzles? Then you'll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test!

Here's How It Works:
Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!