

Don't Let Men Move You. Let God Alone Move You

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of waiting for God's leading and guidance before making decisions or taking actions, and warns against being influenced by the opinions of others.

Scripture: Genesis 11:31 - 12:5, Genesis 12:7, Genesis 12:10, Isaiah 11:3-4, Jeremiah 17:5-8, Matthew 4:4, Luke 14:26, Revelation 17:18

Topics: "Obedience to God", "Divine Guidance"

Description

Zac Poonen emphasizes the importance of being led by God rather than by the opinions of men, using Abraham's journey as a key example. He illustrates how Abraham's obedience to God's command, despite familial pressures and the allure of comfort, was crucial in building the true Jerusalem. Poonen warns against the tendency to act based on human reasoning, especially during challenging times, and encourages believers to wait for God's direction before making decisions. He highlights that true accomplishment comes from following God's voice, not from seeking approval or success in the eyes of men. Ultimately, Poonen calls for a faith that prioritizes divine guidance over worldly comforts.

Transcript

In Genesis 12:1, we see the beginning of the building of the true Jerusalem. This began with Abraham through whom came the nation of Israel, the capital of which was Jerusalem. There would have been no Jerusalem if there had been no Abraham. We observe in Abraham something completely different from what we see in Babylon. It says, "The Lord said to Abram, 'Go forth from your country, and from your relatives and from your father's house to the land which I will show you.'" Abraham didn't suddenly get a bright idea one day like the people in Babel, and say, "I think I have lived long enough in Ur. Let me move to Canaan and do something there." No. His move was totally dictated by God. Abraham was 75 years old. It is good to wait for even 75 years to hear God and then move. Moses waited for 40 years as a shepherd and then moved, when God spoke to him. And think of what he accomplished! I am not saying we must wait for 75 or 80 years. All I am saying is that we must wait until we hear from God and then move. But, do you think busy 20th-century-man has time for that? No.

I am thankful that when I was a young man of 20 years, God taught me one lesson: "Don't let men move you. Let God alone move you." Many men have urged me to do various things - good men, including my co-workers. I listen to their advice, but I don't move until God also speaks to me. I wait until I hear God,

because I know I will end up disastrously, if I listen to the opinions of men. I am not saying we should not consider the opinions of our co-workers. All I'm saying is that the final voice we hear should be God's. God told Abraham to "Go," and he went. God told Moses to "Go," and he went. God told Paul to "Go," and he went. These are the people who accomplished something with their lives. Today people run around trying to do something or the other for God. But they accomplish nothing of eternal value. Statistics-wise, what they do may be impressive. But it's Babylon, not Jerusalem. "Come, let's move. Let's do something for the Lord. Let's make bricks, let's make mortar, let's do something." You can impress men. "Let us make us a name." And you may make a great name for yourself building Babylon - like Nebuchadnezzar did. This is happening today in Christian work and that is the message in Revelation 17 and 18. But Abraham waited for God's "Go."

Notice that whenever Abraham moved without the leading of God, he got into trouble. For example: We read that God had told Abraham to leave Ur of the Chaldees and to go where He would lead him. But in Genesis 11:31 we read that it was Terah (Abraham's father) who took Abraham and moved out of Ur. But what had God told Abraham? "Leave your relatives and leave your father's house." But here we see the 75-year-old Abraham holding his Daddy's hand and moving out! That was how Abraham started!! The ones who will hinder you from doing the will of God will be your relatives first of all - your parents, your brothers, your sisters, your wife and your children. Jesus said, "If any man comes to Me, and does not hate his father, mother, brother, sister, wife and children, he cannot be My disciple." (Lk.14:26). You may want to follow the Lord. But your father or your wife may say "No"!

So Terah took Abraham, and they came as far as Haran (Gen.11:31) and settled there. That was not God's will. Why did they settle there? That was Terah's idea. Haran perhaps had good pasture-land for the flocks. But it was not God's place. And Abraham settled down there with his Daddy! Abraham was a man who made mistakes - and the first mistake he made was to listen to his father, when God had already told him to do something else. So what did God do? God can easily deal with such situations. He took away Terah through death! (Gen.11:32). Then "Abram went forth as the Lord had spoken to him." (Gen.12:4).

Do you have to wait until God does something drastic like that before you move on? If God loves you, He will do something drastic like that. But if God sees that you yourself are a compromiser, He may allow you to stay on in Haran all your life and miss the will of God totally. Learn to move with God. Don't listen to relatives who do not know God. By all means, learn from a father if he is a godly man, who knows God - but not from a father who is worldly (I'm referring to spiritual principles here). Finally when Abraham reached Canaan, "the Lord appeared to him and said 'To your descendants I will give this land.' " (Gen.12:5,7).

And then God tested Abraham again. God tested Adam and He tested Abraham, and He will test you and me too. This time the test was through a famine in the land (Gen.12:10). What do you do when God has told you to go to Canaan and there is a famine in Canaan? You either live by the witness of your senses or you live by what God has told you through His Spirit. There is a lovely verse that says about Jesus that "He would not make a judgment either by what His eyes saw or His ears heard." (Isa.11:3,4). But that is not the way man lives. If we hear about or see a famine in Canaan, we make a decision immediately, by what our eyes and ears and our clever brain tell us. We decide that Canaan is certainly not the place to be in now. We need to move on. We don't have to consult God, because we are living by our senses! That was what Abraham did: "So Abram went down to Egypt" (Gen.12:10). Who told him to go to Egypt? Not God, but his senses!

Can't God preserve a man during a time of famine? Certainly. "Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord. He will not be barren even in time of famine" (Jer.17:5-8). The man who trusts in the Lord will not move until God tells him to. That was what our Lord told Satan in the wilderness when He was tempted. Satan told Jesus to turn the stones into bread. There was a famine there in the wilderness and there were no food stores around. But Jesus replied, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." (Matt.4:4).

But Abraham did not live like that. He decided to live by bread alone. So, since there was bread in Egypt, he went there. That is how a lot of Christian work is done today too. Most Christian workers don't go where the Lord tells them to go. They go where they can get a good salary, where bread is available in plenty. They join organisations where there is no famine of money. Egypt may be a comfortable place to be in, in time of famine. But the question is whether that is the place that God wants you to be in.

I quit my earthly job to serve the Lord full-time in 1966, and since then I have seen quite a bit of what is called "Christian work". And what I have seen in the past 44 years is that when there is a famine in Canaan, most Christian workers move to Egypt!! If you don't hear what God is saying to you right now, you may do the same thing when you are tested. Live by the words that come from the mouth of God, like Jesus did. His attitude was, "Yes. Bread is necessary for life. But to obey God is more necessary for life."

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