

Abram & Sarai

Genesis 12:1-9, Matthew 8:5-11

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Last week, we left the story of Genesis in a difficult place. Again and again, humanity had chosen its own way instead of God's way. Adam and Eve reached for what was forbidden. Cain murdered his brother. Violence filled the earth before the flood. After the flood, humanity gathered at Babel to build a tower and make a name for themselves. The pattern was becoming painfully familiar: human rebellion, human pride, and human failure.

As we reach Genesis 12, we are left asking an important question: What will God do now? Will God finally give up on humanity? Will He abandon the project altogether?

God's answer is to call an ordinary man named Abram. "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you." With that call comes a remarkable promise: "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."

Notice how God's promise directly answers the failures we have just witnessed. At Babel, humanity tried to make a name for itself. Now God says to Abram, "I will make your name great." In Cain, Lamech, Noah's age people tried to protect themselves with horrific results. Now God says to Abram "I will curse those who curse you" - I will be your protection. In Eden, humanity lost the blessing of life lived in harmony with God. God says to Abram, "I will bless you." God is meeting humanities failure with abundance.

God's solution to the world's brokenness does not bypass humanity. Instead, He chooses to work through human beings rather than around them. The Bible Project refers to this as "The Abraham Experiment." What happens if one family learns to trust God's abundance rather than their own fear? What happens if they become a channel of blessing rather than a people who grasp, hoard, and protect themselves?

God had given Adam and Eve an entire garden overflowing with provision, yet the serpent directed their attention to the one thing they could not have. The strategy of the serpent was to create a mindset of scarcity: there is not enough, God is holding out on you, you must take what God has not given.

Of course, we know there is real scarcity in our world. There are places where there is not enough food, not enough housing, not enough security, and not enough peace. Yet Genesis repeatedly points us toward a difficult truth: much of the scarcity we experience is connected to human sin, human hoarding, and human chaos. God is at work in and through his people to restore creation's design for blessing.

And that blessing is not meant to stop with Abram. God immediately expands the horizon: "All peoples on earth will be blessed through you." This is God's answer to a broken world. He chooses one family so that eventually all families might be blessed.

In this sense, Abraham becomes a unique hinge in salvation history. Everything before him in Genesis has focused on the universal problem of human failure and sin. Everything after him begins to reveal God's plan of redemption. The story moves from humanity's repeated failure to God's covenant faithfulness.

This is why throughout Scripture God is so often called "the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." That title appears again and again because these are the people through whom God begins His great rescue mission. Whenever Israel hears that name, they are reminded of a God who makes promises and keeps them.

They are also reminded of a God who chooses ordinary people to be bearers of His blessing in the world. Abram and Sarai are not superheroes of faith. They are deeply human. In fact, every generation of this family repeats the same pattern we have already seen throughout Genesis. There is faith, but there is also fear. There is trust, but there is also failure.

No sooner has Abram answered God's call than he begins to struggle to trust God's promise. Twice he denies that Sarai is his wife because he fears for his own safety. Rather than protecting her, he protects himself. Later, when God's promise of a child seems delayed, Abram and Sarai take matters into their own hands and attempt to produce the promised heir through Hagar, Sarai's slave. The consequences are painful. Hagar is mistreated and abused. Once again, human attempts to seize God's promises through human effort create suffering rather than blessing.

And yet what is astonishing throughout Abraham's story is that every time human failure appears, God's faithfulness appears alongside it. God's commitment proves greater than Abraham's weakness.

Abraham is also given the sign of circumcision as a physical reminder that fruitfulness is God's gift. The descendants who will one day number the stars and the grains of sand will not come through human striving. The promise will not come through manipulation, self-sufficiency, or human strength.

It is in that covenant renewal that Abram and Sarai receive new names: Abraham and Sarah. When we later learn God's covenant name, Yahweh, we discover that it is formed around the Hebrew breath sounds. Scholars have noted how those same breath letters appear in the names Abraham and Sarah. It is as though God places His own breath into their identity. Breath, wind, spirit.

The choir has been preparing an anthem written by one of its members, Jason. He shared its background with the choir when they began practicing.

I woke up in the middle of the night, completely overwhelmed by the state of the world; feeling the weight of global anxiety, political division, and a general lack of decency. I wanted to help fix things, but I realized that focusing on the problem was only adding to my own mental exhaustion. In that moment of prayer, I recognized it was within my control to change my focus to strengthening my own faith and encouraging others. I felt a distinct prompting from God to start this by writing a song about a faith awakening I had a few years ago.

"In the Mystery" is a song about that shift from chaos to clarity, from disconnect to belonging. It's a prayer for 'honest eyes' to see past the noise and division in a world that seems to be falling apart. It is a reminder for me to quiet my space, so that I can once again feel God is near. Ultimately, I want it to express that faith isn't just ink on a page; it's the 'living song' of a changed life. It's what happens when we let God mend our fractured parts until our very existence becomes a sacred sign of His love.

The opening line: In the breath, in the flow, where the hidden seeds of mercy grow. In the mystery. You are here.

Ultimately, Abraham's story points forward to Jesus. The promises given to Abraham find their fulfillment in Christ. The land points toward God's renewed creation. The descendants become a worldwide family of faith. The blessing promised to the nations reaches its climax in the gospel.

When Jesus announces the Kingdom of God, He is proclaiming the arrival of everything Abraham's story pointed toward. The Kingdom is Eden restored. The Kingdom is blessing flowing outward. The Kingdom is

abundance overcoming scarcity. Through Jesus, the blessing promised to Abraham extends to the ends of the earth. What began with one elderly couple becomes a family that spans every tribe, language, and nation.

So when we read Genesis 12, we are not simply reading the story of one man leaving home. We are witnessing the moment when God begins His great work of redemption. A world trapped in cycles of failure encounters a God who refuses to give up. A family marked by weakness becomes the instrument of blessing. A promise given to Abraham becomes a promise for all peoples.

And the God who called Abraham still calls people today—not to live from fear and scarcity, but to trust His abundance, receive His blessing, and become a blessing to others. For the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is still the God who brings life out of failure, hope out of despair, and blessing out of what seems impossible. That has always been His story. And by His grace, it becomes ours as well.