

'ABRAM: THE CALL' # 6**Read Genesis 12:1-9**

A familiar account of a pivotal moment in biblical history with universal implications. The beginning of God's covenantal relationship with Abraham and his subsequent family line. It is foundational to understanding God's plan to redeem humanity beginning with Abram, and eventually culminating through Jesus, who is understood as 'of Abraham's line.'

At the time, most likely, Abram and family, and all neighbours near and far, were worshipping other supposed deities; so a call from an unknown God must have been quite a shock. Does such a thing still happen today? Are you aware of any examples?

The impact of this call was completely life changing for Abram. He trusts absolutely everything this unknown God has told him and, following the instructions, upends his entire family leaving behind everything that is familiar, and departs for an unknown and unspecified destination. *Can you imagine how much criticism and hostility he must have faced from inside and outside of the family? Have you experienced something similar (perhaps not on such a grand scale)? Was God a factor in your story?*

How do you feel about this 'call'? Are there elements of envy that God made the call so clear and provided blessings and protection, or elements of relief that a call of such magnitude has not been made on you?

We should note the various elements of the call. There is God's blessing for Abram and family which grows into a nation, lasting fame, and protection. There is also a missional aspect; this family, this nation are to be a blessing such that all peoples on earth will be blessed through them. This missional aspect anticipates the role of Israel as a light to the nations and foreshadows the ultimate blessing to all nations through Jesus Christ. *Israel failed in their role 'to be the light' as their religious authorities preferred to keep God's blessings exclusively their own, keeping those not of the 'family' as outsiders. The challenge for us as we now 'carry the light' is, are we doing any better? If we asked the general public in our town 'do you think the church is free and open for you to join', what would you anticipate their answer to be?*

Read Hebrews 11:8-12

God was (and remains) faithful, as was Abram, who was also obedient. More of this next week. Abram's obedience to God is a composite of trust, faith and sovereignty. His calling instilled a certainty that God was the one true god. *In our multicultural society today, with political correctness given undue sway, media promotes that there are many gods, and many ways to God, we are encouraged to pick whichever suits us best. How do you respond when your certainty in 'Jesus is the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through me' is challenged?*

Prayer: *Holy and eternal God, give us such trust in your sure purpose, that we measure our lives not by what we have done or failed to do, but by our faithfulness to you. Amen* (New Zealand Prayer Book)