

Genesis 12

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SERMON NOTES

Genesis

In the beginning...

Genesis 12

How can we tell if it's really God calling?

"Most of the trouble in the world is caused by people wanting to be important."

- T.S. Eliot

"All that we call human history — money, poverty, ambition, war, prostitution, classes, empires, slavery — is the long terrible story of man trying to find something other than God which will make him happy."

- C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*

Genesis 12: How can we tell if it's really God calling?

- v. 1-9: Faith and obedience (God steering the ship)
- v. 10-20: Fear and unbelief (Abram takes the wheel)

Two images in Genesis 12 can help us:

- Altars and tents
- Life as a worshiper and life as a pilgrim

God's calling involves:

- Divine initiative
- Sovereign grace
- Transformational sanctification
- A new beginning: in a new land, with a new identity
- God's provision: I will bless
- God's protection: I will curse
- God's purposes: Through you, all the nations of the earth will be blessed!



**When it's really God calling, the focus won't be on us.
There won't be much about self-discovery, self-expression or self-fulfillment.**

"Abraham erred whenever he began to ask himself the question, 'What is now the safe and expedient course for me? What is politic in the circumstances? What will make for my present advantage?' He never erred when he asked himself, 'What is God's will?'"

- James Strahan, *Hebrew Ideals in Genesis*

"I fear that many people seek to hear God solely as a device for securing their own comfort or celebrity. Or, they may want God's endorsement on some lifestyle choice they have made so their conscience won't bother them so much anymore. This is likely not a Christlike interest in the well-being of others or in the glory of God. For those who really desire to know the will of God, however, it is still true that 'those who want to save their life will lose it.'"

- Dallas Willard, *Hearing God*

How will we respond when we finally figure out that it really is God calling?

Faith and obedience vs. Fear and unbelief

“The point to make from Scripture about our calling or our vocation is that when God calls us he is not calling us primarily to do something but to be something.”

- John Stott

“The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?”

- *Psalm 27:1*

**Sometimes we find faith where we least expect it;
and don't find faith where we most expect it.**