

Why Will You Go?

The purpose of this message is to show God's faithfulness to Abram.

INTRO

Your about to leave home, your parent's guardianship, & your childhood priorities. You are leaving the nest. The "when" is imminent. But I'd like to ask you three challenging questions.

Why will you go? **Where** will you go? **How** will you go?

HOOK

How many:

- Were forced to do classes online?
- Had to cancel a get-together with people that was supposed to be special?
- Actually had COVID? Were quarantined because of someone else?
- Got in an argument with a parent while you were stuck at home?
- Had to turn around in a parking lot because you forgot your mask in the car?
- Went to bed feeling like you'd wasted a day?
- Lost someone to COVID?

You are no strangers to flux, but COVID or not, change and uncertainty will dominate your life over this next season. How you live, where you live, who your life companion will be, and many other life-altering and life-settling decisions will begin their trajectories over the next 5-10 years.

For those who serve Jesus, your whole life is used by God to shape you and make you holy to reflect Jesus. God is forming you for Himself (sanctification). He's "perfectifying" you. But it's more than just making you good.

C.S. Lewis – Mere Christianity

"Imagine yourself as a living house. God comes in to rebuild that house. At first, perhaps, you can understand what He is doing. He is getting the drains right and stopping the leaks in the roof and so on; you knew that those jobs needed doing and so you are not surprised. But presently He starts knocking the house about in a way that hurts abominably and does not seem to make any sense. What on earth is He up to? The explanation is that He is building quite a different house from the one you thought of - throwing out a new wing here, putting on an extra floor there, running up towers, making courtyards. **You thought you were being made into a decent little cottage: but He is building a palace. He intends to come and live in it Himself."**

- And God, Who is in you, will be doing this the rest of your life.
- And **God is faithful in His work.**

BOOK

Philippians 3:12-14 - *Not that I have already obtained this (arrived at perfection) or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because **Christ Jesus has made me His own.** 13 Brothers, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and straining forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the **goal** for the prize of the **upward call** of God in Christ Jesus.*

- **What is the goal he's talking about? What is he pressing toward?**
- Notice where Paul's power, motivation, strength come from. We get caught up when we read "I'm doing this/that" but he's not claiming the ability to do any of it. He opens with his identity of belonging to Jesus and his empowerment being the call of God.
- **Romans 8:28** – *...all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose.*
 - There is no power or strength in us. **Who is sovereign to work out things according to His purpose?** The One who calls.
 - Let's look at a man who was called and **see the faithfulness of God.**

LOOK

Two men's trajectories and outcomes.

Backstory: Abram lived in Ur close to what would later become Babylon. He had two younger brothers and they lived in a close large family community with their father (Terah) overseeing the family. Abram's youngest brother was married and had a son. His brother died unexpectedly leaving the son (Lot) who was taken in and cared for by Abram's father. Terah died leaving Abram to care for Lot, his nephew, the son of his deceased brother. But his story is about to change and future about to flux. Look who initiates it.

Genesis 12:1-4 - *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 And 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 him who dishonors 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.

- Everything begins with GOD. *“Now the LORD said...”*
- Abram was leaving a country he knew, its customs, and his family to voluntarily plunge into complete uncertainty based on trusting God. It was a step of faith away from everything stable. **Would God be faithful?**
- **Why was he going?** Because God called him.
- **Where was he going?** Didn't know.
- **How did he go?** Obedience/Faithfulness
- First speeches are always significant. Notice Abram's response to God's instruction. **None.** Simple, profound obedience.
- **Who was the master of Abram's life?**

Genesis 12:6-8 - *When they came to the land of Canaan, 6 Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. 7 Then 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. 8 From 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. 9 And Abram journeyed on, still going toward the Negev.*

- Note: Oak (Terebinth) trees represented fertility shrines to pagan idols. “El” was the generic word for any god. In this case, a pagan deity of the area. In fact, their city was named for it. “Beth-el” = house of god.
- **Why does he do this?** He's giving God glory in a public place. Wherever he goes in the pagan world, he's giving glory to God.

Abram makes some crazy mistakes. That's OK. The story isn't about Abram's faithfulness, it's about God's faithfulness. Now Lot steps onto the stage of the story. Abram and Lot are both wealthy (lots of cattle/flocks) and their herdsmen are arguing over territory. Abram gives Lot a magnanimous offer.

Genesis 13:10-13 - *And Lot lifted up his eyes and saw that the Jordan Valley was well watered everywhere like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, in the direction of Zoar. (This was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.) 11 So Lot chose for himself all the Jordan Valley, and Lot journeyed east. Thus they*

separated from each other. 12 Abram settled in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled among the cities of the valley and moved his tent as far as Sodom. 13 Now the men of Sodom were wicked, great sinners against the Lord.

- **Where was Lot going?** Toward prosperity.
- **What was his motive for departing? Why did he go?** His own benefit.
- Lot set up his tent outside of the cities of the area.

Genesis 13:14-15 – *The LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, “Lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward, 15 for all the land that you see I will give to you and to your offspring forever.*

- God promises him all the land including what Lot took for himself.
- Abram travels to a new city, **and what do you think is the first thing he does when he stops?**

Genesis 13:18 - *So Abram moved his tent and came and settled by the oaks of Mamre, which are at Hebron, and there he built an altar to the LORD.*

We’ll pick up when he encountered two angels on a journey. As they were passing by, Abraham recognized them for who they were and insisted on giving them a meal. He learned that God had come to purge wickedness by destroying two cities. One of the cities was Sodom, outside which Lot had settled his family – living in tents. Abraham pleaded with God to spare the city if there were righteous people living there. God agreed, and the narrative leaves the story of Abraham for a little while. He returns home, and we follow the events around the angels. They travel to this city known for its evil and marked by God for destruction. Who do they find hanging out at the gate and living there? Yes, Lot.

You might know the story of how God pressed the “smite button” on Sodom and Gomorrah, and if you’ve read your bible lately, you’ll know what happened to Lot in the cave he was hiding in from the destruction. After these events, Lot disappears from the story other than references to his descendants, and we again follow Abraham and God’s faithfulness to him (even despite his mistakes) to fulfill His promises.

For some reason, God **called** Abraham and “made him His own” *with* all his mistakes and character flaws. He could have picked Lot with his batch of issues, but He chose Abraham. God equipped and worked in him towards being a “palace... He could live in, Himself.

Why will you go? **Where** will you go? **How** will you go?

Lot:

Why did he go? Because someone else was going.

Where did he go? The place someone else was going until it benefited him to leave.

How did he go? Attached to the world around him and only self-interested.

Abraham:

Why did he go? Because God called him.

Where did he go? Wherever God led him.

How did he go?

1. With faith **IN** who he served.
2. With obedience **TO** who he served.
3. With outward declaration **ABOUT** who he served.

If you are a born-again follower of Jesus, rest in the joy that you have been **called**, equipped, and have a purpose higher than yours - more important than yours - on your life.

- You are NOT Lot. Your life is no longer your own.

Most faiths... most people offer inspirational quotes with the purpose of motivating others to live their “best lives now.”

- “Whatever you’re living for, whatever you want to do, go for it with all your heart. Don’t give up on your dreams. You can do anything if you just believe in yourself. Just do it!”
 - Entirely, wholly, completely self-saturated = “**You are your purpose.**”
 - Your career, your schooling, your spouse, # of children, what you do with your time, who your friends are, your hobbies, your money... are for your benefit.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer – “When Christ calls a man, He bids him ‘Come and die.’”

- Have you seen otherwise in the teachings and life of Jesus or the examples of His followers?

Matthew 16:24-26 - *Then Jesus told his disciples, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. 25 For*

those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. 26 For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their soul? Or what will they give in return for their soul?

Why will you go? Where will you go? How will you go?

Just like Abraham, will you depart to the next season of your life with quiet **faith IN** who you serve? With resolute **obedience TO** who you serve? With clear **declaration ABOUT** who you serve?

Maybe your answer is “uh, to be honest, not really.” Maybe I’ve stressed you out in suggesting you’ve got to live up to unreachable expectations. But I won’t back down because I’m not quoting myself. Jesus laid out the highest expectations.

- **Matthew 5:48** – “...*be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*”

BUT, if you don’t think you’re equipped, you’re in good company. None of Abraham’s admirable qualities were because he, himself, was full of remarkable virtue, but because God called him and was faithful to lead him and empower him. And God’s doing the same for all who make Him their Master.

God is equipping you to follow Him.

2 Peter 1:3-4 - *His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who **called** us to His own glory and excellence, 4 by which He has granted to us His precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.*

Bob Goff, Love Does – Ch. 9: Just Say Yes

- Lawyer, Mission work with orphans, Pranks Doug, receives alleged prank call from Doug, call from “Uganda ambassador”, flies to NY, it’s real, “yes,” now he’s the Ugandan ambassador to the US.

Why will you go? Where will you go? How will you go?

“Go and get it all right.” VS “Just Say Yes”

RECAP

- Through the Holy Spirit and your circumstances, God is working in you to be perfect for Himself.
- The work He's doing will be greater than you imagine or are comfortable with.
- Abraham left because He was called by God.
- He went where God was calling him.
- He went in faith, obedience, and outward clarity of Who He served.
- We cannot live up to God's expectations.
- All we can do is say "yes." God meets His own expectations.

FURTHER INQUIRY

Not every Christian avoids suffering, even (especially) when being faithful to God. Was God faithful when Stephen was stoned? (Acts 6 & 7)

TOOK

Challenge 1: What are your priorities?

Challenge 2: Pick a church.

Challenge 3: Serve at church.

Soli DEO Gloria