Take your bibles and turn with me please to the book of genesis. That ought not be hard to find. That's the first book. And then, go to chapter twelve. Today we're beginning a brand new series of messages entitled 'the school of faith'. The school of faith and the title of this particular message is, 'dare to be great'. I wonder if you think that it is wrong to want to be great? I suppose most of us would just bow our heads and say, well you know, uh! Hah haa, I don't want to be great. It would be wrong for me to want to great. My dear friend it would be wrong for you not to want to be great. But you must understand that it is true greatness that you must want. Did you know that the Lord Jesus Christ told us to be great. As a matter of fact, the Lord Jesus fact, he who would be great among you, let him- be your servant. Now our Lord didn't say, don't be great. Our Lord said, make certain that it is true greatness that you get. And I want you to be great in faith. And because you're great in faith you'll be a blessing. And you'll become a servant when you're filled with faith. So we're going to be thinking today about Abraham the father of the faithful. Abraham, the brightest star in the Hebrew heaven; Abraham, who's name is great among Jews - among Muslims - among Christians - a name that is known the world around. What is Abraham's claim to fame? What is it that made Abraham great? God said of Abraham, your name will be great. What was it that made him so great? His faith. His faith! The bible calls him in Romans 4:11, '..the father of all them that believe...' alright now, and let's begin to read here, and I want to read genesis 12, the first four verses, now the Lord had said unto Abram; by the way his name was Abram before it became Abraham. 'Get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred and from thy father's house into a land that I will show thee and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee and make thy name great and thou shalt be a blessing...' and by the way that is real greatness, when we become a blessing, '...and I will bless them that bless thee and curse him that curseth thee, and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed. So Abraham departed as the Lord hath spoken unto , and lot went
with him; and Abram was seventh and five years old when he departed out of haran.' now we're talking today about the school of faith and this morning I want to enroll everyone of you. I enroll you in that school and we're going to matriculate you into faith 101. Now my dear friend, the text book will be the word of God, the faculty are those people who are found in Hebrews chapter 11, and the dean of that faculty is a man named Abraham. And so, we're going to studying now about faith. And by the way the class room is not here, but the classroom begins Monday morning; when you get out there. Your life day by day is the classroom as you enroll in the school of faith. How important it is, my dear friend that we understand this matter of faith. For Jesus clearly said in Matthew chapter 9:29, are you listening? '...According to your faith, be it unto you...' now we meet one another on Sunday morning and we say 'how are you feeling?' but God didn't say 'according to your feeling, be it unto you.' maybe we ought to meet on another and give each other a hand shake and say, 'how are you faithing?' because according to your faith not your feeling, according to your faith not you fame, according to your faith not your fortune, according to your faith be it unto you. Did you know that faith is the measure of your failure or success in the Christian life? Did you know that everything worth having, everything worth knowing, everything worth doing is wrapped up here in faith? You need to be saved, therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. You need to overcome the world, this is the victory that overcometh the world, even you faith. You need to have your prayers answered, whatsoever things you desire when you pray believe that ye receive them, and you shall have them. Pray, believe and you'll receive; pray in doubt, you'll do without. You want to have victory over Satan, the bible says taking the shield of faith wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. My dear friend whatever it is, in the kingdom of heaven whatever you need, the medium of exchange is faith. To receive from God, first of all you must offer to God your faith. '...According to your faith be it unto you...' but we're going to see that really your faith is really his faith in you and through you. Now there are three things this morning as we enroll in the school of faith that I want you to learn about faith that God taught Abraham. And remember Abraham is the father of all them that believe. Now we're going to go right back to bed rock. I want us to think first of this morning about what i'm going to call the root the root of Abraham's faith. And it will be the root of your faith and of all faith. What is the root of faith? It is a revelation from God. God must speak before you can have faith. All faith is a response of trust in what God has said. Unless God speaks you can have no faith. For faith is taking God at his word. And there must therefore be a word from God. Because the bible says in Romans 10:17, '...faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God...' or more literally, a word from God. Now begin reading here again, look in verse one, '...now, the Lord hath said unto Abram...' that's it! That's the root of his faith. The Lord hath said to Abram. God spoke to Abram, God gave Abram a word. The Lord hath said to him and all he did was in response to what God said to him. Now let me tell you three things that faith is not rooted in. To make it very clear, since this is faith 101. Faith is not rooted in human will. It wasn't something that Abraham cooked up. Abraham didn't say I think I ought to be the father of a great nation; I'll name it and claim it! He didn't cook it up. It wasn't his idea.
But we have some people today who have the idea that anything you want, just name it and claim it. But dear friend, you can't claim it until God names it! Now it must be from God, it doesn't root in human will. A very interesting thing, hah! I'm going to tell you something astounding now. Genesis 12 follows genesis 11, now you've already learned something. Now listen, go back to genesis 11, and I want you to see the biggest fiasco that this world has ever known. It's what we call the tower of Babel. The tower of Babel as some say. Now this tower was a hi rise to hell. It was tower of blounders. It was a monumental failure, and these people are trying to build a tower who's that to that would reach into heaven, and they're trying to do what? And they're trying to make a name for themselves. Look if you will in verse four for example, I want you to see 4 times they use the little pronoun 'us' let us; look at it. For they said go to - let us do you see it? And then - build us - that's the second time; a city and s tower who's top may reach into heaven; and let us - that's the third time, make us a name. Four times: let us - let us - make us - us, us, us, us , us! Now you see that? Four times they're saying we're going to make ourselves a name. It was a colossal failure. Now I want you to go to genesis 12, and look if you will please in verses 1 through 3. Four times you hear God say I will, I will, I will, I will. In genesis 11, they're saying we're going to make us a name; let us, let us, let us, let us. And it was a colossal failure and then God says here to uh Abram in verse one '..I will show thee...' verse two, '..i will make thee...' verse two, '..i will bless thee...' verse three '..i will bless thee...' I will, I will, I will, I will... Now my dear friend the difference between let us, that man says and I will that God says is the difference between failure and true greatness. Faith always begins with the wills of God and not the let us of man. It's ironic that these people in genesis 11 said we're going to make us a name. They made a mess. God said I will make your name great Abram. So the first thing I want you to learn about faith, it is not rooted in human will. The second thing; it is not rooted in human works. Not in human works. Do you know what Abram was when God called him? Now we think of Abram as being a great man. But the bible tells us in chapter 11 and verse 31, that he was living in the center of idolatry the of the caldeas. And he was a pagan. God didn't choose Abram for what he was, God chose Abram for what God knew he could make out of him. And God's calling upon Abraham was a calling of grace. There was nothing in Abram that would've called caused God to call him. I want you to put this verse down in your margin. And it is a very important verse this morning. Romans 4:3-5, or 3 through 5, 'what saith the scripture, Abraham believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness, now to him that worketh, it is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of death...' that means dear friend, if you had to work for your salvation, then God would owe it to you and you wouldn't be saved by grace. But the bible says here in verse the following verse, '..but to him that worketh not but believeth on him that justifieth the unGodly, his faith is counted for righteousness...' Abram was a pagan, there was nothing good about him, and yet his faith was counted for righteousness. I want to say something else while we're looking at this scripture. Look if you will in verse 4, he was 75 years old. Do you see that? He was 75 years old when God called him. Now listen to me my dear friend, Abram was a pagan idol worshiper, 75 years old, and God spoke to him, called him and saved him. Now listen there's- no one so bad here today, he cannot be saved. And
it's not too late for anybody to be saved. Isn't that wonderful? It's not too late. You say, I'm an old seventy-five year old man - wonderful - come to Jesus today. Abram did! You say, well, I've been a deep sinner. Abram was. Let me tell you about faith my dear friend. It is not rooted in human will. But God's I wills. It is not rooted in human works, but God's grace. And it is not rooted in human wisdom. Not human will, not human work, not human wisdom. God said to Abram, just look at this passage of scripture here in verse one, '...get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house into a land that I will show thee...' that is Abram, you don't need to understand it, it is human wisdom. Now what is faith? Faith is not getting it figured out. Faith is not positive thinking. Faith is not following a hunch. Faith is not hoping for the best. Faith is not a feeling a optimism. Hah! As the little boy said, ' faith, that's believing what you know ain't so.' no. Faith is none of these things. Faith is just laying your intellectual pride in the dust and saying God just show me. I don't know Lord. Just show me. Put in your margin, Hebrews 11 and verse 8, the bible say, '...by faith, Abram when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive as an inheritance, obeyed and went out not knowing whether he went.' he didn't know where and he didn't know why, but bless God he knew who, he knew the Lord. What am I saying? Faith is not rooted in human will, faith is not rooted in human works, faith is not rooted in human wisdom. Faith is rooted the word of God. God had said to Abram, and what Abram did was just simply step out on the word of God; he stepped out on God's omnipotence. Think about it; here he was already a wealthy man, a successful man, here he was 75 years of age, here he was surrounded by his loved ones and his friends, here he was with a beautiful wife, and God said Abraham let's go. And he says alright Lord, let's go. He did not know where and he did not know why, but my dear friend he had a word from God. Are you listening? You want to be a person of faith? This is faith 101 my dear friend. Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God. Nobody has ever had faith who has not first of all had a word from God. Faith is believing God. And unless God speaks, you cannot believe. Alright so that first of all is the root of Abraham's faith. You got it? Second point. The requirement of Abraham's faith. Now when God speaks, what is the requirement? That we move, that we obey. Now look if you will in verse one. '...Now the Lord hath said unto Abraham, get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee and I will thee...' now he didn't say I'll make thee, until he obeyed. Until he got out in order that he might come in. Now my dear friend, let me tell you something I said it takes the word of God, but belief in the word of God is not faith. It becomes faith not only when we believe it, but when we act upon it. Are you listening? Do you know the difference between belief and faith? Faith is belief with legs on it. Faith is belief with legs on it. Now the difference between belief and faith is the difference between knowing about God and knowing God. If you know these things happy are ye if you do them. Jesus said, '...he that hath my word and...' and he's the one who does it, Jesus says, '...is the one I will manifest myself 'o him.' now the requirement of faith is to obey God. Let me tell you something about what faith is. Faith is not believing in spite of evidence. That's not faith. That's superstition. God doesn't any of us to believe without evidence. God gave Abraham evidence, and he'll give you evidence. The bible says, Stephen when
he was preaching about this said, '...the God of glory appeared unto Abraham...' God gave him his word. God spoke to him. God gave him some evidence. Blind faith is not faith at all. The bible never anywhere just says just believe. God always gives us reasons for believing. God gives us his word. Faith is not believing in spite of evidence. You listen to me. Faith is obeying in spite of circumstances or consequences. Faith is not believing in spite of evidence, it is obeying in spite of my dear friend of circumstances or consequences. Whatever God says I will do it. My dear friend when you begin to live that way, then you have faith. Now listen, the root of faith was revelation. The requirement was separation. Notice what he says, look, '...now the Lord had said unto Abraham, get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred and from thy father's house unto a land that I will show thee...'
you say you have faith, my dear friend your faith is going to be seen in what you get out of and what you come to. Get out and come in. Here was a man who was living in a land of idolatry. But God brought him out that he might bring him in. Deuteronomy 6 and verse 23, God said the same thing though Moses. '...And he brought us out from thence that he might bring us in...' God always brings us out, that he might bring us in. Real faith is not simply being dead to the world, but being alive unto God. Faith is listen, not only abhorring that which is evil but it is cleaving to that which is good. You see, the root faith is the word of God, the requirement if faith is obedience to that word. Revelation - separation. Now you know why many of us don't have faith? Do you know why many of us are limping rather than leaping? Do you why there are so many people who are spiritually anemic? Anemic? And don't have faith? I'll tell you why my dear friend, you listen to me. They have forsaken the old way. What is the soil in which the seed of faith grows? What is it like? It has to be clean soil. Hebrews 4:12 says this, '...beware..' excuse me Hebrews 3:12 says, '...take heed brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief...' where does your lack of faith come from? Your lack of faith doesn't come our of your head. You say, well now Mr. Rogers, I have intellectual problems concerning faith. Know you don't. You got dirty rotten sin. If that offends you, you come up to me after the service and apologize and I'll forgive you. My dear friend, you don't have intellectual problems, you have moral problems. God built you and God made you to believe in him. When your heart is right, you'll respond to God by faith like your eye responds to light when your eye is right, and like your ear responds to sound when your ear is right. Unbelief doesn't come out of the head, it only shows in the had, it comes out of the heart. Beware lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief. Whatsoever is not of faith is of sin, the bible says. It's sin that keeps us from believing our creator, and believing our God. You want to have faith, I john 3:21, 'beloved if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God?' let me give you an ill illustration. Suppose you and your wife have just had a tremendous argument, and there's that hostility and that animosity between you and your wife. And then your little baby shows up with a tremendous fever and you know that you need God to do something for that baby. And you get down on your knees and you begin to pray and ask God to touch and heal your baby. Don't you feel silly? Don't you feel stupid? Don't you feel so out of place? Until you get up and say, honey, I'm sorry, forgive me. And until you all get it right. And then you can pray and say, just like the bible says, that we're to dwell together as heirs of the
grace of life, that our prayer be not hindered. There is nothing more damning, nothing more debilitating, nothing more stultifying, nothing more inhibiting to faith than sin in the heart. Hebrews chapter 12: 1- 2, 'wherefore, seeing that we're compassed about so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin that so easily beset us, and let us run with patience, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.' lay aside those encumbrances, lay aside that sin. My dear friend, if you're having trouble; listen, if you're having trouble with faith, try repentance. Try repentance. Now God has put certain things in order in the bible. For example the bible says, '...grace and peace be multiplied unto you...' it never says, peace and grace; always grace and peace. Why is that? Because you have to know grace before you have peace. Isn't that right? The bible always says, '...believe and be baptized...' it never says, be baptized and believe. Because if you're baptized before you believe that's like having your funeral before you die. Believe and be baptized, that's God's order. And I'll tell you another one of God's orders, and it's always this way in the bible, repentance and faith...' never faith and repentance. Repentance and faith. If you're having difficulty my dear friend with faith, try repentance. Now, what am I saying? Listen. The route of faith is the word of God, but, the requirement of faith; the route of faith.- revelation; the requirement of faith - separation. '...Get out Abraham...' '...come in, Abraham...' not only get out, but get in. He brought Abraham out, that he might bring him in. Do you want to live a life by uh of faith? Would you dare to be great? There is no greatness without believing God. God said, '...Abraham, I'll make your name great...' '...I'll make a great people out of you...' he said, Abram, your belief in me has got to have legs on it. Your gonna have to start believing me. Alright now, let's go to the third thing. Faith 101 now! Ha! Ha! I mean, this is basic folks. We're not going to get beyond this. The route of faith - revelation: the requirement of faith - separation; the reward of faith - appropriation. Look at it. Go back if you will now to genesis 12, beginning in verse 2, 'and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and I will make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing.' now, by faith you appropriate. God wants to bless you. How is God going to bless you? When you believe God. How do you appropriate what God has? By faith. Put in your margin this verse, Hebrews 1:6, 'but without faith it is impossible to please him. For he that cometh to God must believe that he is...' are you listening? '...And that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.' now that verse tells us two things about faith. By faith, man gives God pleasure. Without faith it is impossible to please him. You want to please God? You want to give God pleasure this morning? Believe God. Did you know that faith honors God? And unbelief dishonors God? '...He that believeth not God has made him a liar...' there's no greater thing, no greater insult that you could give God than simply not believing God. Suppose you were talking about me. And you said, well, Adrian Rogers, he's this and he's that, and you would say some nice things about him: and then you'd say, but there's just one thing about him, you can't believe him. Now, my dear friend, no matter what else you may say about me if you say that you can't believe me, you've just cut the jugular cord of my character. Isn't that right? The jugular vein. I mean you have, you you've just said the worst thing about me that you could say. That I am not trust worthy. You can't believe him. Now my dear friend, no matter how much you say God is good, God is great,
God is holy, God is this and God is that; dear friend, if you don't believe God, '...he that believeth God, made him a liar...' '...without faith it is impossible to please him...' what pleases God more than anything else is for you my dear friend to simply believe God, because faith honors God. Without faith it is impossible to please him, by faith man gives God pleasure. And through faith God gives man treasure. That's what Romans 1, 11:6 says, '...but without faith it is impossible to please him. For he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him...' the reward of faith is to appropriate what God has for you. Now, did God bless him? Did God give him that land, indeed he did? Did God make his name great? Indeed he did. But, now listen to me folks, he wasn't great yet. Just by being a blessing. Look in verse 2, '...and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee...' that's only half of it. But, now let's look at the rest of it. '...And I will make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing...' you want to be great? Would you dare to be great? My dear friend, God put you in your family, God put you in your business, God put you in- your neighborhood, God put you where ever you are, God put you in that school, that you would be a blessing. Why does God bless you. Do you think that you're a reservoir into which God is going to poor blessings? Then you'll never have them. Do you see yourself as a pipeline through which God will pour blessings? You'll have plenty. Now my dear friend, your prayer must be owe God bless me, because you can't be a blessing until you've been blessed. And my dear friend, any sermon that I preach that doesn't bless me, is not going to bless you. By the way, this one blesses me. Not because I'm the preacher, but because of the subject. But you see, when I get blessed, when I study, when I'm blessed, then I'll bless you. You see dear go friend, God makes us a blessing, that we might be a blessing. Not a reservoir of truth. But a river of revival. Think how God blessed Abraham. God made him a blessing to his nation. He's the father of the Jewish nation. And from the Jewish nation, we got the prophets. And from the prophets, we got the bible. And we received the Lord Jesus. A direct descendant of Abraham. Yes, he was great. Yes, his name is great. But, not only did God bless him, God made him a blessing. Oh Lord, make me a blessing. I tell you our world today is in such a terrible condition. And the only people who are going to bless this world today; the only one who has any answer in the school where you are; or the neighborhood where you work; and the only one who has anything for your children is the one dear God, dear friend, who has been blessed of God, and becomes a blessing. And there's no blessing without believing God. Listen, the route of faith is the word of God, the requirement of faith is the obedience of God, the reward of faith is the blessing of God: to us and through us. How we need to believe God. And this isn't just what God did for Abraham. The bible says, that Abraham is the father of all who believe. My dear friend, let me tell you this, it all begins with trusting Christ as your personal savior and Lord. The bible says believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved. When I talk to boys and girls about faith I have a story I tell them, and I'm going to tell it to you because, if they can understand it, you just might. A little girl, and she was walking through her home one day and she saw that the basement door, the cellar door was opened. It wasn't the kind that had stairs, it was a trap door and there was a ladder that had to be put in place. The door was open, and there was a black gaping hole in the
floor. She said, who's down there? Her daddy said, I'm down here sweet heart. She said, well, daddy I can't see you. He said, well, I can see you. She was up in the light and he was down in the dark. He said, daddy I want to come down where you are. Ha ha! He said, I've taken away the ladder. But said, I'll tell you what sweet heart, you jump and I'll catch you. But she said, I can't see you! That's alright, I can see you. But she said, I'm afraid. He said, sweet heart, do you believe I'm here? She said, I know you're here, I'm talking to you. I know you're here. Well, do you know that I love you? Well yes dad, I know you love me. Have I ever told you a lie? No daddy, you haven't lied to me. Do you believe that I am strong enough to catch you? Sure daddy, I know you're strong enough to catch me. If you know I'm here, you know I love you, you know I won't lie to you, you know I'm strong enough to catch you, and I promise to do it; why don't you jump? She said, okay dad, here I come. Stepped off! And he caught her. My dear friend, that's what saving faith is like. God I can't see you, but I've heard your voice, I know you're there, I know that you love me, I know, I know that you do not lie, and you have promised to save me, if I trust you. And Lord by faith I step off on your omnipotence, and into your arms. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved. Bow your heads in prayer.