



READ: Genesis 12:1-7; Hebrews 11:8-10 (ESV)

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. 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. 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." So Abram went, as the LORD had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. And 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, Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. 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. (Genesis 12:1-7)

By 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. By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God. (Hebrews 11:8-10)

ENTER THE STORY:

Out of the blue, and without warning, God turns his attention to a man named Abram (soon to be Abraham), a man living in Ur...a city located near Babylon. Babylon was known for the people who tried to build a tower that reached the heavens. God scattered the people and confused their languages as a result. Abram and his family did not move far, however. Where they settled was probably very civilized with access to food and water, well-established homes, and most of all...safety. But God calls Abram to leave all of it behind and set out to a new place that he will show him along the way. No map, no compass, and no GPS to guide him.

If God called you to drop everything and leave the safety of your home, would you be willing to obey?

History is full of stories of people who left something behind in order to seek a better life, but usually these people were leaving a bad situation hoping to find something better. Abram's situation could have been quite the opposite. He seemed to be doing just fine, but when God called...he walked away, and even though he would be a stranger in a strange land and would not see all the fulfillment of God's promises in his lifetime, he will trust God to be true to his word and give him something better. And even though he and his wife Sarai were old and withered and didn't even have one child yet, they believed!

When God calls you to leave something, "good," behind do you believe he has something better for you?

God starts something new when he calls Abram out of Ur. No longer will he only work with one person, he will bind himself to a family, and out of that family will come a nation of people that will be his chosen people. And out of one of the families within that nation, God will send His Son to fulfill this huge promise to Abram...that through one of Abram's descendants, the whole world will be blessed. Jesus' willingness to leave the comfort of heaven and enter into our world means that *the blessing extends to us*. From him, we have received grace upon grace.

We will all gather and celebrate that blessing on Christmas morning!

PRAY: *Jesus, it is so easy to get comfortable in our luxurious lives that we become dull to your calling. Help us not forget that you have called all of your followers to be like strangers in a strange land. To be in the world, but not of it. Help us always look forward to the "city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God." Amen.*