

Church Together

A Journey That Includes God!

9th June 2024

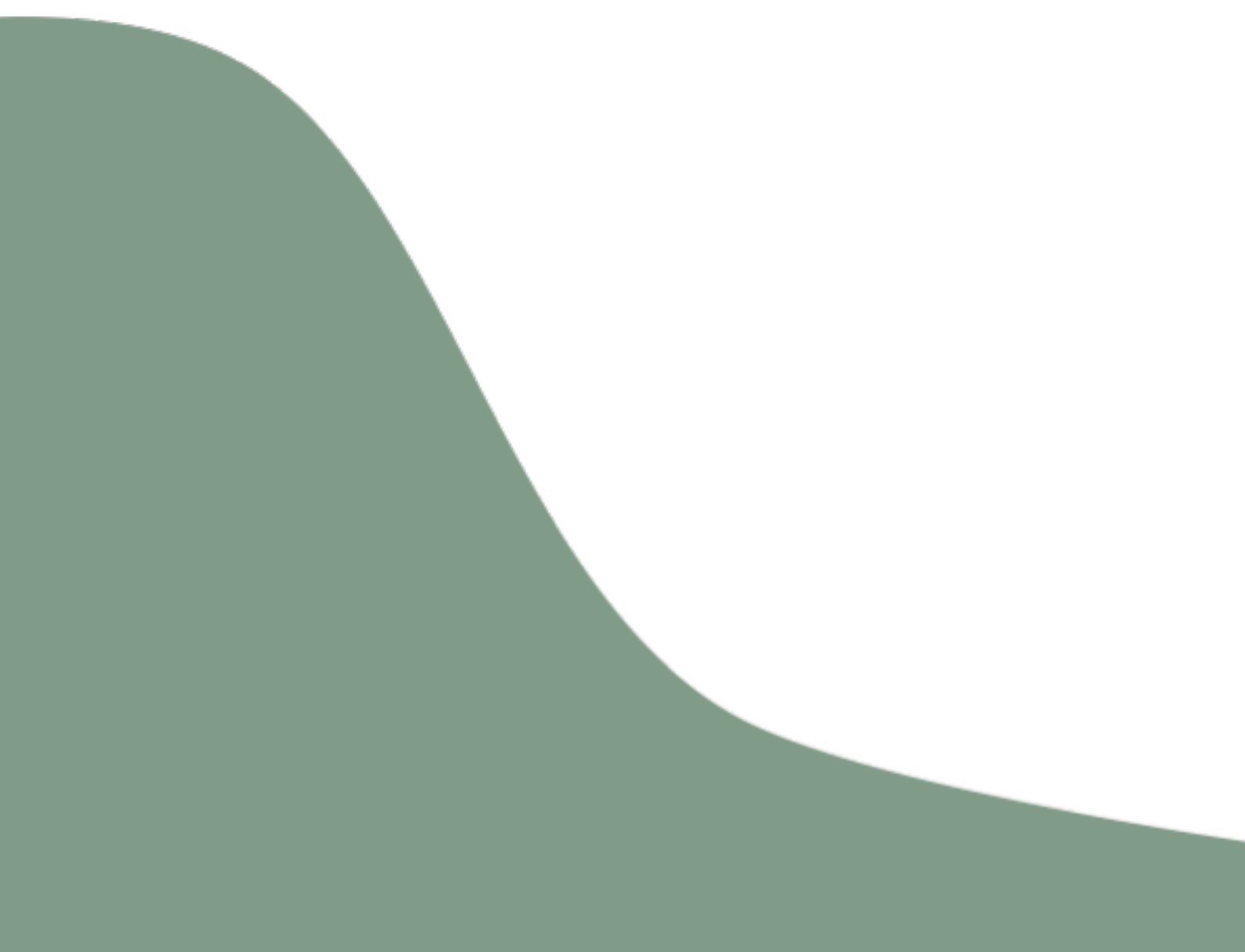


Welcome

Today's Service we will be looking at: **Genesis 12 v. 1 - 20**

The theme for our service today is: **A Journey That Includes God!**

We hope that you will be able to engage with everything that has been produced for today's service and that you would be able to **Know That God Is In Everything You Do, Even If It's Not In Your Timing!**



Call To Worship

Psalm 138

I give you thanks, O Lord, with my whole heart; before the gods I sing your praise; I bow down towards your holy temple and give thanks to your name for your steadfast love and your faithfulness; for you have exalted your name and your word above everything.

On the day I called, you answered me.

On the day I called, you answered me; you increased my strength of soul. All the kings of the earth shall praise you, O Lord, for they have heard the words of your mouth.

On the day I called, you answered me.

They shall sing of the ways of the Lord, for great is the glory of the Lord. For though the Lord is high, he regards the lowly;

but the haughty he perceives from far away.

On the day I called, you answered me.

Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve me against the wrath of my enemies; you stretch out your hand, and your right hand delivers me.

The Lord will fulfil his purpose for me; your steadfast love, O Lord, endures for ever. Do not forsake the work of your hands.

On the day I called, you answered me.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.

Amen

Song Suggestion


When I Feel The Touch



Song Suggestion

Majesty, Worship His Majesty





“Faith is trusting that when God calls us on a journey God provides all that we need on the way. We do not need all the answers when we start, we learn as we are transformed by God and one another on the journey.”

—Cassie Chee

Bible Reading

Genesis 12 v. 1 – 20 NIV

The Call of Abram

12 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, 3 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.”

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 travelled 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 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.

Abram in Egypt

10 Now there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to live there for a while because the famine was severe. 11 As he was about to enter Egypt, he said to his wife Sarai, "I know what a beautiful woman you are. 12 When the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife.' Then they will kill me but will let you live. 13 Say you are my sister, so that I will be treated well for your sake and my life will be spared because of you."

14 When Abram came to Egypt, the Egyptians saw that Sarai was a very beautiful woman. 15 And when Pharaoh's officials saw her, they praised her to Pharaoh, and she was taken into his palace. 16 He treated Abram well for her sake, and Abram acquired sheep and cattle, male and female donkeys, male and female servants, and camels.

17 But the Lord inflicted serious diseases on Pharaoh and his household because of Abram's wife Sarai. 18 So Pharaoh summoned Abram. "What have you done to me?" he said. "Why didn't you tell me she was your wife? 19 Why did you say, 'She is my sister,' so that I took her to be my wife? Now then, here is your wife. Take her and go!" 20 Then Pharaoh gave orders about Abram to his men, and they sent him on his way, with his wife and everything he had.

Song Suggestion

From Heaven You Came



Song Suggestion

Thank You Jesus, Thank You
Jesus



Church Together

Thought

God's call to Abraham is one of the best known in the Bible. Although the details are unique to Abraham and his family, when we look at the call a little more closely, we discover that it contains elements common to many calls in the Bible - and common to our call to follow God today. Most calls are from something to something. Sometimes the 'from' part is specific, sometimes it's the 'to' part. Here the call for Abraham to move from his family home in the great city of Haran is exact; the call to a new home is only given in very general terms. But once Abraham begins to obey God's call, we can note five related elements that can help us understand what happens when we are called by God:

Firstly, the call is individual. God doesn't make a general offer; the call is given specifically by God to Abraham. It is up to Abraham to listen and obey, or to listen and reject. Secondly, Abraham's call to obey God isn't simply so that Abraham can serve God but so that God can bless Abraham as we read in **Genesis 12 v. 2**. Often, we think of following God as what we can give to God in service, whereas the emphasis is primarily on what God wants to give us through obedience. As we will see, Abraham's obedience opens the door to blessings.

Thirdly, the call is not just a state of mind. It involves Abraham doing something specific. For him and his family it involves a radical change of lifestyle.

Fourthly, it appears that Abraham obeyed the call immediately. This does not necessarily mean he left Haran the very day of the call; presumably he prepared before leaving. There are times when before we can move to the thing to which God calls us, we need to make ourselves available. In terms of the ultimate call, the call to become a Christian, the stage of making ourselves available is called 'repentance', as reflected in **Mark 1 v. 15**.

Fifthly, all the above things may not be easy! As part of the call itself, God's words to Abraham include a promise that God himself will be involved in the process. This is not a picture of God calling Abraham and then leaving Abraham to it. Rather God will be there throughout, helping Abraham to remain obedient.

It doesn't take Abraham long to make a mistake though as we read in **Genesis 12 v. 10 – 20** which says: 'Now there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to live there for a while because the famine was severe. 11 As he was about to enter Egypt, he said to his wife Sarai, "I know what a beautiful woman you are. 12 When the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife.' Then they will kill me but will let you live. 13 Say you are my sister, so that I will be treated well for your sake and my life will be spared because of you."

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We are not told what God intended, but we are given the impression that Abraham tries to overcome difficulties by solving the problems himself. This reminds us that although we make mistakes, God doesn't reject us. We may need to put things right, but even in our failures God is there, available to help us. It appears that Abraham hasn't fully learnt that lesson yet; indeed, it takes twenty - five years before Abraham learns to rely always on God. What we do know is that complete obedience to God is not learnt quickly.

When we allow God to be part of the journey that we are on we can make progress in our relationship with God? The ups and downs of Abraham's journey with him make a realistic model for us to reflect on, and to learn from. So, let's think about how a journey that includes God can move us forward.

FIRSTLY, LIKE ABRAHAM WE MUST BE PREPARED TO MOVE FORWARD FAITHFULLY

You live four thousand years ago in the Middle East. Your town is wealthy and at the centre of trade routes. You put your success down to the good luck conferred on you by the many gods you try to please - gods of moon and

stars, of crops and fertility, each with a manageably sized idol which you can bow down to or carry with you.

Then one of your neighbours shocks you. Something wonderful and true has been revealed to him, he claims.

There is only one God, and he is invisible. What has happened to the man? Has he gone mad? Perhaps he will revert to normal when he realises that his one, invisible God is outnumbered by the thousands of other gods, which you can see and touch and control.

No! Even more absurd! Your neighbour is leaving his comfortable home, buying tents, taking his family, and setting out into the desert to go to ... well, he doesn't know where - yet! He claims that God knows where he is going, so all he must do is follow! What is going on? Faith is going on. Your neighbour is called Abraham, and he is beginning a journey which will transform the world.

God chose Abraham. He didn't choose him because he deserved it, nor because he was obedient. To start with **Genesis 11 v. 31** tells us that Abraham only went halfway, nor because he initiated it. The only reason Abraham was chosen was because God is gracious. And the same is true for humankind - undeserving, disobedient, godless - four thousand years later, after the time of Abraham.

But as a recipient of God's salvation, Abraham's response was full of faith - he set security aside (**v. 1**), he went (**v. 4**), he worshipped (**v. 7**), and he prayed (**v. 8**). The result was a relationship with God so close that it was as if, as we can see in **Genesis 12 v. 7** that: 'the Lord appeared to him'.

SECONDLY, LIKE ABRAHAM WE MUST BE PREPARED TO MOVE FORWARD FEARFULLY

Realising the courage it took for Abraham to respond to God's call, it seems a comparatively small thing that was his undoing. He allowed fear of how others would react to undermine his trust in God.

He was not lying when he said that Sarah was his sister, as recorded in **Genesis 20 v. 12**; he just wasn't explaining the whole truth.

Thomas Merton who was a Cistercian monk and writer, in his writing, The Sign of Jonas, says this:

It seems to me the most absurd thing in the world to be upset because I am weak and distracted and blind and constantly make mistakes! What else do I expect! Does God love me any less because I can't make myself a saint by my own power and in my own way? He loves me more because I am so clumsy and helpless without him - and underneath what I am he sees me as I will one day be by his pure gift and that pleases him - and therefore it pleases me and I attend to his great love which is my joy. How easily the fear of being looked down on as a Christian, or of losing out on material rewards, can make us settle for the easiest option instead of trusting God and doing what is good.

FINALLY, LIKE ABRAHAM WE MUST BE PREPARED TO MOVE FORWARD WITH FAR SIGHTEDNESS

There are seven blessings poured on Abraham in **Genesis 12 v. 2 - 3** which says: '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'.

Some of them Abraham began to see immediately, but it

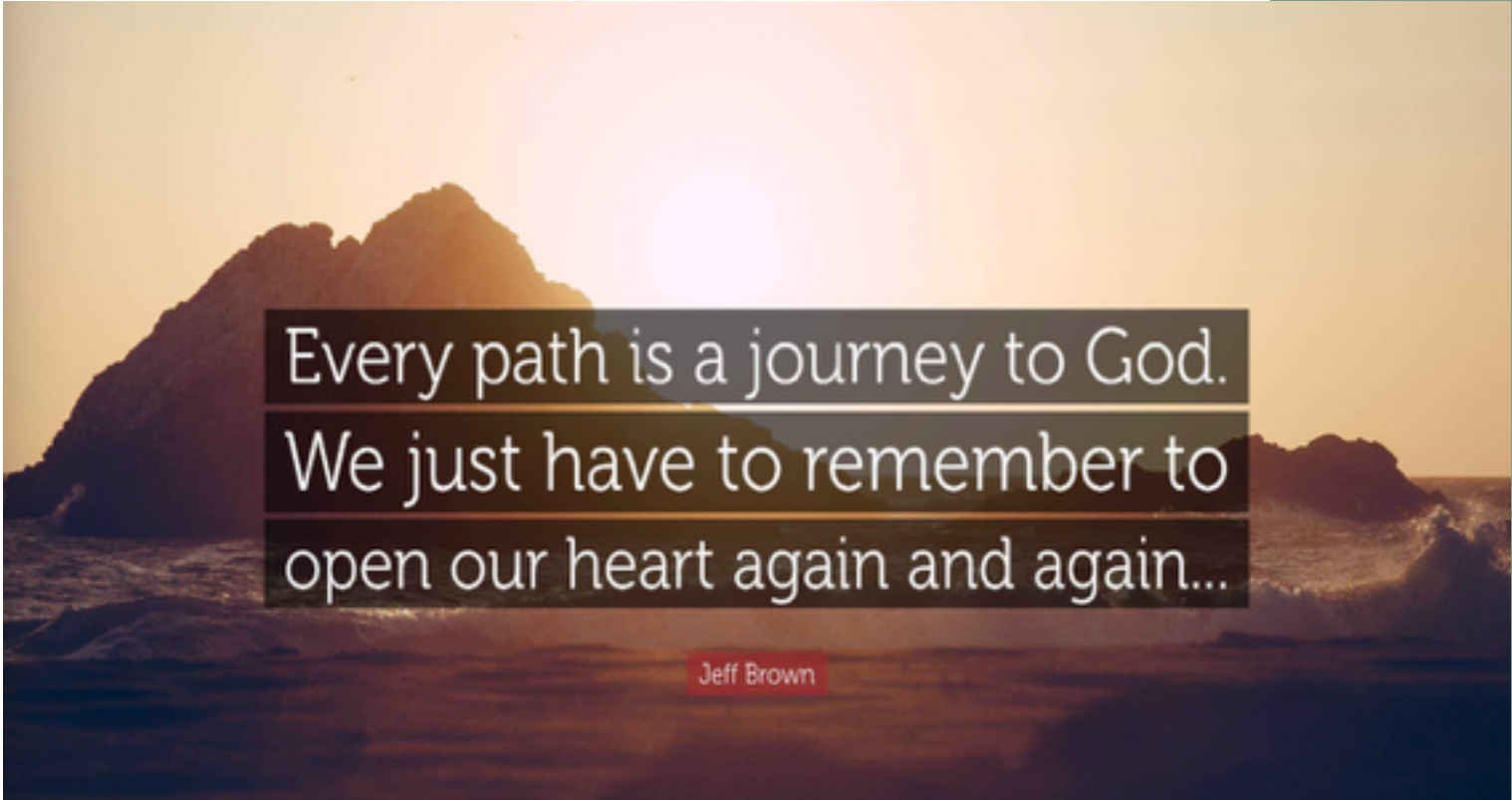
took as we have said, twenty - five years for his son Isaac to be born, as reflected and seen in **v. 2a**. Yes, God's timing maybe slow, but God's timing is always perfect. Our trust in him will sometimes make an immediate difference to our lives for example, in answered prayer; sometimes it will take a lifetime of following, we can often only see in retrospect the way God has led us through life's experiences for our good; and sometimes it is our descendants still to come who will be blessed by God's faithfulness to us, and ours to him.

Tithes, Gifts & Offerings

No matter wherever you are, whatever you do, whoever you are, together we can grow as Church Together here at Salendine Nook.

If you feel that your are able to, then please keep on giving with a cheerful and grateful heart, praising God for all that he has given to you and share in the finances of the church.





Every path is a journey to God.
We just have to remember to
open our heart again and again...

Jeff Brown

Prayers Of Intercession

God of life, You have created us to have life, and life in all its fullness. Help your wounded Church to be a source of hope and healing. As we follow Jesus' way with determination, may we lead others to you. Lord, give us the grace to know you deeply, in order to love you entirely. May the gift of your Holy Spirit enable our eyes, ears and minds to receive the unconditional love with which you love us. Purify our hearts that we may always be ready to love our neighbour, however different, as ourselves.

God of love, who writes love in our hearts, instil in us the courage to look beyond ourselves and see the neighbour in those different from ourselves and to be the unexpected neighbour, that we may truly follow Jesus Christ our brother and our friend, who is Lord, for ever and ever. Lord Jesus, may our eyes not look away, but be wide open to the world around us. As we travel through life, may we stop and reach out, bind up the wounded and in so doing experience your presence in them. Give us a renewed commitment to journey with you towards unity.

Gracious God, You who are the source of all love and goodness: enable us to recognise the needs of our neighbour. Help us to be honest about our need for healing. Change us, so that we can love all. Help us to overcome the obstacles of division, that we might build a world of peace for the common good. Thank you for your renewing work in creation and for leading us to a future

which is full of hope: you who are Lord of all, yesterday, today and forever.

God of unity, you showed us the meaning of hospitality, by caring for our fragile humanity. Help us to become a community that generously welcomes those who feel abandoned and lost, together building places where all are welcomed and loved. May we become closer to each other as we flaunt your unconditional love in the unity of the Holy Spirit.

Holy God, your Son Jesus came among us to show us the way of compassion. Help us by your Spirit to follow his example, to serve the needs of all your children, and so witness together as Christians to your ways of love and mercy.

Almighty God, who holds the world in loving embrace, may we care for each other as you do, each and every soul. Holy Spirit, giver of life, open us to each other and strengthen our bonds of communion and grow us in mutual affection. Prince of Peace, give us the resolve to live out the Gospel faithfully that we may be radical welcomers and reconcilers. For we ask all of these things in the precious name of our Saviour, Jesus.

Amen

Christ's - Journey - Into - Death

We realize the radical extent that Christ journeyed into death for our salvation includes His descent into Hell.

For those who want to follow their Crucified God, this descent also informs their journey.

Dr. Antony Theodore

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in Heaven
Hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
On earth as it is in Heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive those who trespass against us.
Lead us not into temptation
But deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power
And the glory, forever and ever.
Amen

Song Suggestion

Guide Me O Thou Great Jehovah



Blessing

Lord, let us go from here in peace,
May your Word be fulfilled with us.
May your blessing be ever with us,
As we seek to be your witnesses in the
world.

May your grace, love and fellowship,
Be with us until we meet again.

Amen