

Church Office

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Meeting location

Marshall Middle School  
25 S. Pontiac, Janesville

Pastor:

John Swanson

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*Declaring the greatness of God and serving  
others for joy and His honor (II Cor. 4:5)*

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February 29, 2000

Dear Friend,

I have been thinking a lot about Abram wandering around in the land of Canaan after God has promised him that He will make him a great nation by giving him that land and descendants to inhabit it (See Genesis 12:1-9). Here is a man, chosen by God out of the rest of humanity and given absolutely mind-boggling promises and yet he doesn't even have a place to call home. He is experiencing nothing of the fullness of the promises that God has made to him. All that can be seen and felt is the opposite of what God has promised him. I've been thinking about Abram because my circumstances and those of most of the people I know seem so similar to his.

Just consider three promises that God makes to everyone who trusts in Christ and then compare our experience to what we are promised:

- ◆ Colossians 2: 13: "When you were dead in your sins...God made you alive with Christ." If I have been given spiritual life why does it so often seem that my spiritual senses are so dull? Why does God seem so distant, so much of the time?
- ◆ 1 Peter 2: 9: "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light." If I belong to this elite group, why do I so often feel alone and isolated? Why does going to church so often lack this sense of unity and jubilation?
- ◆ 1 Peter 2: 24: "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree so that we die to sin and live for righteousness." Why does sin seem so alive in me? Why is living for righteousness such a struggle?

Like Abram, God has made mind-boggling promises to us. Like Abram we are daily confronted with a great disparity between these incredible promises and our pitiful experience. Again, Abram shows us how we are to live in this reality.

He worshipped God for the amazing fact that He had chosen to make promises to him in the first place. He was overcome with gratitude and wonder at the fact that the great God of the universe had taken note of him and promised him such a glorious future (v. 7). Then he called on God to fulfill the promises and to strengthen him to stay firm in faith until they were fully his (v. 8). As Hebrews 10: 9-10 says, "By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents...For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God."

As you may know we have just begun a series that looks at God's work in and through Abram, entitled, "What in the world is God doing?" I am looking forward to all that God is going to teach us about living in the gap between the promise and the reality that is our life now. I hope you will make it your aim to be there each Sunday as we learn to live by faith in this great God who makes such astounding promises. I would also urge you to join one of our "Discovery Groups" as we will be discussing all that God teaches us through the life of Abram.

Living in the mercy,