

Blessed to Be a Blessing; Finding our Home

King of Glory Lutheran Church

God's Work Our Hands Weekend: Genesis 12:1-4a

Pastor Ruth Ann Loughry

September 12-13, 2020

God chose Abram to bless and gave him promises. One of those promises was that others would be blessed. We don't know why God chose Abram, but he did listen and follow the Lord. It's God's work through our hands! God chooses us in our baptismal calls to go and be a blessing! In blessing others, we find our true home.

Genesis 12:1-4a 1 Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. 2 I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." 4 So Abram went, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him.

This weekend is God's Work Our Hands! Now you may be chalkin', you may be walkin', but to be a blessin', is all our lesson! Now just do it!

Indeed we have homes that have been nominated to have art work drawn on their sidewalks. Hopefully those home owners will be happy. And with those nominations came donations to Habitat for Humanity; whose purpose it is to help people build a new home for themselves and their families.

Abram, in our lesson from Genesis suddenly found himself without a home! That's right. The Lord appears rather abruptly, out of nowhere and commands Abram to leave everything he knows: his country, his clan, his home. We don't know why the Lord chooses Abram. But we do know the promises the Lord makes to and through Abram are for the restoration of humanity and creation as it was originally intended to be before sin and death came into the world. (www.workingpreacher.com Rev. Dr Terrence Fretheim September 13, 2020) Abram has a mighty calling.

We don't know why the Lord calls Abram. He's an ordinary character really. A nomadic sheep herder who surely has struggles with some of the villages he passes through. Is there anything special about him? Who knows? But the Lord's specific choice of this one man is to make of him a new and great nation...to the way it was originally intended to be by Creator God.

One thing we know about Abram, was he listened to God. He followed. He was willing to sacrifice everything – even his son – for the Lord's purposes. God

promised to this man mighty things would happen to him and through him. Those promises form the theological narrative for the future of God's chosen people Israel and much of the interpretation of the Old Testament.

So God comes and promises to Abram, the following:

1. Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you.
2. I will make of you a great nation; you will have a new clan – a new family and descendants
3. I will bless you, and make your name great. He will have a new status and standing in the known world.

It was literally God's work through Abram's life...or on this day, we could say, God's Work Abram's Hands.

None of us have ever been given the status that Abram received from God. None of us were fathers or mothers, patriarchs or matriarchs of new nations of people. Perhaps looking around the table at Thanksgiving, it might feel like that, but don't humor yourself.

Yet...we have been given new status which led us away from all we knew...sin, darkness and death..and then we were led into a new land of promises and blessings.

We were baptized! In those baptismal waters, the Lord claims us, names us and says, "Let your light shine. You've been blessed by me, God. Now go be a blessing!"

Oh the blessings we have received from God! New life! Eternal life! Forgiveness of sin! Unmerited grace and love! A place at the table forever! Light, peace, joy! Mercies too grand to even understand. We don't have to understand them all, we are only called to stand under them. Stand under those promises.

It's what we do! It's our only right and proper response to God's immeasurable life-giving promises! We've been blessed – just like Abram – and so we now go to be a blessing to others! It's God's work, our hands. Praise be to God!

Now I want us to notice one last verse from Genesis 12:1-4a. The Lord says, "I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you."

In other words, God will not only bless Abram's family, the intention is that other families, many families, all of humanity will be blessed through Abram. Think about that. One ordinary guy who listened and followed. Now embodies the restoration of humanity and all of creation the way the Creator originally intended it before sin came into the world.

You and I are ordinary people. Right? We are! We're not. We're baptized. Which means we are set apart and made holy. We have a new family, a new clan! God's baptized Christians live together for the sake of the world. We are set apart, in God's promises, to be holy and to be light for the world.

When we celebrate God's Work Our Hands Weekend, we remember again our holy calling, just like the calling of Abram, to leave the comforts of our homes...to go to places God will show us...to serve at God's leading...so that others will be blessed.

God's intention is for other families, other clans, other peoples' even in other nations will be blessed through us and by us at God's leading. Ever since sin and death came into the world, God's intention has been to restore humanity and all of creation. To welcome all home again.

I would put forth this claim, because I've experienced it in my own life and I know you have as well. Whenever and wherever we get called forth, like Abram, to serve and be a blessing to others...we usually find home. God knows what our hearts are created for. They are created to be a blessing to others. There is no place like home except in blessing others.

It's God's work – always! Anything we do, anything we accomplish, is only because Almighty God is alive and working in us. Therefore it's God's Work! Through our hands.

Leave your house today. Chalk. Walk. Bake. Call. Buy. Go to the land God will show you. And there God will bless you and through you....bless others. It's God's Work and our Hands. Amen.