

Where Are We Going?

Heb 11:6-10

6 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 them that diligently seek him.

7 By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

8 By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

9 By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:

10 For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

When he was 88, Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes found himself on a train. The conductor called for tickets, but Justice Holmes couldn't find his ticket and seemed terribly upset. He searched his pockets and fumbled through his wallet without success. The conductor was sympathetic. "Don't worry, Mr. Holmes," he said. "The Pennsylvania Railroad will be happy to trust you. When you reach your destination you'll probably find the ticket and you can mail it to us." The conductor's kindness did not put Holmes at ease. He said, "My dear man, my problem is not 'Where is my ticket?' but rather 'Where am I going?'"

I would like to speak to you on this thought "Where are we going?"

Each one of us have felt like Wendell Holmes before.

- There are times in life when we feel like we have a clear picture of where we are going.
- And there are times in life when we feel like we have no clue where we are going.

We wake up sometimes and wonder, what am I doing here?

- Where is this taking me?
- What is this accomplishing for my life?
- I can't see my destination, in fact I don't even know what my destination is!

May I remind you tonight of the story of Abraham?

By faith, Abraham said 'yes' to God's call to travel to an unknown place that would become his home.

The Bible says, "not knowing whither he went."

When Abraham left home that day, he gathered together his belongings, his wife and his nephew and set out from his hometown of Ur, but he had no idea of where he was going.

- He didn't know what God had in store.
- He didn't know where every step would take him.
- He didn't know what might befall him on the way.

All Abraham knew was that God had called him out of his home country, and was taking him to a strange land that one day his descendants would possess, and there God would make a great nation of them.

When Abraham arrived at this strange land,

- He didn't know anybody there.
- He didn't have any relatives there.
- He didn't have any connections there.
- He didn't even speak their language.

What kind of life is that? Living with a bunch of strangers who don't even speak the same language, and to top it off, they were living in tents.

How many of you ladies would put up with that for very long?

Abraham had to be thinking of going back home.

- Almost all of his family, except his wife and nephew, were back in Ur of the Chaldees.
- He had left everything behind.
- But he didn't go home, he continued on.

Little did he know it, but things were about to go from bad to worse.

- A famine came upon the land.
- He had to pack up and go to Egypt for food to survive.
- When he arrived in Egypt, the princes of Egypt saw Sarah his beautiful wife, and they took her to Pharaoh for his pleasure.

At that point, Abraham had to be thinking, God, what in the world am I doing here? Where are you taking me?

Yet, I don't find any record of those kinds of words from Abraham.

He might not have known what was happening at that moment, but he knew that there was an unseen city with eternal foundations that were designed and built by God!

- He knew that God had called him.
- He knew that God was going to bless him.
- He knew that God was going to provide.

The key to Abraham's success was that he held onto the promise of God.

He walked by faith, and not by sight.

Things were going to get better...they had to.

Can I remind you tonight that we too have received a promise....we are also on a trip, aboard that good old Gospel ship, we are going far beyond the sky. And when our ship comes in, we are gonna leave this world of sin, and go sailing through the air.

We have got to keep our eyes on that city, whose builder and maker is God.

- He is calling us out of our comfort zones.

- He has called us out so that we can be blessed.
- He has called us out so that we can claim our inheritance.

We have to walk by faith and not by sight!

Give the Lord some praise tonight!

Sherlock Holmes and Watson were camping one night. In the middle of the night Sherlock Holmes awoke and looked up at the stars. He asked, "Watson, what do you see". Woken from his sleep Watson looked up and said "stars". Yes, but what do the stars tell you. Watson said "Cosmologically they tell me that we are part of a large universe – that we are one of billions and billions of planets. Theologically they tell me that we have a great God who made all of it. Meteorologically they tell me that the sky is clear and we will have good weather tomorrow. Temporally they tell me that it is the middle of the night and we should be sleeping! Sherlock, what do they tell you." "Well," he replied, "they tell me that someone has stolen our tent".

Sherlock saw something totally different than Holmes.

- They were both in the exact same place.
- They were both looking at exactly the same thing.
- Yet they saw totally different things.

Abraham saw something totally different than what you and I would have seen in his position.

- Abraham could have looked back...but he didn't.
- Abraham could have looked at his present position...but he didn't.
- Instead, he chose to look for that city with foundations that were made by God!

Here we are today at Life Church, it is the summer of 2010.
We are all looking at the same thing.
We are all living in the end time generation.

Yet we are all seeing different things, we are all reacting in different ways.

- It has been a tough year for some of you financially...jobs are scarce...the economy has gone bust.
- We haven't had a great year of growth, we have gained some, we have lost some, some have moved away.
- Some of you, me included, are a long way from home.
 - We can look back and wonder what it would be like back in Ur of the Chaldees, back at home.
 - We can look at our present situation and wonder, "God where are you?"
 - Or we can look ahead at what God has promised the church and just keep on marching!

What do you see today? Where are you going?

- I challenge you tonight to look ahead with the expectation of a promise.
- Can I persuade you to get your eyes off of your present situation?
- Will you grab hold of that promise that God has something great in store for you and for your family?

You are here for a reason, God has called you here for such a time as this!
The end time church has been promised great revival!

- Are we going to claim it?
- Are we going to make it happen?
- Are we going to get a hold of this?

Turn to your neighbor and ask them; What do you see? Where are you going?

All throughout scripture, God's people were faced with situations where they could have given up...some did, some didn't.

On one occasion, Israel had been captured by Babylon, it looked hopeless for them.

- Their cities lay in ruins.
- Their loved ones and children were dead or prisoners.
- All the people could do was to look back and remember Zion, that beautiful city of God.
- They sat down and wept and cried and hung their harps amongst the willows of Babylon.

Their captors asked of them a strange thing, mockingly demanded that Israel sing a song of Zion to them.

Let me read the account to you;

Psalms 137:1-4

137 By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.

2 We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof.

3 For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion.

Listen to the reply of Israel, they said;

4 How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?

That is a legitimate question for us today. How can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?

Abraham was able to do it, but his descendants were not.

What do you see today? Where are you going?

Israel totally missed what God was doing because they were blinded by their present troubles!

God was doing a new thing but they did not understand it.

They saw their captivity as an ending and not a beginning.

They did not see that through their captivity God was setting the stage for the coming of their Messiah.

They couldn't see that God was in total control! God was about to set four world powers in place for His purpose!

- The Babylonians would be defeated by the Persians who would allow the Jews to scatter all across the Mediterranean region.
- The Persians would be defeated by the Greeks who would unify all the people through its common language and customs. Greek was the language of Jesus' day.
- The Greeks would be defeated by the Romans who would build roads and make transportation possible to every remote corner of the known world.

When Jesus was born, the stage was set for this Gospel message to spread like wild fire. And in one generations time, that is exactly what happened.

The Apostles reached their known world in one generation!

I want you to know tonight, that if God has the power to set world powers in place at exactly the right time, then surely God has placed you right where He wants you to be for this generation!

Do you know that God has set the stage for history to repeat itself in this generation?

- In the generation of the first coming of Jesus Christ, the known world heard this Gospel.
- And in the generation of the second coming of Jesus Christ, the whole world will hear this Gospel message.

Matt 24:14

14 And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

We are living in the generation which has been called to share this message to the whole world!

You have been placed where you are for such a time as this!

What do you see tonight? Where are you going?

Years ago, when Mao Zedong was the leader of China, there was a great persecution of the Christians. Mao wanted to eliminate Christianity.

- First, he arrested the Christians and then spread them all over the country thinking that they could not meet together, so the church would die.
- Secondly, he wanted to punish them so he gave them the worst jobs possible – garbage collectors and grave diggers.

On the surface, you would have thought that this would work.

- However, in spreading out the Christians, he planted Christianity through the entire nation.
- In making Christians garbage collectors, he gave them access to every home in the country.
- In making them grave diggers, he placed them in situations where they could share the hope of the Gospel with people who were grieving.

Instead of eliminating Christianity, he caused it to grow.

- Church, God knows what he is doing!
- God sees where you are, and He will turn it around for His good!

- When you are facing your toughest times in life, God will do his greatest work through you.

The first century church was built in a generation of persecution!

We have come through a tough year, the church may even go through the tribulation, but through it all, God is going to do His greatest work!

- As long as you keep walking by faith.
- Keep working for the kingdom.
- If you fall down, get back up again.

Get involved and do everything that you can...God will take care of the rest.

Matthew 24:13

13 But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

Jonas Salk attempted 200 times to develop a vaccine for polio before he came up with one that worked. Somebody asked him one time, "How did it feel to fail 200 times?" This was his response: "I never failed 200 times at anything in my life. My family taught me never to use that word. I simply discovered 200 ways how not to make a vaccine for polio."

We have all been down that path...we have learned some things not to do!

- If you fail, try again, get up again and again and again.
- Walk by faith and not by sight.

Can I get a witness tonight?

Our text also mentioned Noah.

It said, by faith Noah built an Ark.

Imagine with me the situation.

- Noah was building a huge ship on dry ground.

- There would have been no possible way to move this ship to a lake or sea.
- They didn't have any cranes in those days.
- In that day, the earth was replenished by a constant dew that was upon the earth.
- It had never rained before in the history of mankind.
- They didn't even know what a flood was.

Then there is the physical complications of building such a boat.

- 450' long, 75' wide, and 45 feet high...four and a half stories high.
- They didn't have forklifts.
- It took Noah and his sons about a hundred years to build the ark.

I don't know about you, but if I knew it was going to take a hundred years to frame a house....I would have some big problems with that.

But Noah didn't, by faith Noah built an Ark.

- He saw something that nobody else could see!
- He saw it through faith.
- He kept walking by faith.

What do you see? Where are you going?

- How big is your faith?
- What are you focused on?
- Are you willing to lay everything on the line for God?
- Are you focused only on the immediate needs?
- Are you focused on the past?
- Or are you open for God to use you in ways that you have never been used before?

Just like He did 2000 years ago, God is shaking this world and the powers that be. God is getting ready to advance His Kingdom one last time before the rapture of the Church!

Don't miss out on what God has planned for your life!

In closing, I would like to share a story with you:

Eight-year-old Frank had looked forward for weeks to this particular Saturday because his father had promised to take him fishing if the weather was suitable. There hadn't been any rain for weeks and as Saturday approached, Frank was confident of the fishing trip. But, wouldn't you know it, when Saturday morning dawned, it was raining heavily and it appeared that it would continue all day.

Frank wandered around the house, peering out the windows and grumbling more than a little. "Seems like the Lord would know that it would have been better to have the rain yesterday than today," he complained to his father who was sitting by the fireplace, enjoying a good book. His father tried to explain to Frank how badly the rain was needed, how it would make the flowers grow and bring much needed moisture to the farmers' crops. But Frank was adamant. "It just isn't right," he said over and over.

Then, about three o'clock, the rain stopped. Still time for some fishing, and quickly the gear was loaded and they were off to the lake. For whatever reason, the fish were biting and father and son returned with a full string of fine, big Walleye. At supper, when some of the fish were ready, Frank's mom asked him to say grace. Frank did--and concluded his prayer by saying, "And, Lord, if I sounded grumpy earlier today it was because I couldn't see far enough ahead."

I would like to ask you as you come to this altar tonight....are you looking far enough ahead?

Do you have the faith to see that God is doing something through you?

- Come tonight and let God know that you desire to walk by faith and not by sight.
- Ask God to open up your eyes so that you can see His plan.
- God is preparing each of us to do a great work for His Kingdom.