

Sunday January 6<sup>th</sup> 2008  
Laying the Foundations  
The Picture of Marriage Continued  
Getting Practical 2 – Leaving 2

1). In our study last week we had seen that ‘Leaving’ is a foundational action that must be taken by those who enter into a marriage relationship. And the reason for it is with respect to rulership and an inheritance.

- a). We saw this with Adam and the Woman
- b). And how this is a picture for us of Christ and His Bride
- c). We saw this from different perspectives with regards to Abraham, Rebekah, Ruth and the nation of Israel.
- e). And from yet another perspective with David.

2). What we will try to discover this week is exactly what the process of leaving father and mother looks like for us as Christians as we make our pilgrim journey from the land of our birth to the land of our calling. Let’s begin by revisiting our foundational scripture from Ephesians.

3). Eph 5:31 *"For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."* 32 *This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.*

- a). Again let us note the process here – there is first leaving of father and mother in order to be joined to – then the joining to results in becoming one flesh.
- b). Without leaving we cannot be joined to, and without being joined to we cannot become one flesh.
- c). Within the realm of the natural it is perfectly possible for a couple not to leave father and mother, not to cleave to each other and not become one flesh and still be married.
- d). But within the spiritual realm, as we will see during the course of this study, without leaving, cleaving and becoming one flesh there can be no marriage for us to the Bridegroom – It is for the reason of rulership that we must do this.

4). So what does it mean for us to leave father and mother?

- a). Well to begin with we will realize that this is not a literal command for us, although as part of our process this may literally take place.
- b). But rather, as we saw with Abraham last week - Ge 12:1 ¶ *Now the LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you.*

c). We need to understand this as a complete separation from everything associated with our first birth.

d). We are born - Eph 2:1b.....*dead in trespasses and sins,*

e). Inextricably linked with this age and the ruler of this age –  
1Jo 5:19b....*and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one.*

f). And it is in our separation from this relationship with the world, contained in the phrases – our old man, the man of flesh, our sin nature, the body of this death, that we should understand leaving father and mother. Father and mother really would be one and the same with respect to this.

5). This might be easy for us to see in some scriptural examples.

a). Adam is, in a scriptural sense, our father, and we are all born in his likeness - Ge 5:3 *And Adam lived one hundred and thirty years, and begot a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth.*

b). The image and likeness we are born in is that of fallen Adam – this we need to leave.

c). Jesus says this to the scribes and Pharisees - Joh 8:44 *"You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do.*

d). Even as eternally saved people our desires and our actions can more readily align us with the enemy of our soul than with our Savior – again, witness Christ's words to Peter - Mt 16:23 *But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men."*

e). This we need to leave behind.

f). And of course in - Ga 4:30 *Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? "Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman."*

g). The son of the bondwoman is our first birth – this we need to leave. Only the son of the freewoman, our new birth, has the potential to receive an inheritance.

h). This I hope will give us perspective on what leaving father and mother pictures for us.

6). And let us also remember that our leaving father and mother does not automatically happen at the moment of our new birth – rather our new birth makes leaving possible.

a). We saw this with Abraham, with Rebekah, with Ruth and with Israel.

b). And the reason for this is very obvious, leaving requires faithful obedience – and neither faith nor obedience are possible until we pass from spiritual death into spiritual life - Heb 11:8 *By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance.*

7). The Hebrew word for leave is – *azab* – and the Greek equivalent is – *kataleipo*. And these words have three specific meanings and usages. They mean –

- a). To loosen
- b). To depart
- c). To abandon

8). If we look at the experience of Abraham we can see how all three definitions of the word ‘leave’ describe Abraham’s process of leaving.

a). We will remember that the command the Lord gave to Abraham was to get out of his country, from his family and from his father’s house – and although Abraham reacted positively to God’s command it was not in total obedience – *Ge 12:5 Then Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people whom they had acquired in Haran, and they departed to go to the land of Canaan. So they came to the land of Canaan.*

b). Here we have a very good example of the idea to loosen – Abraham is following God’s instructions but he is holding on to the familiar, that from his country, his family and his father’s house. We will remember that it is only after the death of his father, Terah, whose name means ‘delay, that he then left Haran – However, in the very act of going his connection with the past has begun to loosen.

c). The idea of departing can be seen in his encounter with Melchizedek after the battle with the kings - *Ge 14:18 Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. 19 And he blessed him and said: "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; 20 And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand." And he gave him a tithe of all. 21 ¶ Now the king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the persons, and take the goods for yourself." 22 But Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have raised my hand to the LORD, God Most High, the Possessor of heaven and earth, 23 "that I will take nothing, from a thread to a sandal strap, and that I will not take anything that is yours, lest you should say, 'I have made Abram rich' –*

d). It is here that we see a real departure from his past life as he raises his hand to the Lord, God most High, declaring his trust in God’s provision in both the heavens and the earth by giving Melchizedek a tithe of all – the process of leaving is in effect becoming more complete.

e). But even here there is a certain amount of equivocation - *Ge 15:8 And he said, "Lord GOD, how shall I know that I will inherit it?"*

f). Although Abraham’s faith has grown considerably from that recorded in the 14<sup>th</sup> Chapter of Genesis, there is still the need for God to provide proof of His

faithfulness – Abraham’s grip has loosened, he has made a departure, but his leaving is still not absolute.

g). It is in the sacrifice of Isaac that we see the complete abandonment of his country, his family and his father’s house – everything connected with his first birth - Ge 22:2 *Then He said, "Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you."* 3 ¶ *So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he split the wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him.*

h). Here there is no second guessing, no request for further assurances from God, just faithful obedience and absolute trust in the nature and character of God and the voracity of His promises - Ge 22:8 *And Abraham said, "My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering."*

i). Heb 11:17 *By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, 18 of whom it was said, "In Isaac your seed shall be called," 19 concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.*

j). It is at this point in the leaving process, where he has abandoned reliance on anything but God’s word that God gives to him the culminating promise – Ge 22:17 *"blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies.*

9). There is a process of faith here that is an encouragement to us – Abraham did not finish his journey the same as he started, there is a clear progression for him. Just as there is for us - Ro 1:16 ¶ *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."*

a). In the good news of the coming of Christ and His Kingdom is the power of God to salvation – the salvation of the soul. For in that good news the righteousness of God is revealed – His nature, His character, His faithfulness, His trustworthiness – as our faith grows, as we progress in the process of spiritual maturity – from faith to faith. We believe more now than when we started.

b). And for each of us we will be in a different place in the process, but where ever we are in that process we need to conduct our lives in accordance with what we know to do - Php 3:16 *Nevertheless, to the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind.*

c). And as with Abraham our faith will be tested as we move to the next stage in our journey - *1Pe 1:7 that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,*

10). It should be that as we receive more and more of the revelation of God's word, so our hold on behaviors, thought patterns and actions associated with our first birth – that in which we have been raised and familiar with, will become looser and looser as our mind is renewed, and as our focus is on the hope that is set before us.

a). *Php 3:13 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, 14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. 15 ¶ Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you.*

b). Let us be encouraged today to remain steadfast and immovable in the faith, sinking our roots deeper and deeper into the living water – having a foundation so strong that no storm or tempest could move us out of place.

b). Let us have the absolute assurance that God is faithful and will do that which He has promised, even if we should not see it before our physical death here on the earth - *1Co 1:9 God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.*

c). *Heb 3:14 For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end,*

d). *Heb 11:13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. 14 For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. 15 And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.*

11). Now in our marriage counseling sessions we teach about leaving father and mother in three ways – physically, financially and emotionally.

a). And it would not be at all unreasonable to bring these three over into the spiritual realm with regards to how we leave everything connected with our first birth behind.

12). In leaving physically we can see our ever present challenge of dying to self. Having a response or a course of action before us and having to choose to follow what the word of God says rather than following what our flesh wants to do.

a). 1Pe 1:13 ¶ *Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; 14 as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; 15 but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, 16 because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy."*

b). There was a time, and probably still is for each of us, a time when the action of our lives was contrary to the word of God because we were ignorant of what the word said – but once we know what the word says it is incumbent upon us to put that word into practice instead of patterning ourselves after what we did in ignorance.

c). There is a command here for us to be holy in all our conduct, to be separated from, to have left behind the patterns of our worldly living.

d). Ro 12:2 *And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

e). Ro 8:13 *For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.*

f). 1Jo 2:15 *Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

g). In all we read here there is the requirement of some action on our part. We need to see what used to be, which has come out of this world and is founded on a lie, and instead embrace the truth that we find in God's word making this the motivation for our action.

13). Leaving financially would take us right back to Abraham and Melchizedek. We looked at this just a short while ago.

a). Abraham recognized and understood the promises God was giving to him through Melchizedek – having understood the promises his focus was on that which remained out ahead, the fulfillment of those promises. His faith in the surety of the promises was demonstrated in refusing to take that which the king of Sodom offered and giving a tenth of all to Melchizedek.

b). For us it is really no different – we are to see and to understand the promises God has given us with regards to the Kingdom of the Heavens and our inheritance therein. The hope we have in this is to be our focus – the steadfastness we are to have as a result of the assurance of what God will provide for us in that day is to transcend anything the world has to offer.

c). The expression of our faith with regards to this, our faith in action, is through the tithe.

d). The giving of the tithe is a joyous act of celebration over what God has done for us and promised us – it is our delight in His goodness and our declaration of who is the source of our blessing.

e). The lie, of course, is I can't afford to tithe – taking such a stance is really a declaration that our hope is in the present and our happiness in this world, and we look to the god of this world to be our source.

f). Let's just remember those commended for their faith in Hebrews 11 – Heb 11:36 *Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. 37 They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented-- 38 of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth. 39 And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, 40 God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.*

g). Our joy and our fulfillment is not in the abundance of what we have but in the promise of what we shall be

h). Mt 4:8 *Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. 9 And he said to Him, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me." 10 Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.'"*

i). In the short term Christ was giving up the kingdoms of the world for the agony of the cross – but He endured the cross and despised the shame for the joy that was set before Him.

j). Mt 16:26 *"For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"*

k). What we have or don't have now is not the issue – the issue is the faithfulness of God to fulfill His promise in that coming Day.

14). Leaving emotionally is probably the most difficult part of leaving in the natural and I would suspect that this would also be true in the spiritual.

a). It is very difficult for us to come to the realization that - Ro 7:18 *For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find.*

b). We have a desire to see our old man as not that bad – he may not be good, but he is not as bad as many others. From God's perspective, which is the one we need to see, nothing good dwells in our old man. Our sin nature is what it is, a sin nature, and as such is no better and no worse than anyone else's sin nature. Sin is sin and there is the end of it.

c). Sometimes we like to think that our old man is improving – because of our engagement with the word we are doing better than we were, but the reality is that our old man is not improving – he’s dying and we are now walking more in the spirit.

d). And sometimes we can deceive ourselves by thinking that we are basically good people, so if we were to give in to our old man occasionally it really doesn’t matter that much. We think God will overlook the sin because we are OK people .

e). It does matter – sin is sin – and no amount of OK can change that – the only thing to do with sin is to confess it and repent, receiving the mercy that the Lord extends through forgiveness - 1Pe 1:17 *And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear;*

15). Probably the most difficult emotional attachment with our ‘father and mother’ to shed is that surrounding our identity.

a). We have all from the time of our birth grown up with an identity the god of this world has tried to give us. He has, as a result of us being born dead in trespasses and sins, tried to shape the outcome of our life through deception.

b). Who we perceive ourselves to be is often determined by others – we are fat, thin, ugly, stupid, a failure etc.

c). It’s even possible for us to be deceived into thinking that we deserve to be abused or downtrodden. In fact most people abused in their childhood grow up thinking that it is their fault and they only got what they deserved.

d). Now the reality for us needs to be that no matter what we have believed about ourselves in the past, once we are born again we need to accept, not what the world says about us, but what God says about us.

e). We may have been told from the earliest days of our childhood that we were unwanted and unnecessary, yet regardless of what we have been told, the truth is that we have been called as a firstborn son of God, we are offered a position with God the Son as a joint heir and that we have an inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ. That makes us neither unwanted nor unnecessary.

f). In fact we are so wanted and so necessary that God Himself came in the form of a man and died on the cross so that we could have access to this.

g). The blood of God has been shed for us to take away the reproach of the world and replace it with the righteousness of Christ.

h). The abuse we may have suffered at the hands of others is not our fault, nor is it any indication that God does not love us or care about us – rather it is the result of wicked choices made by someone who should have protected us, and

because we live in a fallen world we have to live with the consequences of their wickedness.

i). But again this does not determine who we are – we need to believe what God says about us.

j). Did God not care about our situation?

k). Of course he did – so much so that He had already shed His blood before our pain was inflicted that we should be healed from it.

l). We can choose who we are going to believe with regards to our identity – either the god of this world or the Lord of creation – it's not rocket science.

16). We need to leave the lie and the deception behind, we need to get out from our country, our family and our father's house and go to the land that God will show us.

a). But the danger for us in this is that we feel safe with the familiar.

b). The wife in the awful marriage on the Brac – why abused wives stay.

c). This is really not surprising as it is exactly what we see in scripture.

d). Ru 1:15 *And she said, "Look, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law."*

e). With our example of Orpah we see her return to the familiar – there is a feeling of safety in staying where you are comfortable rather than going on into the unknown.

f). And of course Orpah is not the one who meets Boaz and becomes his wife.

g). Nu 11:4 ¶ *Now the mixed multitude who were among them yielded to intense craving; so the children of Israel also wept again and said: "Who will give us meat to eat? 5 "We remember the fish which we ate freely in Egypt, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic; 6 "but now our whole being is dried up; there is nothing at all except this manna before our eyes!"*

h). Nu 14:4 *So they said to one another, "Let us select a leader and return to Egypt."*

i). As we think of Israel's enslavement in Egypt – everything connected with the harshness of their treatment – it is difficult to imagine why they would remember it with such fondness and desire to return.

j). The answer of course is in the familiar – it may be incredible to think it but the nation as a whole felt a greater degree of security in their ill treatment as slaves than in walking out God's promises – because to follow God required them to go into the unknown where they had God and God alone to rely upon. In essence they didn't trust Him.

k). It would seem that they were never able to make the emotional separation from 'their country, their family and their father's house'.

l). They chose rather to believe what Egypt had taught them about their identity rather than the truth of who God said they were. It was easier to remain a slave, retaining their old identity than become a king/priest, taking on the identity God had for them.

m). And the result for them was not a happy one - Heb 3:17 *Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness?*

n). Their example was given to us so that we should learn from it. Don't let us make the same mistake that they did.

17). As we close for today let me ask each one of us – ‘Where are you in the process of leaving father and mother?’

a). Have you loosened? Have you departed? Come to the place of abandonment?

b). What is it you are still holding on to? – the things of the world? - A comfortable sin? - A false identity?

c). Whatever it may be, and it is there within all of us, let us choose now to leave.