



Growth Group Questions
August 17, 2025
“That’s Not the Way I Planned It”

CONTEXT

This week we begin a new sermon series entitled “Called.” For the next seven weeks we will talk about different call stories that we see in the Old and New Testament. God wants to call us to a life that is far more exciting and compelling than we can possibly imagine. To remind us we are made for something more than anything the world can offer.

Genesis 12:1-9 can be divided into two parts. Verses 1-3 talk about the call of Abraham and verses 4-9 describe the obedience of Abraham. Abraham is told to leave – literally “get out.” He must walk away from his family, his people, and his country and go to a new place where God is calling him.

The promises offered to him are incredible, but we must remember that he and his wife Sarah were unable to have children so the idea of becoming a great nation would have seemed impossible and the place he was being called to was already occupied by the Canaanites. This was a call that required faith.

Verse 3 expands the scope of God’s purposes: those who bless Abraham will be blessed and those who curse him will be cursed, and ultimately all nations will be blessed through him. Abraham and his descendants are to be a blessing to others and as they bless others and care for others God will bless them. God’s redemptive plan for the world begins with the faith and obedience of Abraham and Sarah.

As Abraham makes his way through Shechem, Bethel, Ai, and toward the Negev he builds altars to God and worships the God who has called him out to a new place. These sites will be seen again in the Old Testament and are significant in Israel’s story as the people called by God. They link Abraham’s first steps of faith to the unfolding covenant that God had begun with him and would carry on in the nation of Israel.

SCRIPTURE

Genesis 11:27-31

²⁷ This is the account of Terah's family line. Terah became the father of Abram, Nahor and Haran. And Haran became the father of Lot. ²⁸ While his father Terah was still alive, Haran died in Ur of the Chaldeans, in the land of his birth. ²⁹ Abram and Nahor both married. The name of Abram's wife was Sarai, and the name of Nahor's wife was Milkah; she was the daughter of Haran, the father of both Milkah and Iskah. ³⁰ Now Sarai was childless because she was not able to conceive. ³¹ Terah took his son Abram, his grandson Lot son of Haran, and his daughter-in-law Sarai, the wife of his son Abram, and together they set out from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to Canaan. But when they came to Harran, they settled there.

Genesis 12:1-9

¹ The LORD had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. ² "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. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

⁴ 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. ⁵ 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. ⁶ 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. ⁷ The LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring^[s] I will give this land." So he built an altar there to the LORD, who had appeared to him. ⁸ From there he went on toward the hills east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. There he built an altar to the LORD and called on the name of the LORD. ⁹ Then Abram set out and continued toward the Negev.

Isaiah 51:1-2

¹ "Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness and who seek the LORD: Look to the rock from which you were cut and to the quarry from which you were hewn; ² look to Abraham, your father, and to Sarah, who gave you birth. When I called him he was only one man, and I blessed him and made him many.

Hebrews 11:8

⁸ By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going.

Acts 7:1-5

¹ Then the high priest asked Stephen, "Are these charges true?" ² To this he replied: "Brothers and fathers, listen to me! The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham while he was still in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Harran. ³ 'Leave your country and your people,' God said, 'and go to the land I will show you.' ⁴ "So he left the land of the Chaldeans and settled in Harran. After the death of his father, God sent him to this land where you are now living. ⁵ He gave him no inheritance here, not even enough ground to set his foot on. But God promised him that he and his descendants after him would possess the land, even though at that time Abraham had no child.

QUESTIONS

1. In Genesis 12:1-9 and again in Hebrews 11:8, we are told that God called Abram to leave his current land without telling him where he would be going. Why do you think God didn't tell Abram up front where he wanted him to go?
2. What can we learn from Abram's response to God's call?
3. What does it mean to be called by God?
4. How does the call of God change our lives?
5. After reading the Scripture passages this week and hearing Pastor Paul's sermon, what do you see as the relationship between faith and obedience?
6. In Hebrews 11:8 we are told that "by faith" Abram "went even though he didn't know where he was going." How can we trust God when we don't know His plan or understand exactly what will result from our obedience to Him?
7. What Bible verses help you to understand some of the ways in which God calls on each of us?
8. Do you see God's calling on your life as an event or as a lifelong journey? Why?

PASTOR PAUL'S SERMON QUESTIONS:

1. Has God been calling you to do something outside your comfort zone? How have you been responding?
2. Is there something in your life you are trusting or holding onto that you need to let go of?