**Origins (pt.2) - wk 7 – From the Heart**

**The OT is the sign to the Messiah - NT is the arrival of - JESUS.**

**Genesis – The Life of Abraham - the beginning of the way.**

**The LORD called an unlikely wanderer – fast forward,**

**Abe is the Father of 60% of all world religions.**

**Abe is now growing in his walk with the LORD and settled in Canaan.**

**25 years in five chapters. Last wk his biggest mistake…**

**Though Abe and Sari failed, God is saying, I still have you.**

**Genesis 17:1 When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared (unsure how) to him and said, “I am God Almighty; (El Shaddai - First use - It has been 14 yrs since God talked to Abe and He shows up with a new name!) walk before me faithfully and be blameless. (this is what I expect from you)**

**2 I will make my covenant between me and you and will greatly increase your numbers.” (I have not forgotten – I will do what I said) 3 Abram fell facedown, (in humility / submission) and God said to him, 4 “As for me, this is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations. (reaffirming a 25 yr promise)**

**5 No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations. (notice - I have made – it’s already done)**

**The name change to Abraham.**

**Abram - exalted father / to Abraham - exalted father of nations.**

**This was an increased burden of his name to live up to.**

**6 I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you. (Kings – that’s new…) 7 I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you. 8 The whole land of Canaan, where you now reside as a foreigner, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God.” (the land according to El Shaddai – belongs to Israel) 9 Then God said to Abraham, “As for you, you must keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you for the generations to come.**

**This next part changes the commitment level.**

**10 This is my covenant with you and your descendants after you, the covenant you are to keep: Every male among you shall be circumcised. (1st mention of this medical procedure in the Bible) 11 You are to undergo circumcision, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and you. (Sign of your faith in God) 12 For the generations to come every male among you who is eight days old must be circumcised, (Why 8? We now know Vitamin K is highest on this day – a vital ingredient necessary for clotting) including those born in your household or bought with money from a foreigner—those who are not your offspring. 13 Whether born in your household or bought with your money, they must be circumcised. My covenant in your flesh is to be an everlasting covenant.**

**What is circumcision? The cutting away of the male foreskin.**

**This practice is mentioned in other ancient Near Eastern groups.**

**1st mentioned in Gen 17 w/ Abraham - later commanded by Moses in Lev 12**

**14 Any uncircumcised male, who has not been circumcised in the flesh, will be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant.” (play on words – cut it off or you will be cut off)**

**Remember this is written during the exodus – and read to the people. Ohhhh, this is why we do this…**

**Why is it such a big deal in the Bible? (41X in OLT / 75X in the NT)**

**We will come back to this.**

**15 God also said to Abraham, “As for Sarai your wife, you are no longer to call her Sarai; her name will be Sarah. 16 I will bless her and will surely give you a son by her. (It will be the son of Sarah not Haggar – though she was pushing 90) I will bless her so that she will be the mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her.”**

**The name change to Sarah.**

**Sari – princess / Sarah - princess of multitudes**

**This is in keeping with the Abrahams name change.**

**Both names now include the name of God (yah)**

**17 Abraham fell facedown; (humility &submission) he laughed (not one of doubt – but joy) and said to himself, “Will a son be born to a man a hundred years old? Will Sarah bear a child at the age of ninety?” 18 And Abraham said to God, “If only Ishmael might live under your blessing!” (He accepted that Ishmael was going to be his only son)**

**19 Then God said, “Yes, but your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac. (his name means laughter – joy) I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him. (Ishmael and his descendants are not the people I will change the world though)**

**20 And as for Ishmael, I have heard you: I will surely bless him; I will make him fruitful and will greatly increase his numbers. He will be the father of twelve rulers, and I will make him into a great nation. (the Arab nations) 21 But my covenant I will establish with Isaac, (Again, it is not Ishmael, but it will be Isaac) whom Sarah will bear to you by this time next year.” (Next year you will have a son) 22 When he had finished speaking with Abraham, God went up from him.**

**23 On that very day Abraham took his son Ishmael and all those born in his household or bought with his money, every male in his household, and circumcised them, as God told him.**

**You can only imagine how that went over. Gen 14 - over 318 males in household. They must have thought Abe had lost his mind – or maybe they too had faith…**

**24 Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised, 25 and his son Ishmael was thirteen; 26 Abraham and his son Ishmael were both circumcised on that very day. (Circumcision party!!) 27 And every male in Abraham’s household, including those born in his household or bought from a foreigner, was circumcised with him.**

**Some big events in this chapter!**

* **A new name for God – El Shaddai**
* **A new name for Abe - Abraham**
* **A new name for Sari – Sarah**
* **A new Covenant – Circumcision**
* **An example of incredible faith**
1. **A new name for God – El Shaddai (Gen 17:1)**

**1 …the LORD appeared to him and said, “I am God Almighty;**

**El Shaddai – unknown origin and meaning – different suggestions**

* **The God who pours out richly, abundantly, and faithfully.**
* **The God of the mountains. The God of the wilderness.**
* **The God who gives children. The God powerful in war.**
* **The God who created all things and stopped.**
* **The God of heaven. The God who is sufficient.**

**\*\*\* I am the God who is more than enough - to get it done**

**The all-sufficient one – able to do all he wills!**

**If he said it – it will absolutely be done!**

1. **A new command (Gen 17:1)**

**1 …walk before me faithfully and be blameless.**

**After the proclamation of His name, God then told Abraham what was expected. It was first a revelation and then an expectation.**

**You know who I am – now this is what I expect.**

* **Walk faithfully – walk faithful with God**
* **Be blameless – walk blameless before others**

**\*\*\* I am the God who is calling to you to complete commitment**

**This is the seed of the greatest commandment. Mark 12:** **29 “The most important one,” answered Jesus, “is this: ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. 30 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ 31 The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”**

1. **A new name for Abe - Abraham**

**Abram - exalted father / to Abraham - exalted father of nations.**

**Exalted Father now Exalted father of nations - give me a break, unlikely**

**Remember this name – This is who I say you are. It is done.**

**\*\*\* I am the God who is faithful to gives you a new future**

**When it looks hopeless and impossible.**

**Did you know You get new names in Christ?**

**Righteous, chosen, royal priest, child of God, overcomer… etc.**

**(even in heaven – Rev 2:17 – new secret name in heaven)**

**Names that seem impossible in the mirror – but God says he will accomplish. When feeling overwhelmed remember your names.**

1. **A new name for Sari – Sarah**

**Years of pain and loneliness, being left out for not having a child. God says – not only will I give you a son – but one will change the world.**

**\*\*\* I am the God who gives you a family**

**Today, through Jesus – you become sons and daughters of God and family with one another – you are not alone or forgotten.**

1. **A new Covenant – Circumcision**

**This became one of the most significant & divisive issues in the Bible.**

**Why would God have them do that??**

* **Protects – health benefits in ancient times. Sustain his chosen people for the Messiah. To Protect them.**
* **Sets apart – consecrate self to God – set apart from other nations and people thru this. Identified as followers of the LORD by marks on their bodies.**

**This mark was both painful and private. Whether anyone else knew of it or not, the person was circumcised, and the Lord knew about it.**

* **Declaration of faith – As the organ of procreation – it was a reminder that God provides his children with promise. A declaration that - my legacy and future are the LORD’s.**
* **A physical practice that represents a spiritual event**

**A physical event that represented a cutting away of the heart – a cutting away of the most private places of your life to the LORD.**

**My heart my most intimate life is yours.**

**Circumcision was an outward action that a person did in response to faith. It was never what made them right in the eyes of God.**

**It was always to be a matter of the heart.**

**It was an outward sign of faith. We see it today - much like baptism - God took a ritual practice and gave it new meaning.**

**Deut 10:12 And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God ask of you but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in obedience to him, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, 13 and to observe the Lord’s commands and decrees that I am giving you today for your own good?**

**14 To the LORD your God belong the heavens, even the highest heavens, the earth and everything in it. 15 Yet the LORD set his affection on your ancestors and loved them, and he chose you, their descendants, above all the nations - as it is today. 16 Circumcise your hearts, therefore, and do not be stiff-necked any longer.**

**Deut. 30:6 The LORD your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, so that you may love him with all your heart and with all your soul, and live. / Jeremiah 4:4** **Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, circumcise your hearts, you people of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem…**

**Because of Jesus - circumcision of the flesh is not required today:**

**Acts 15; Gal. 2:1–3; 5:1–11; 6:11–16; Rom. 1-4, 1 Cor. 7:17–20; Col. 2:8–12; and Phil. 3:1–3, Rom. 2:28-29; Gal. 5:6; Col. 2:11-12; Gal. 6, Romans 4**

**BUT - The New Testament still speaks of a "circumcision of the heart"**

**Romans 2:29 But a Jew (one who is chosen) is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God.**

**Romans 4:11 And he (Abe) received circumcision as a sign, a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. (It was a sign of faith) So then, he is the father of all who believe but have not been circumcised, in order that righteousness might be credited to them. 12 And he is then also the father of the circumcised who not only are circumcised but who also follow in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.**

**\*\*\* I am the God who gives you a new life by faith!**

**Jesus cuts away the sin of our flesh - through his marks on his flesh. Making us new - protecting us from wrath, setting us apart, and securing our future. We receive this by faith in Jesus!**

**To Jewish people - it became a sign that you belonged to God.**

**It became the ultimate test - and, unfortunately, led to legalism. The sign became more important than the faith. They trusted in the sign of the covenant rather than the God of the covenant. (Galatians, Romans, Hebrews talk a lot about this)**

**Relationship with God is always a matter of faith, not race or ritual This was not based on nationality or ethnicity – but faith.**

**Galatians 6:14 May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. 15 Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is the new creation.**

**We have the same issue today – some walk an aisle, raise a hand, dunk in the water, join a church, or say a prayer when nobody is looking – these actions are to be reflections of the heart.**

**But sometimes, these actions are void of true faith in the Lord. They do not reflect true submission of heart to the Lord and faith in Jesus. They are nothing more than empty circumcision. Empty action is not what God wants - He wants our heart, passions, will.**

**Abraham showed us - what faith looks like**

**Rom 4:17 As it is written: “I have made you a father of many nations.”[a] He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed—the God who gives life to the dead and calls into being things that were not.**

**18 Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, “So shall your offspring be.” 19 Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead—since he was about a hundred years old—and that Sarah’s womb was also dead. 20 Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, 21 being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised.**

**\*\* Faith is trusting God’s word when He seems silent**

**In the silent days - God is always near**

**Abe had a limited understanding of God and did not interact with him often. He didn’t hear from God for years and didn’t do anything memorable during that time – except one thing – he was faithful.**

**His faith rested in what God’s word said - obedient and consistent. We see something similar w/ Paul—13 yrs from salvation to his launch as an Apostle. He was faithful and grew. Seasons of waiting.**

**\*\* Faith is trusting God’s word over the years not just over a weekend.**

**I gave my life to Christ on Sunday, and he changed my bank account on the day / spouse / kids / habits. Time tells the truth.**

**\*\* Faith is trusting God word when it seems uncomfortable**

**He didn’t pray about it / think about it – he heard it – and did it.**

**This action (obedience) – was an act of faith – it said I believe.**

**\*\* Faith is trusting God’s word when it seems strange**

**Circumcision How do you explain that one to your people?**

**\*\* Faith is trusting God’s word when others possibly won’t understand**

**Name change – the humor in it – it got worse for him before it got better. No kids to father with millions of kids…**

**Where were you 2 years ago? You are here – that is faith.**