



Sermon – 08/21/2022
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Verses Covered This Week

Genesis 12:1 - 9

Hebrews 11:8

Acts 7:4 – 5

Romans 4:13

Galatians 3:16, 8 - 9

Let me invite you to grab your seats and take out your Bibles. We're going to be in Genesis 12 this morning. Genesis 12. If you're a guest in the room for the first time today, welcome home. Especially if you're one of our new college students new to A&M and Blinn. Aren't y'all glad our college students are back with us this morning? Yeah. I know you love them everywhere but in the traffic on the roads, right? But we are thrilled to have you all here and I just want you college students to know that right after our service today, if you'll head out these doors and across the parking lot to our Family Life Center, we have our college gathering each Sunday at 11:00 AM. We want to invite you to be there.

Now, today, as we prepare our hearts for this message, I want you to know in advance that following this message during the response song, I want to challenge you and invite you to come make your way to these steps to pray as we start this new semester as we begin a new chapter. There's no better place to begin it than on our knees before God and I want to invite you as a congregation to come and join me at the steps following this time together in God's word. And here's why. Because we are coming to a turning point in the of Genesis where last week in Genesis 11, we saw a call to ordinary faithfulness. And this week, in the life of Abraham, we see a call to an extraordinary future. That God focuses attention on this chosen one. It's like the book of Genesis shifts from a telescope that looks at the whole history of humanity and now it zeros in like a microscope on the story of this one man, Abraham and his family. This chosen line that God will use to transform the universe. But I want you to remember who God is calling here in Genesis 12. Because the last person we saw God call was Noah back in Genesis 6 and Genesis 6:9 tells us about how Noah was a righteous man. He walked with God. It would make sense for God to call someone like Noah. But with Abram everything is different, there's no illusion to his righteousness. In fact, he's raised in a pagan home, he's affected by the brokenness of sin with death in his family, a wife who can't have kids, he's living in a place he doesn't want to be. And what happens is God meets him in this moment. He puts a calling on

his life and it changes everything for him and for everyone of us. So, let's see what that looks like this morning. As we read this text in Genesis 12, beginning in verse 1. Here's what the Bible says.

¹Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred, you and your kindred and your father's house, the land that I will show you. ²And 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. ³I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed. ⁴So Abram went as the Lord had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was 75 years old when he departed from Haran. ⁵And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people that they had acquired in Haran, and they set out to go to the land of Canaan. When they came to the land of Canaan, ⁶Abram passed through the land of the place at Shechem, to the Oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. ⁷Then the Lord appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built there an altar to the Lord, who had appeared to him. ⁸From there he moved to the hill country on the east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. And there he built an altar to the Lord and called upon the name of the Lord. ⁹And Abram journeyed on still going toward the Negeb.

Let's pray together now.

Father, as we come to Your word, I pray You would open our hearts. As we see this calling on Abram, I pray that You would help each one of us to wrestle with the calling that You've placed on our lives. Lord that we might today die to ourselves and our plans and our vision for our future and instead live for the one that You've called us to. We pray this in Christ's name. Amen.

Well, I love this time of the year in the sports world. Because right now is the Little League World Series. I got any other Little League World Series fans out there? What I love about the Little League World Series is it strips away all the drama and all the controversy surrounding sports in general. And it's just innocent kids playing the game on the field. And each year, there's a new story line. So, last year, my wife Cami is from Abilene, and the team from right in her neighborhood was playing in the college, er Little League World Series. This year, a team that my kids used to play against when we were living in Nashville is playing there from Nolensville, Tennessee. But the story that's gripped America about this Little League World Series has nothing to do with what's happening on the field but what's taking place off the field. It's not about something going on with the team but one of the player on that team. And his name is Easton Oliverson. If you don't know his story, Easton is a part of the team from Utah. The first team from Utah to ever make the Little League World Series. And all the players stay in a dorm. And in those dorms are bunk beds. And one night, when Easton was on the top bunk, laying in his bed to sleep, something happened and he fell out of that bed and came crashing to the ground head first. He hit the ground so hard that he fractured his skull. And in moments, his life was then in jeopardy. He had to be life-flighted to the emergency room. And the doctors were uncertain that he would even be able to make it. They had to put him in a medically-induced coma in order to try to stabilize him from the swelling that was taking place in his brain. But God worked a miracle in Easton's life. While he was on the edge of death, God brought him

back. And he is recovering in significant ways. The swelling that was happening in his brain has decreased. But now, one of the side effects is he continues to improve as he's still experiencing swelling in his face. And the swelling in his face is happening in such a way that it is limiting the clarity of his vision. So, just think about the scenario what happens. A fall led to brokenness and part of the damage from that brokenness was effects on him physically that limited the clarity of his vision. And in same way Easton is being affected like that physically, Genesis is showing that each one of us is experiencing those kind of effects spiritually. That the fall from sin and the brokenness that comes through the curse that results from our disobedience to God is affecting us spiritually in a way where we lack clarity when it comes to God's vision for our life. And that's the incredible reality about Genesis 12 is it's a game changer for us. Because in the calling of Abram, what we're going to see is that God breaks through the brokenness of our lives to bring clarity for His vision for our future. Now, just think about what's happening in this text from Genesis 1 through 11. It spent 10 chapters covering thousands of years of human history. But now, beginning in verse 12 through the next 10 or 15 chapters, it's only going to cover 25 years. Why is it that the text slows down? Why is it that it zeros in? Well, the reason is because apart from Jesus, arguably the most important person in the Bible is this man, Abraham. And in the life of Abraham, if you were going to rank, what are some of the most significant moments in his life, this original calling to Abraham would be at the top. The most significant moment of the most significant man in the Bible is taking place right here in this text. And as we explore the calling of Abraham that God lays out in Genesis 12, what we're going to find is that it shows us three key dimensions to understanding God's vision for our own lives.

And here's the first one we find back in verse one. We see first that God calls us to a place to belong. He calls us to a place to belong. And as you're noticing that in verse 1, take a look at the screen. You'll see a circle with the name placed in there for each one of these three dimensions of God's vision for our life. You're going to see a visual representation for that. God calls us to a place to belong. The question we should be wrestling with is, where is my place? Where can I make an impact for the sake of the kingdom? You know, we live in a mobile society where change and movement is common. I mean, all you have to do is go anywhere near campus and you'll see it surrounded by U-Haul trucks and move-ins. It's like a full contact sport to get into Target to buy the things you need to decorate your dorm room or your apartment right now. I think there was probably more liquid that fell to the ground from the sweat of move in day yesterday than all the rain that's fallen in Bryan/College Station this summer. We're used to that sense of movement and transition. But in this culture, it was not like that at all. For someone to do what Abram did would seem shocking. Look back at the second half of verse 1. Look at the way he describes the nature of this transition. Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house. In other words, he's leaving everything: his family, his homeland, his place. He's leaving it all behind. It's a bit less like when a college student from Texas moves a few hours to set up shop here at A&M and Blinn and it's much more like an international student flying from another country to set down roots here for a season. As a matter of fact, last night, as part of our mission trip to campus, we got to host a dinner right here in the Family Life Center gym for international students. We were praying that God would bring 50. We had over 150 new international students show up last night. Isn't that incredible? Not only to feed them some traditional Indian food but also to begin relationships with them. To begin introducing them to Jesus and why we would serve people like that. And when I was hearing some of their stories, I could see a glimpse of what Abraham must have been

feeling in this moment. The family is thousands of miles away. You can't go home on the weekends for mom to do the laundry. You can't count on anything else. He is moving into this new space and that changes the way we see this. God is calling him to a new place to belong.

So, where does he call him to go? Look back at the end of verse 1. He's he calls him to the land that I will show you. In other words, it's an unknown place. And I want you to see on the screens the way the author of Hebrews talks about this in Hebrews chapter 11, in verse 8. You know, there are times when I'm at home with our four boys and one of them will come into the room and say, "Dad, I want you to close your eyes and follow me." It's like, how am I supposed to that? I'm blind but I'm trying to walk at the same time. I'm being led to a place that is unknown. And in order to do that, I have to trust the one who has called me there. And look at how Hebrews 11 speaks about this in much the same way. Hebrews 11:8 says:

⁸By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out not knowing where he was going.

So, for one, Hebrews highlights the inheritance, the glory of the place that he is called to belong to. But it also puts it side by side with the uncertainty of that place to where he is going. And the only way that we get to that place of glory, that place of inheritance, is by walking by faith and not by sight. Now, notice how the text goes on. Because what we find here is that we know that this journey begins right after this. So, look back beginning in verse 5 at what the text tells us about where he goes. I want you to see a few parts of the next portion of the passage. See, he takes his people, he leaves Haran. In verse 5, the second half of it, says,

and they set out to go to the land of Canaan. And when they came to the land of Canaan, verse six tells us, Abraham passed through the land, to the place of Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. At that time, the Canaanites were in the land.

Now, look down at verse 8. Now, it says,

⁸From there he moved to the hill country on the east of Bethel and pitched his tents, with Bethel on the west, and Ai on the east.

Now, verse 9,

⁹And Abraham journeyed on, still going toward the Negeb.

So, if you were to look at this geographically on a map, he starts from the north and begins to work his way to the south. And listen to some of the places he goes, Shechem, Bethel, Ai, the Negeb. All of these places show up in the story of Israel in the future, both playing significant roles. But the place, he comes to a stop at this time as the Negeb. And I want you to notice this connection the Bible creates for us. Because the same place where he stops is also the same place where Israel stops in the wilderness in this place called the Negeb. They are near to one another as they are waiting on God to bring them into the promise land. To bring them into the place that they are now called to belong. And Acts chapter 7 helps us to make sense of what God is doing in this moment. So you'll see on the screen a portion of Stephen's speech. Remember Stephen is one of the first, is the first martyr in the early church who loses his life for

his faith. And before he is stoned to death, he is recounting the story of Israel beginning with Abraham and this moment right here. And look at what Acts 7:4 has to tell us.

⁴Then he went out from the land (speaking about Abram). He went out from the land of the Chaldeans and lived in Haran. And after his father died, God removed him from there into this land in which you are now living. ⁵Yet, he gave him no inheritance in it, not even a foot's length, but promised to give it to him as a possession and to his offspring after him, though he had no child.

So, think about what Stephen is reminding us of here. That Abraham receives the promise of a place to belong but he never sees it fully come to fruition. And part of the reason for that is because even though later on, we see Isaac born and that offspring, that line of the seed begin, it never is fully completed in his lifetime. And what that means for us is that we need to wrestle with the nature of this place that Abraham was called to go. That's why another New Testament passage will help us make sense of it Romans 4:13 helps us to get a sense for this question. What is the place that Jesus will receive in fulfillment of this calling on Abraham? You see, the Bible is clear that he is the son of Abraham who fulfills the covenant commitments and receives the covenant promises including this promise of a place to belong to. And notice how Romans 4:13 describes it.

¹³For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith.

Now, look right there at the middle of that verse. What is Abraham and his offspring going to be the heir of? What's it say? The world. In other words, the promise of a place to belong, this promise of a new place is not limited to just a small parcel of land in the Middle East. Instead, the promise of this inheritance is for his offspring to receive the entire world. How does that happen. It's because in Jesus, God is keeping His promise not just to restore the land that he received as a promise there in Canaan, but to bring all of creation, all of it, under Christ's feet. To make all of it his inheritance. And how does he do that? Because in Christ, God is bringing us into a new creation. He is making all things new. That's why 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. It's not just that God is bringing us into a new creation, but He is bringing a new creation into us. That's why this first calling of Abraham of a place to belong helps us to make better sense of what God does in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Have you ever been homesick before? Maybe it was when you were off at camp as a young kid. Maybe it's here right now as you're settling into a new space, in a new semester in college. Maybe you're homesick because you've got a loved one who's in bad health and you can't be there to support them. And we know what that longing for home feels like. That personal desire and need to be back in this place where we feel like we belong. But what this passage is reminding us of is that homesickness that we feel is not just a personal issue but a spiritual one. That ever since sin caused us to be exiled from Eden, everyone of us has been seeking to find our way back home. But through Jesus, the son of Abraham, the son of God, He has made a way for us to come home. We're like prodigals who walk away from God in our sin. We seek pleasure and satisfaction in a far country. But through Jesus, His payment for our sins and the forgiveness that He offers us, it's as if God is saying to each one of us, come home, welcome home. You have a place to belong here in the people of God.

Which takes us to the second reality that this passage shows us about the calling of Abram. You'll notice now down in verse 2 that, second, God calls us to a people to invest in. Not just a place, but a people. So, notice again what verse 2 says,

²And I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.

So, look at the slide back on the screen. The first one we saw was a place. Now, it's a people. The first one is a geographical reality. This one is a genealogical reality that God is working to bring together a people for Himself. And the calling for each one of us is to invest in the people that God brings together. And what is the nature of this new people that Genesis 12 is speaking of here? You'll notice several things about it. First thing about the status of this promised people. Back at the beginning of verse 2, it says, I will make of you a great nation. And think about that word nation. We already saw it in the genealogy in Genesis 10. It spoke about how God was raising up nations that were being dispersed to the world. And this word nation is not just something for a family or a clan. It's not just a tribe, it's for a people group. It's for a nation. It's as if it's speaking of a kingdom. And when God is speaking here to Abraham and saying, I'm going to raise up a great nation for you. It's picturing that Abram is not just the father of a family, but he is the king of a kingdom. That's the status of this new people that God is creating. But look there in the middle of the verse. We also see the stature of this promised people. It says, I will bless you and make your name great. It's as if Abram was receiving the first NIL deal in all of human history. God is making a great name for him. And remember why this is significant in the text. Because back in the Tower of Babel, why did they build this tower? They built it to make a name for themselves. To elevate themselves in the eyes of the world. And God takes their pride and he crushes it as they seek to make a name for themselves. But now, in contrast to that, God calls this man Abram who does not deserve it and says, I will make a name for you. It is God's work through Abram that makes a name for Abram. Which shows us part of the way that God is working in the world. Think about not just the stature of this promised people but also the end of verse 2, the statute of this promised people where it gives us a sense of command or expectation for what they will do. The end of verse two says, so that you will be a blessing. That's what he calls us new people. Not to turn inward on themselves in pride but outward towards others in humility. To pour themselves out. To give themselves away in order to be a blessing for others. And who is it that's a part of this original new people as God calls them forward? You'll see if you look back in verse 5, the way it describes this rowdy band of people on the road with Abram. It says this,

⁵And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people that they had acquired in Haran, and they set out to go to the land of Canaan.

So, think about this. This household includes his wife, his nephew. It involves a number of other people. In fact, we'll learn in just a few chapters in Genesis 14 that there's at least over 300 men in this group, not including the women and the children. It is a growing number of people. There's just one problem. Even though there is a greater number of people, the presence of the promised one isn't there yet. That this one that God tells Abram who will come from his offspring, who will fulfill the covenant and receive its promise of a new people doesn't yet exist.

Which brings us to the escalation that we see in verse 7. If you look back here, you see the way that the promise of a people and a place come together. When it says in verse 7 at the beginning,

⁷Then the Lord appeared to Abram and said, “To your offspring, I will give this land.

So, think about what’s happening here. God appears to him. The presence of God brings with it the promise of God and that promise of God fuses these two dimensions together. A new place, a new people to your offspring, I will give this land. And that word offspring, it’s the same one that saw all the way back in Genesis 3:15 in the first promise of the coming of the Messiah in the Bible. That God would raise up an offspring from the seed of the woman who would crush the head of the serpent. And look at the way the same passage shows up in the New Testament. You’ll notice it here on the screens. Galatians chapter 3 in verse 16. Paul talks repeatedly about Abraham in this part of Galatians. And he gives us the answer to the question, how can Abraham’s offspring receive the promise if he doesn’t even have an offspring yet when he is the recipient of this promise? And look at what Galatians 3:16 tells us about who will ultimately receive this promise. It’s not one of Abram’s descendants like Isaac or Jacob or anyone from the nation of Israel per se. Instead, Galatians 3:16 tells us the answer when it says,

¹⁶Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. And it does not say, “And to offsprings,” referring to many, but referring to one, and “To your offspring,” get this, who is Christ?

Now, why does this matter? It’s because Paul is quoting from this exact passage in Genesis 12:7 and what he says is when he speaks about to your offspring, singular, they will receive this land. God had a particular person in mind as a recipient of that promise. And you know who it is? Galatian 3 tells us that it’s Jesus. That Jesus receives the promise of a people to invest in and a place to belong. Why? Because every point at which Israel failed to keep the covenant, He succeeds. He lives a perfect life and in your place, he dies the death you deserved in punishment for your sins. He is sacrificed on the cross. He is raised from the dead, defeating satan, sin, and death so that now He might bring together a people for us to invest in. Think about what that means for us as a church as we start this new fall semester together. This promise has everything to do with us as a church because Galatians 3 is showing us that the ones who received this promise of a place to invest in is not the physical descendants of Abraham but the spiritual descendants of Abraham. Those who are united by Jesus. And part of what that means for us is if we have been brought together in a family, then we should invest one another as a family. So, I came across a study here the last couple weeks that took a survey to determine what were the characteristics of people who regarded themselves as committed Christians. So, they asked some questions and created a bucket of people that they identified that met the characteristics of a committed Christian. And when they drilled down into that and asked further questions, they looked at Gen Z, they looked at millennials, they looked at Gen X. And you know what they found? Of all these people they discovered who are self-proclaimed committed Christians, do you know what percentage of them went to church more than once a month? Only one third of them who were self-proclaimed committed Christians. And if you’re of an older generation, you weren’t that much better, it was right about 50%. Now, think about that. Think about how it could be that the God of the universe has overlooked our sins. He’s brought us into the family through salvation and so often we find ourselves being pulled away from pursuing God and community in the church. For the college student, it’s one more weekend to sleep in. For the

older adults and families in the room. It might be that one last weekend at the lake house or getting out to the ranch to get the feeder set up for deer season. We can just watch it on the live stream. We justify these ways to not invest in the new people of God rather than going all in as this passage commands us.

Which brings us to the last reality we need to see beginning in verse 3. The third thing here is that God calls us to a purpose to live out. A purpose to live out. And you'll see that purpose in verse 3.

³I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

Do you notice back on the screen the third slide here? Another circle and right in the heart of that is this idea of purpose. Everyone of us is called to a purpose to live out. And the question we should be wrestling with is, what is God's purpose for my life? What's His vision? Where is He taking me? So, if a new place is a geographical dimension of God's calling, and a new people is a genealogical dimension of God's calling, this new purpose is a generational dimension of God's calling. How will we make an impact on the next generation? And we see the nature of this kingdom purpose that God is calling us to right here in verse 3. To begin with, God's purpose comes with both a blessing and a curse. You see that language there in verse 3 when it says, I will bless those who bless you and him who dishonors you I will curse? So, what does this mean by blessing? I mean, most of the time when we hear the word bless, we hear it in response to somebody sneezing and we say, bless you. Or maybe you watch somebody make a really dumb decision and in your heart or perhaps through your mouth, you say, bless your heart. Those are the context where we're commonly hearing this term. But the concept of blessing has an entirely different picture in the book of Genesis. In fact, the word bless shows up five times just right here in these three short verses. What does it mean? Well, it comes from the original language. The word *barak*. And this idea is one of abundant provision of God supplying your needs, to providing all that you require. And Abraham is set up with this contrast that those who bless you will be blessed and those who dishonor, you will be cursed. And this curse we've already seen all the way back from Genesis 3. God's judgment rather than provision. There is absence. Rather than meeting our needs, we sense weakness; we sense this lack of provision. And the reason for this taking place, the reason God says, I will bless who blesses you and curse those who dishonor, you is not because of the greatness of Abram. But because of the greatness of the God of Abram. That He has now selected and chosen Abram, brought him into His family as part of the chosen people. And how you respond to God's family is how you respond to God Himself. But there's not just this blessing and curse. There's also a commission here right in the middle of the text when God's purpose comes with a sending mission element to it. And it says, in you, all the families of the earth shall be blessed. God gives this promise of a global blessing to Abram. That he is called to be a blessing to all the nations. And what's true for him in the Old Testament carries forward in Jesus for us as the church as we are called to the great commission. This is the foundation in the Old Testament for it: to go forth being a blessing and a light that shines in the darkness in the world around us.

But you'll see beginning down in verse 7 that this commissioning also is connected to celebration. So, notice the way it says it again in verse 7,

⁷Then the Lord appeared to Abram and said, “To your offspring, I will give this land,” and look what he does. So, he built there an altar to the Lord who had appeared to him.

And now look at the end of verse 8.

⁸And there he built an altar to the Lord and called upon the name of the Lord.

So, what happens here when God appears to Abram? Well, what we see here that the experience of the presence of God empowers the expression of the praise of God. When God comes down, Abram’s praise goes up. You can’t help but celebrate when God is present in your midst. He’s working in your midst. That’s exactly what we find here. And as we wrestle with this reality, the first time that an altar is built to God, the first time a structure is built in worship to Him foreshadowing the tabernacle, and then the temple and then the one who would be the fulfillment of that temple in Jesus Christ. What’s taking place there is a celebration at the invitation to live on mission for God. And you’ll see the way that that shows up in one other passage this morning in Galatians chapter 3. This passage, this passage ties the whole package together here. Where Paul speaks about this exact moment in Genesis 12:3 when He, God calls Abraham to a promise and look how he talks about it. Verse 8 of Galatians 3 says,

⁸And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preach the Gospel beforehand to Abraham saying, “In you shall the nations be blessed.” ⁹So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

So, do you see what Paul is saying here? I mean, look at the beginning, the middle of verse 8. It speaks about the nature of what happens in Genesis 12:3 like this. That God preached the Gospel beforehand to Abraham. In other words, when you read this passage in Genesis that appeared thousands of years before the coming of Jesus, Paul is telling you that is a Gospel sermon. That He is foreshadowing the good news of what He is going to do for us in Jesus Christ. And what is that good news? The good news is that by God’s own Son, when He sends Him down, He changes our lives in such a way that we flee from the sin that leads us astray. We run from our own purpose for our life and instead begin to pursue the vision and the purpose that God has called us to. You see, this reframing of Genesis 12 by Paul in Galatians 3 has everything to do with the purpose of God that He’s called us to as a church. It’s why for example, this week our college ministry is leading a mission trip to campus. It’s the reason we had 150 international students here last night. It’s the reason why next week after life groups we’re going to have a missions informational lunch in the gym so that you can figure out how to take a next step in giving your life to the mission of God right here at Central.

I’ve got one more slide I want you to see on the screen. It brings all three of these circles together in one image that will bring you face to face with the question this morning. What is God’s vision for my life? That’s what Abraham was wrestling with when God was speaking to him. And you’ll notice on this image that you see these three dimensions of the calling, of place, of people, and of purpose. And if you want to understand God’s call on Abram, you need to recognize that right there in the bull’s eye, in the center of those three circles is where God is calling him. And that same reality is true for you and me. That as we hear this word, as we wrestle with this text, God is putting in front of us an invitation, a calling, a vision for our life rooted in these three realities. A place where we’re wrestling with the question, where is the

place I can make the biggest impact? A people where we're wrestling with the question, who are the people upon which I can have the biggest impact? And a purpose where we're wrestling with, how can I make the biggest impact as I give my life away. And this passage in Genesis 12 means a lot to me personally. God used this passage right here to change the trajectory of my life right before I was a junior at Texas A&M. Some of you have heard me share this story before. I was a counselor at Impact Camp, a camp for incoming freshmen. And when the pastor, the preacher there was speaking that night on from Genesis 12 on the question, what is God's vision for your life? As I was listening to the sermon, it was as if I had a moment where I had a vision in my mind's eye. And what I saw was a common experience for me. As my dad climbed the corporate ladder, he would often work on the weekends and he would sit at a desk in his home office with a stack of papers that seemed as if it was piled this high hunched over. There could be chaos from four kids all around him but he was locked in on his work. And as he was preaching, I could see that same image that I'd seen hundreds of times as a child right there in my mind's eye. And as I'm looking at my dad, the question the Spirit of God prompts me with is the question, is this what you want for the rest of your life? In other words, do you want to spend your life in order to move the balance sheet a couple zeros on a on a company that will never last. And up until that point, the answer to that question have been "yes". You know I want to be a faithful Christian businessman. You know I want to follow in the footsteps of someone as admirable as my dad. But in that moment, rather than responding to the Spirit with the yes I expected. I responded with a no. And right then and there God broke my heart. He broke my desires and changed the trajectory of my life as he called me into Christian ministry. And the reason I'm standing before you today right here is because of the work that God did in my life through this passage in Genesis 12. And I want to put that same question in front of you this morning that that preacher nearly 20 years ago put in front of me. What is God's vision for your life? And will you follow it faithfully? Because what it took for me is a willingness to die to my vision for my life. So that I might live in an embrace of God's vision for my life. And that's exactly what Genesis 12 is calling each of us to this morning.

So, let's pray about that as we close our time together today. And before I lift a prayer to the Lord this morning, I just want to ask you in the quietness of your own heart today to just ask God the question, will you show me Your vision for my life? Take a moment to ask Him that and wait quietly to hear from Him now. As you continue to wrestle with that question, I want to take a moment to pray over each one of us in this moment.

Father, we come to You and we come to You willing to lay it all down. You sent Your Son to die in our place so that we might live for You. And so often, we find ourselves living for ourselves and not for You. And I pray in this moment as we wrestle with the calling of Abram that You might help us to wrestle with Your calling in our life. Lord, if there are men or women that are here this morning that are seeking their own way rather than Your way, that this would be the moment they turn away from that and instead seek after You. And we ask these things in Jesus' powerful name. Amen.