BALLYSILLAN
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

DAILY DEVOTIONS

VOLUME 2

GROWING & GOING

/AS FAMILY
/AS FOLLOWERS
/IN PRAYER

/WITH THE
/GOOD NEWS
/OF JESUS

OUR FAMILY STORY

As the story of Genesis progresses, God calls one man to leave everything and follow him, and he promises him a family. Abraham's response of faith in God is a key moment in the story of salvation and it is also a key lesson for us about what it means to have saving faith in the God who calls us all to leave everything and follow him.

As well as Sunday sermons we want to provide you with further resources **so that we can continue to GROW together as the family of God, as followers of Jesus, and in prayer and GO with the good news of Jesus to the world around us.**

READ

Each week there are five daily readings to do on your own or with others. These will explore some of the test and themes we look at on Sundays. So read the TEXT, work through the THOUGHT and then put the THEREFORE into action.

REMEMBER

Each week there is a memory verse so that we can store up God's word in our heart (Psalm 119:11)

REJOICE

Each week there is a song that helps us rejoice in a truth about God, who he is and what he has done.

WEEK 1
SERMON / GENESIS 12:1-20

//REMEMBER

if we are faithless,
he remains faithful,
for he cannot disown himself.

2 TIMOTHY 2:13

REJOICE
Here's our song for the week

HIS GLORY AND MY GOOD
CITY ALIGHT

WEEK 1 / READING 1

Text - GENESIS 12:1-5

The Lord had said to Abram, “Go from your country, your people and your father’s household 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 peoples on earth
will be blessed through you.”

So Abram went, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Harran. He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated and the people they had acquired in Harran, and they set out for the land of Canaan, and they arrived there.

Thought

Dale "Grey Beard" Sanders is the world record holder as the oldest person to hike the 2193 mile Appalachian Trail. He was 91 at the time. It’s an age when most people aren’t considering such a journey, which makes his feat so impressive.

Abram was 75 years old when he set out fromm Harran to travel the 400 miles to Canaan (he’s already covered 600 miles from his home in Ur to Harran). Again, most people aren’t planning a 1000 mile hike, never mind a home move across 1000 miles at 75, which makes the fact the “Abram went” so impressive.

It could be said that little three word phase,“So Abram went,” is the defining phrase of Abram’s story…but I think we can zoom in on the first word, “So…”

It's impressive that Abram went, but it's important to note that Abram wasn't upping sticks because he saw a nice retirement chalet on a vineyard on PropertyPal or he fancied setting a world record for oldest man to hike from Ur to Canaan.. Rather, God called Abram to go with a promise, and that call and that promise is the motivating factor of the "So…"

That's what makes Abram's going so impressive, not because it's a feat but because it's faith. Abram went, putting his faith in the God who called him, who promised him, and who would guide him.

Therefore
God has called us to himself in Jesus, God has promised to bless us so we can bless the world, God has promised to lead and guide us until we arrive home, so…?

What is your response today?

WEEK 1 / READING 2

Text - GENESIS 12:4-9

So Abram went, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Harran. He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated and the people they had acquired in Harran, and they set out for the land of Canaan, and they arrived there.

Abram traveled through the land as far as the site of the great tree of Moreh at Shechem. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. The Lord appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built an altar there to the Lord, who had appeared to him.

From there he went on toward the hills east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. There he built an altar to the Lord and called on the name of the Lord.
Then Abram set out and continued toward the Negev.

Thought

Have you ever taken a walk round some of the National Trust properties with their massive gardens and grounds and thought, "Imagine living here…imagine all this belonging to me."

Abram didn't have to engage in any such imagination as he "traveled through the land," because this is where the Lord had called him to live and this land is what the Lord had promised to him and his offspring (of course it's a down payment on a bigger promise, but we'll cover that another time).

But I wonder if he did wonder, about why he spent so long in Harran when this was all waiting for him. Stephen, in Acts 7, gives a little bit more detail on Abram's journey which started in Ur and was supposed to go straight to Canaan, but he stopped and settled in Harran for a time.

Harran was a moment of faltering faith for Abram, but it was a time of forfeiting the fullness of what God had promised to him. Abram sinned against God and shortchanged himself when he settled in Harran.

Therefore
So maybe there's an area of life where God has called you, and you've stepped out in faith, and that faith has faltered halfway and you've settled there…or maybe all of faith feels a bit halfway and you've settled for it.

Abram's story challenges us…God is not calling us to settled for half way faith, rather he wants us to go the whole way…when we settle we sin against him and we shortchange ourselves, we forfeit the fullness of all he has for us.

So take time to reflect, confess, and ask for more faith to push on and keep going.

WEEK 1 / READING 3

Text - GENESIS 12:10-13

Now there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to live there for a while because the famine was severe. As he was about to enter Egypt, he said to his wife Sarai, "I know what a beautiful woman you are. When the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife.' Then they will kill me but will let you live. Say you are my sister, so that I will be treated well for your sake and my life will be spared because of you."

Thought

You probably won't have heard of Drew Scanlon. He's the guy in the viral "blinking guy" meme (a little video clip used in social media if you're unfamiliar with memes) which has been used millions of times to indicate a "sorry, what did you just say/do" reaction.

I mention it because had Abram and Sarai been having this conversation on WhatsApp, Sarai may well have "hearted" the first line, "sweating emoji-ed" the problem and then "blinking guy-ed" Abram's solution.

"Pretend to be your sister so you don't get killed…sorry, what?"

The man of faith has failed to have faith in the God of promise to protect him…and so he risks his wife's life to protect himself. What a fella! And he risks receiving what God has promised by allowing his wife to be taken (more on that tomorrow). What a fool!

Faith in the Lord does not guarantee an easy life for us…Abram found famine in front of him when he walked in faith into Canaan… but failure to have faith guarantees that we will hurt others and harms ourselves because we act out of fear and foolishness with a focus on ourselves.

Therefore

So where is fear and foolishness causing you to act in ways that hurt others and harm yourself. Ask the Holy Spirit to lift your eyes from yourself and onto the Lord, and push into what a faith-filled response to that circumstance might be.

WEEK 1 / READING 4

Text - GENESIS 12:14-16

When Abram came to Egypt, the Egyptians saw that Sarai was a very beautiful woman. And when Pharaoh's officials saw her, they praised her to Pharaoh, and she was taken into his palace. He treated Abram well for her sake, and Abram acquired sheep and cattle, male and female donkeys, male and female servants, and camels.

Thought -

So Abram's fears came true!

And Abram's foolishness was acted out!

And Abram found himself quids in!

I wonder what he was thinking that first night going back to his tent alone as the new sheep and cattle and donkeys and camels baa-ed and moo-ed and bray-ed and "whatever noise camels make"-ed around him, and as his new male and female servants fluffed his pillow and make him his bedtime cocoa.

Did he think, "I'm blessed!" or did he think, "I'm a balloon!"?

The "blessings" could easily convince him he'd done the wise thing… the right thing…but we know that this good outcome does not equate to a good action.

Rather than looking at his own circumstances, he needed to look at the circumstances of Sarai who had been "taken into [Pharaoh"s] palace] (read into that what you may, because the reality for Sarai is probably worse that you can imagine).

Therefore

Thinking back to yesterdays "Therefore," the enemy can convince us that moral decisions were wise and right by our own pleasant circumstance, and blinding us to the circumstances to those we have

hurt. So pushing into this further, ask the Holy Spirit to lift your eyes from your own circumstances and to see where you're decisions have brought hurtful and harmful circumstances to others.

WEEK 1 / READING 5

Text -GENESIS 12:17-20

But the Lord inflicted serious diseases on Pharaoh and his household because of Abram's wife Sarai. So Pharaoh summoned Abram. "What have you done to me?" he said. "Why didn't you tell me she was your wife? Why did you say, 'She is my sister,' so that I took her to be my wife? Now then, here is your wife. Take her and go!" Then Pharaoh gave orders about Abram to his men, and they sent him on his way, with his wife and everything he had.

Thought

If you had to grade Abraham on his performance in the second half chapter 12 of Genesis, an F would be generous. Failed as a husband, failed as a follower of God.

Yet what happens to him…he's protected from the wrath of a very angry Egyptian king…he get's his wife back…and he keeps the animals and servant.

He does not get what he deserves based on his grade. He get's what he doesn't deserve based on God's grace and based on God's great faithfulness to his promise.

Which is a great summary of the Gospel…sinful people do not get what they deserve based on their performance grade, but rather they get what they don't deserve based on God's perfect grace and his great faithfulness to his promise that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Therefore

This week has probably been a bit weighty thinking about how Abram points us to our faltering and foolishness and failures…but ultimately the story of Abram is the story of God's faithfulness to his promises despite Abram's faithlessness. So as we head towards worship on Sunday, rest in God's faithfulness to you and his promise to bless you and use you to be a blessing in the world.

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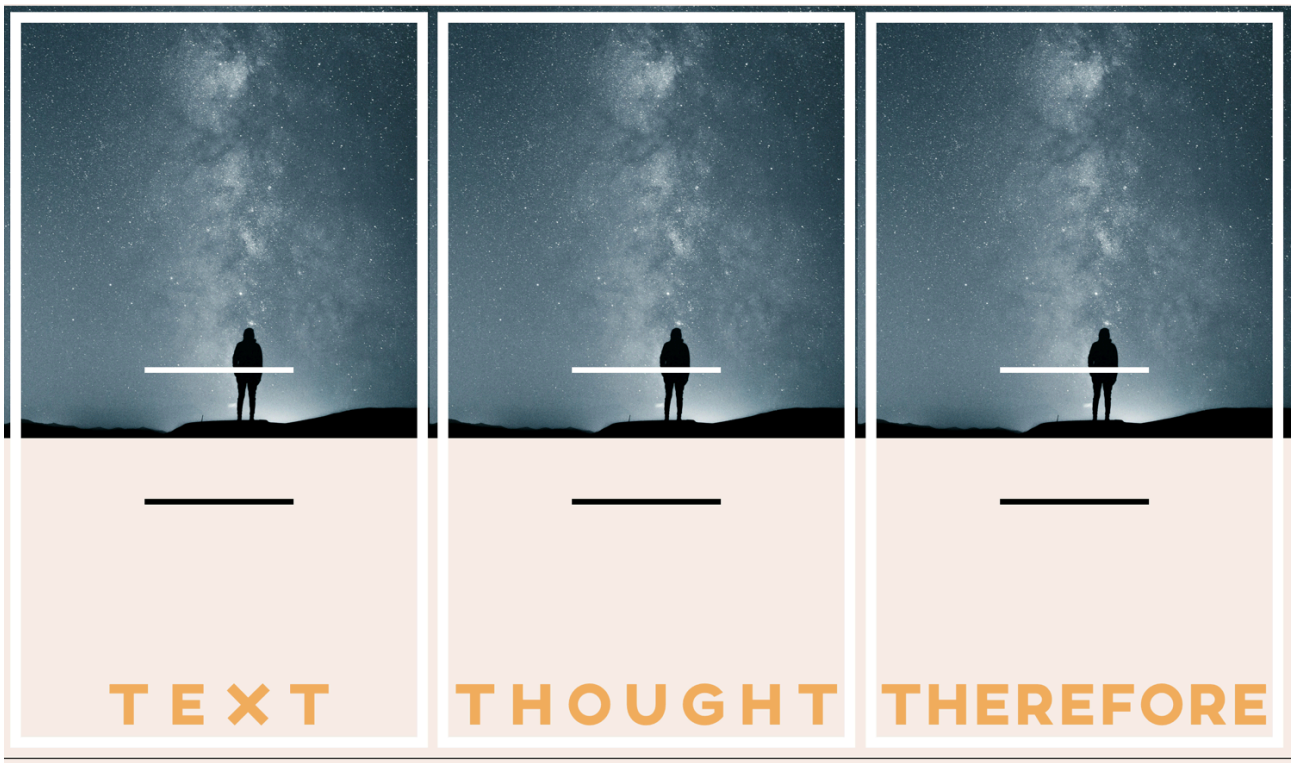

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