



**READ:** Genesis 12:1-7 (NIV)

*The LORD had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."*

*So Abram went, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Harran. He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated and the people they had acquired in Harran, and they set out for the land of Canaan, and they arrived there. Abram traveled through the land as far as the site of the great tree of Moreh at Shechem. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. The LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land."*

*So he built an altar there to the LORD, who had appeared to him.*

**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. As a punishment for their pride, God scattered the people and confused their languages, but Abram and his family stayed close by. The place they were living was probably very civilized, with access to food and water, well-established homes and most of all, safety, and God called Abram to leave all of it behind and set out to a new place that he would 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 do it?**

History is full of stories of people who have 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. 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 trusted 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!

**Would you believe?**

God starts something new when he calls Abram out of Ur. God's blessings will allow Abram to create a family, and out of that family will come a nation of people that will be God's chosen people. Out of *ONE* of the families within that nation, God will send his own Son to fulfill this huge promise to Abram that the whole world will be blessed through one of his descendants. 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. Lord, 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.*