

Date: June 7, 2026 (Pentecost 2)

1. Texts: Genesis 12:1-9; Ps. 33:1-12; Romans 4:13-25; Matthew 9:9-13, 18-26.
2. Subject: discipleship.
3. Topic: called as a community to go forth.
4. Aim: encourage, challenge.
5. Proposition: "God calls communities to go forth from the familiar into the uncertain."

GOD CALLS COMMUNITIES, NOT JUST INDIVIDUALS

The reading from Genesis about Abram should create some anxiety for all of us. Oh, sure, there are promises of blessings and of a future filled with hope and meaning. But those promises only follow once Abram obeys God's call. God summons Abram and that summons creates the anxiety for all of us.

It is obvious that God calls Abram, just as he will later call Isaiah and St. Paul¹ amongst others.

That call demands that Abram leave behind the old, familiar and trusted life behind. The call pulls Abram away from family, culture, language and traditions. God's call separates Abram from the familiar circumstances of his well-to-do life and summons him to abandon what he had come to accept as his life.

That, on its own, should be enough to cause us anxiety, but there is more. You see, God doesn't usually call an individual. He calls communities.

Abram took his wife Sarai and his brother's son Lot, and all the possessions that they had gathered, and the persons whom they had acquired in Haran; and they set forth to go to the land of Canaan.²

Abram's clan left Haran and journeyed the 800 km to Canaan. Not just Abram. The whole clan. God delivered the call to Abram, but the summons was for his community. They all were to leave their old lives behind and find a new life as God's chosen people in an unfamiliar country with none of the supports they formerly knew.

¹ Isaiah 6:1-13 and Acts 9:3-9.

² Genesis 12:5.

Isaiah would later follow God's call to a new life. As would Paul. They both left behind what was the familiar, to become God's chosen representatives for a new community. That's how God's call works in the lives of communities.

We probably don't need the proof that God has called us, but here it is:

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."³

Like Abram, we are to "go", to leave the familiar and safe behind to be God's chosen people out into the world.

But, you may need some more specifics.

First, listen to the Spirit as you pray. We know that it is through the voice of the Spirit that God calls Christians today. So be attentive and expect the Spirit to speak to you.

Then, listen to the Church as it encourages you and guides you in listening to the Spirit and in ministry. The Church is given the responsibility of confirming the call and guiding its execution. Remember, it is not just individuals that are called—it is the community.

Lastly, look for opportunities to serve the wider community. God uses the circumstances of your life to call you. He doesn't call you *despite* who you are. He calls you *because* you are who you are. So, as you explore the call, look for those things that excite you, those things that will demand you be the best person you can be. Look for opportunities to be most fully who you are, to experience even in your call the abundant life which Christ has promised.

³ Matthew 28:18-20.

But let's be clear: God's call to you affects your community, whether that be your family, your congregation or your civil community. Like Abram, you pull a clan with you as you respond to God's call.

It could be that God is not calling you to move away from community, from family, from your home. Most of the time, God's call is away from the comfortable and familiar, not away from a geographical location. God most often calls us to take risks on his behalf, to speak to someone we've never spoken to before. God calls us to present the good news in unfamiliar ways. God calls us to step out in faith from inside our circumstances. Most often.

So, perhaps that reading from Genesis is not so anxiety-producing after all. Yes, God does call us away from our former lives, but not all of us are called to the same level of sacrifice as Abram was. So, we listen for the Spirit's voice. We listen to the wisdom of the Church. We look for opportunities to step into the unfamiliar for the sake of the gospel. God does call his people to a new and eternal life. This new life to which we all are called begins in our here and now.

AMEN.