QOD: WHAT FEARLESS INFLUENCER DO YOU ADMIRE AND WHY?
Or Phrased another way...WHO DO YOU LOOK UP TO AND WHY?

God wants each and everyone of us to be fearless influencers who can impact other peoples lives. It is not just a job for the heroes in our lives to be the influencers.

Today we are looking at a fearless influencer in the Bible, who was called a friend of God. He is also known as the father of the faith. His name was Abraham and he was an amazing influencer. Let's take a look at Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3:

*Genesis 12: 1 – 3*

The Lord had said to Abram, “Leave your country, your people and your father's household, and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you and whoever curses you I will curse and all the peoples on earth will be blessed through you.

Before I go any further today, I kindly ask you to stand up, and join me in singing this song;

Father Abraham, had many sons
Many sons had father Abraham
I am one of them, and so are you
So let's just praise the Lord,
Right hand, left hand...

Thank you so much, you may please have your seats. All of us know Abraham. We have been hearing about him since we were young. There are even sons about him as we just sang. But here is the great thing, just like God had great plans and dreams for Abraham, he has big plans for you as well. Read with me:

*Ephesians 2:1-10*

1. And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2. in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. 4. But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which he loved us, 5. even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved) 6. and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7. so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in the kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8. For by grace you have been saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9. not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10. For we
We are the home of the ‘Fearless’!

So today, we are looking at Abraham who was one serious Fearless Influencer in the Bible. This man is one of a kind. The Bible refers to him as the ‘Friend of God’. Wow. Imagine that with me. The Bible does not use that term friend lightly. In life we have many acquaintances, but few friends. A friend is one that not only celebrates the good times with you, but one who sticks with us even through the hard times, and even the embarrassing ones. A friend is the first you call when you get that promotion, but also the one you call when the girl turns you down. God refers to Abraham as His friend. So much that Abraham pleads with God about the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and God is willing to change plans because of Abraham. In fact when the Bible in Hebrews is writing about the hero’s of faith, half of that chapter is about this man. He was also not just a friend of God, but God gave him such great promises, which He fulfilled.

He became a great nation. The nation of Israel today comes from him, and not only that but even some Arabs are descendent from Him. God made His name great, in fact Abraham is not only a hero in the Judeo-Christian faith, but even other religions like Islam honour him. (God can cause you to be honoured even among non-believers). In fact, in his day, he went to war with kingdoms and defeated them. He also was a very wealthy man, and had loads of gold, silver, livestock, goats, sheep, camels...and a great number of servants. He was so influential that kingdoms came to him to build relationships so he could be their ally. We can safely say that this man was so Fearless, he left a mark on the world.

What made this man Fearless? Is there something we can learn from this man and put into practice? The Bible is given to us that we can learn about God and his dealings with people from the stories of others.

So what made Abraham fearless? We will turn our attention to the scriptures we read and see some marks of Fearlessness

1. The History

The man was born in Ur, and we know it was an un-Godly city with, sexual immorality, corruption, and rampart worship of idols .... In fact, Abram’s father, Terah was an idolater Joshua 24:2. So we can tell Abram did not get off to a good start. God still chose him though.

We too have similarities with Abram. God has called us to be fearless influencers in our generation. Not to just live a mediocre life but a life of purpose. But we too have some history that is not favourable. Every person who has made a mark in the world, had history that they had to overcome. And we may think it is not possible because of our past and the circumstances around that. God knows all about our past but has decided to call us to be Fearless Influencers in society. You have had it said that God does not call the qualified but qualifies those He calls. The passage in Ephesians puts it this way,

1.And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2. in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest....But God

2. The Call of Grace
Just like God chose Abram, He by His grace has saved us. God, being rich in mercy has saved us by His grace. He chose us, when we were still lost in our ways. It is not because of our performance, or things we have done. Sometimes we tend to think that God’s mercy towards us was somewhat influenced by our good behaviour, our fervent prayer, our Bible reading...Not at all. All these things are nice but are things we do because we are His children not so that we become His children.

At home, I am trying to raise a fearless family. So there are things that I want my children to do. For example, I want my sons to be kind, and hardworking and punctual, and all those with girls can start putting through their cvs. However, my son's position as my son is not pegged on those things. Those are things they do because they carry my name, not so that they carry it.

So God has graciously chosen us. Turn to your neighbour and tell them, **I am chosen by God.** It does not matter what you have done, or what was done to you, God has chosen to bestow His love on us and all we have to do is respond to it and we are on our way to fearlessness.

Example: My son is my son. Sometimes he does stuff that does not make me happy. He is still my son. Sometimes he does stuff that makes me smile. He is still my son. His being my son is not pegged on things he does or does not do.

The same thing is true for us as children of God.

**3. The Purpose**

God gave Abram some serious promises.

*I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you;*  
*I will make your name great and you will be a blessing*  
*I will bless those who bless you and whoever curses you I will curse and all the peoples on earth will be blessed through you.*

And He fulfilled each and every one of them. God has great purposes for our lives. This is how Ephesians puts it;

**Ephesians 2:10 says 10. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.**

God has plans for our lives and they are not small. We can see from the promises God made Abram that the plans were big. God has big plans for us. God wants us to be fearless. God wants to make a mark in this world with your life. However, for this to happen, we do have a part to play;

God told Abraham, leave your country, your people, and your father's household.

For us to be fearless influencers and receive the promises of God, we do have a part to play.

- We have to be different/let go of baggage

God has always called his chosen people to be distinct from the world. This does not mean God wants us to be an inward looking, exclusive hurdle...no, on the contrary even Abram's household seemed to be open to those who want to join it. But we need to be different. We cannot walk in the ways we used to walk, because we are different people. As it says in Ephesians, these are our former ways, because we are changed. God calls us as we are. But we are not to stay as we are. God has bigger plans for us.
Each of us have fearless potential within us. It is not to grow up, get married, have kids, make money, be happy and die... That is not all God wants from you. God wants to impact this world through you.

We have a role to play. We need to let go of the baggage.

Once before I boarded a flight, I discovered my luggage was over weight. For me to head to my destination, I had to either let go of the extra baggage or pay extra. Some baggage is good stuff, but does not add any value but rather slows us down. Baggage can also be sin in our lives.

The reason God calls us to be different is that sin is one way your purpose in life can be ambushed. Over and over in the Bible, we see people taking longer to achieve their promises. They are still children of God but their purpose in life can be derailed.

Once we are saved, we are children of God. But if we keep sin in our lives, our purpose can be ambushed.

Sin will:

1. Take you farther than you wanted to go
2. Keep you longer than you wanted to stay
3. Cost you more than you wanted to pay.

God called Abraham - he told Abraham to leave (leave his family, his country, etc) Has God told you to leave something behind that you have refused to leave? What baggage/stuff are you moving with that God is asking you to let go of?

Do you need to let go of friends, work, or certain situations? Are you carrying baggage in terms of sin in your life? Sin will cost you. We see in Abraham's story that he carried along baggage that he was not supposed to move with. God had told him to leave his father’s household and go to a new country. But Abraham disobeyed and he brought some of his father's household with him. This decision slowed Abraham down and cost him in the long run, sometimes forcing him to go in a direction that he would not have otherwise needed to go.

When God calls us he leaves the decision up to us. So like Abraham, we have to make some decisions. Life is about our decisions, and the Fearless life is no different. We have to make fearless decisions.

The beauty though is God does not live us to make these decisions alone; instead we even have an advantage over Abram. We have the Holy Spirit, who is God living in us to help us make these decisions. Jesus promised not to leave us as orphans, but instead said it was good that He goes so that God would send the comforter, the counsellor who will guide us in all truth. So our part is to co-operate with God and His Spirit and make fearless decisions to live a life distinct from the world around so that we can fearlessly influence the world.

As we have seen, we may not have made the ideal start in life, but God’s Love and Grace have been poured out on us and we have been given a fresh start and a great purpose. However, we need to make decisions in keeping with obedience to God to fulfil our God given potential. And God will not let us walk this journey alone, but wants to walk it with us through His Spirit.

Will we choose to let go of our baggage when we travel on our journey? Tell your neighbour "Travel Light"

Short Discussion Time:
Today we are going to do something a little different. I want this time to be practical and useful.
Pair up with someone next to you and share your dreams with them. God has given us all big dreams but we are sometimes scared. What dream has God put on your heart that you need to walk towards.

Let me tell you a story about a guy named Wilberforce. It is a story of the slave trade and Wilberforce's stance against it... 20 years this young man fought against the government, against the rich to stand up for what was right. Wilberforce spent his entire life fighting against the slave trade and in 1833 the slave trade was finally abolished just before Wilberforce died.

Wilberforce was just one person who dared to believe God to change the world. He didn't see the impossibilities but he looked to God to give his life purpose and meaning. He had serious threats to his life but God protected him and helped him.

Wilberforce took God seriously. Will you also take God seriously in the plans he has planned for you? All of us were meant for greatness...God has given you all you need to walk in Gods plans for us. When we do God will it only change you, your family, your community but your entire world.

Choose today to stop accepting the status quo. It will cost you but it will be worth it. Let your life count for something. Step out. Do what God wants you to do no matter the cost.

The first step is to simply believe God.

Let it be said that the world was a better place because you lived.

**Alter call:**
- call for those who feel God calling them to step out
- people who don't know Jesus - a call to surrender to God