



February 2, 2022

A Note from Pastor April

Dear Friends,

This week, our journey through the Great Story makes a dramatic turn.

What began as a story about the broad scope of humanity and our relationship with God now turns to focus on a particular family and their faithful response to God. We move from the first covenant, a promise made by God to all of humanity, to the second covenant, a promise made specifically to Abram and his wife Sarai, who will later become Abraham and Sarah, in Genesis 12.



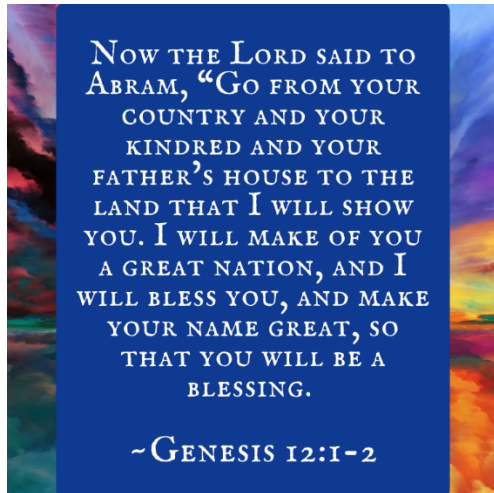
It's as if the camera lens has just zoomed in from a 10,000 foot view to the Google Street view. **We have gone from the universal to the particular.**

Of course.

Key to the first part of our narrative was this notion that this was a God of relationships. **Foundational to the nature of relationships is that they exist not in the abstract but in the concrete.** This God desires to be in relationship with us in ways that reveal a way to live and love to the fullest. Love and partnership and reconciliation happen in the context of real people, living out that love in very particular ways with one another and with God.

Now we get to see the nature of this relationship begin to unfold.

The first thing God does is interesting. God calls Abram to leave everything that is comfortable and familiar and secure, to go out into the wilderness toward a new land and a new promise. (Sounds a little like the start of Jesus's ministry, but we get ahead of ourselves.)



Abram was a well-to-do patriarch living in a choice region by the river with EVERYTHING he needed to provide for his family and to live with comfort. He had wealth, power, and security.

And yet, God speaks to Abram.

There is more.

God invites Abram on a journey. A journey with an invitation: to build a new kind of people whose sole purpose would not simply be to acquire security and power and wealth. **These people would have a larger purpose...**

To be a blessing to the whole world.

The invitation requires an immense amount of trust, but also an immense amount of willingness to let go of the things we so often cling to...

Routines, predictability, security, resources, wealth, and even power.

If we are honest, had we been Abram's friends and neighbors... we might have advised him against this decision.

Nearly two years into a season of pandemic, I can't help but wonder whether God is reaching out to us yet again. Shaking us from our comfort and calling us to a place of trust and willingness.

As we watch this relationship with Abraham and Sarah and their family unfold, I hope we will also be thinking about the ways that this same God shows up in particular ways in our own lives.

Are there places where God is inviting you to know that THERE IS MORE?

Are there places where we are being invited to step out into the new and release our hold on what is comfortable?

Who will benefit and be blessed by our willingness to do so?

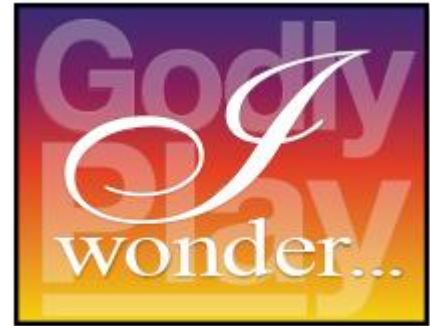
Where are we holding back?

None of these are easy questions with easy answers. Your story is unique to you.

But in the particular we find some of the universal truths of a God who has intentions for us that are bigger and wider than the ones we might have chosen for ourselves.

God has hopes and dreams for humanity that may ask for some willingness on our part to be uncomfortable and brave.

I hope you will be pondering some of these things this Sunday as we hear this story told to us by our Director of Children's Ministry, Lindsay Robinson. Using the gifts of Godly Play storytelling, Lindsay will invite us into the Desert Box to wonder and imagine what life might have been like as Abram received this call and said yes.



I pray that our hearts and minds will be open to consider how this particular story has something very important to say to each of us.

Blessings!

Pastor April



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God Loves You  No Matter What

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