

“Moved to Bless”
Genesis 12:1-6; Psalm 67; Mathew 11:28-30
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July 9, 2023

Let's pray together,

Holy and loving God, may the words of my mouth and the meditations of all of our hearts be pleasing and acceptable in your sight. O Lord our rock and our redeemer, Amen!

The first five years that Johanna and I were married we moved six different times. A back and forth across the lower mainland up to camp Douglas and back again in and out of St. Andrews Hall we got really, really, really good at moving. We had all these really nice sturdy boxes that we used over and over again I could take apart all of our IKEA furniture and put it all back together again blindfolded. And every time we moved we gave away or we threw away all this stuff that we didn't really need. So when we finally left BC to head out east to Ontario we were expert movers, lean, mean, moving machines.

We had moved so many times that just going a little bit further away across a few extra provinces it didn't seem like that big a deal. But things change. We've spent the last 12 years living in one house the same house and over those 12 years we have filled that house with all this stuff. Two cats, two children, lots of toys, and games, and books, and collectible video game figurines, clothing that fit at one time and might one day fit again, kitchen gadgets for a recipe I only made once, tools for a project I never actually completed, and all those nice sturdy boxes sat in the basement getting mildewed and spider webbed. And all those IKEA assembly instructions I had in my head got pushed my memory by more important things like children's birthday parties.

And then all of a sudden one day we realize it's time to move again. God is calling us back to BC to Richmond and now we have to pack up all that stuff. All the belongings we've accumulated over 12 years the cats the children everything. And all of a sudden moving is really hard. Deciding what to keep and want to throw away wrapping up everything important with enough padding so we won't get damaged on the road.

Trying to keep it all organized so you'll be able to find what you need when you get there. All of that is so much harder now then it was back then. The longer you stay in one place the more stuff you have, the harder it is to move. So I wonder how Abram did it? I mean Abram was 75 years old when God shows up in his life unannounced, uninvited, calls him to abandon everything familiar pack up all 75 year's worth of accumulated belongings, hitch a U-Haul to the back of his camel, hit the road for parts unknown.

That kind of risk, that kind of wild spur of the moment adventure, that's fine for teenagers and newlyweds. But not sober responsible senior citizens like. Abram can't move, he got too much stuff to move. He's got a full set of golf clubs with multiple different putters and wedges. He's got a model train set in his basement a collection of vintage pinball machines, he's got season tickets to the Haran Opera.

Abram can't move and remember the God who invites Abram along on this harebrained roller coaster ride, Abram has never met this God before. Nobody has. Every other time in the Bible, when God shows up and calls someone to follow on this crazy adventure, every other time God has a track record. A resume a history of other crazy adventures that all turned out well in the end. Every other time God says I am the God of your forefathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The God who led Israel out of slavery, parted the Red Sea, gave the covenant at Sinai, brought down the walls of Jericho, delivered David from Goliath, Daniel from the lion's den, every other tongue. God has this long list of achievements to point to as evidence that following this call isn't such a crazy idea.

But God can't do that here, because, none of that has happened yet. God isn't the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob yet. Right here right now God is just some random deity who muscles into Abrams nice settled life and tries to get him to move, tries to get him to set aside the comfortable world he knows to step out into the unknown.

So why does Abram say yes? Why does Abraham move? I mean maybe it's the promise of future. Blessings, blessings are always nice after all. But Abraham is already doing pretty well for himself in Haran, on blessings wise. He's got lots of stuff, doesn't need God's help to get more. Maybe it's the promise of becoming a great nation the head of a huge family of descendants of his very own. But Abraham doesn't seem all that convinced that God will actually keep that promise, since he brings his nephew and heir Lot along for the journey as a backup plan, so there's still someone that's ready to inherit Abrams fortune if God doesn't come through on the promise.

I don't know if those promises are enough on their own to convince Abraham to take this risk, to make this move. No I think the promise that makes the difference the promise that ultimately seals the deal and pushes Abram to say yes to God's call is the last promise God makes to Abram. Abram, you will be a blessing. In you all the families of the earth will be blessed. God promises Abram that he will be the means, through whom all the other human beings will receive God's blessings. He will be the vehicle God uses to deliver blessings to every other person on the planet. Not just at that moment but for all time.

God's promise isn't that Abraham will receive a gift, it's that he will become a gift. He will become God's gift to the world, to every family, every nation, every individual born from that moment onwards, they will all be better off because Abraham said yes to God. And that is a promise worth moving. The opportunity to so fundamentally change the course of history, that every single life from that moment onward bears your fingerprints. The opportunity to make a difference, not just for one life, but everybody. That's a promise worth moving. And it's a

promise God keeps. All those stories and miracles on gods resume all the other times God shows up and turn someone's life upside down, all of that is only possible because first Abram said yes.

The road that leads through the Red Sea to Sinai, to the Promised Land, the road that leads through a Bethlehem stable and a hill outside Jerusalem, and forever empty tomb that road starts here. It starts when Abram says yes. Abram opens the door for God to enter into our world in an entirely new way. And all humanity is blessed because of that miracle, because God makes and keeps that promise to Abram, to use Abraham to bless the whole world.

And that promise that God made to Abraham so many years ago, that's the promise God makes to the Church. The promise God makes to us God is calling the church to move to go out into the world in a new direction, a new way of being God's representatives and ambassadors to the world. And moving, moving is hard we get comfortable doing things a certain way we build up all this stuff around us we think we can't live without. All the things that used to be blessings can become burdens that weigh us down and keep us from going to the places God wants us to go.

And yet we have God's prompts, that when we are ready to move when we bring those burdens to Jesus Christ and leave them at his feet, our God promises to make us a blessing. So that through us, through the church, the whole world will be blessed. Following Jesus Christ isn't just about being blast it's about being a blessing. It isn't just about receiving a gift, it's about becoming a gift. Becoming God's gift to the world the means through which the love and grace of Jesus Christ can be communicated out to the world around. So every single human being on this planet can receive and experience the love of God we've encountered in Jesus Christ. As Christ disciples we are God's gift to the world. We are the way God is going to bless the world around us so that whatever we touch, God's fingerprints are left behind.

God's love and power are evident everywhere we go. As individual Christians as one little congregation we might not think we matter that much. We might struggle to think we could ever really make a difference. But if God can take one 75 year old in Bronze Age Haran, and use him to so fundamentally transform the world that 4000 years later his story is still being shared, his name is still remembered.

If God can do that with Abram, a who can say what God might do with us. Who knows where the road that starts here, might lead. Our God is calling us to start moving, to leave behind what is safe and familiar to take our first steps toward something new. To live in this world so everyone we meet can be blessed by God's love through all we say and do. We are God's gift to the world. Today may we move as the Holy Spirit moves us, may we bless the world as we have been blessed. May we set out on the road together. The road that leads to the Kingdom of heaven, so that every step we take the love of God will be made real, here and everywhere we go.

In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen!