

9/25/17

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In 63 years on this earth, I, at first with my parents and brother, and later with Carolyn and our kids, moved 15 times. This last move from West Chicago, IL to North Fort Myers, FL, was the toughest. We downsized a lot and we still have too much stuff. We were in the midst of closing the church in West Chicago and packing up for Florida. Our kids helped a lot at both ends of the move. I would imagine that we will be moving once or twice more before God moves us to heaven.

Today's devotion talks about a man who was commanded by God to pack up all his belongings and move to a place God would lead him. It would have been a daunting task for a 75-year-old man, but he had God's promises to strengthen and encourage him.

The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. 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. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." So Abram left, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Haran. He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated and the people they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan, and they arrived there. Genesis 12:1-5

I don't envy Abram. Just the thought of moving is enough to make me tired—the sorting, packing, and cleaning. But moving at age 75, when many are starting to enjoy a slower pace of life, and going to an entirely new country that you have never even visited and where you don't know a single soul—well, like I said, I don't envy Abram.

But this is what God commanded him to do. God commanded Abram to move. And God gave him some gracious assurance as he began his journey. "I will bless you," "I will make you into a great nation," and "all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." In other words, God promised that

Abram's obedience to God would be worth it. Good things would happen because God would faithfully fulfill his word.

But I wonder, as Abram led his family across the unfamiliar desert sand, if Abram ever doubted. I know that we often can. We can sometimes wonder if following God's instructions is really worth it.

When children grow up and walk away from God, a parent can wonder if it was worth it taking them to church, praying with them, and reading the Bible with them when they were young. When you see people caught in a sin, you might wonder if it's worth it to say something, especially if previous attempts to speak with them have soured your relationship. When you can't seem to overcome one particular sin, even after you've prayed and cried for long stretches of time, you might begin to wonder if it's worth it to keep trying. After all, so far you haven't seen anything good come from it.

But consider just how many of the good things God promised Abram were actually seen by him during his life on earth. Abram was confronted with many challenges in the Land of Canaan. When Abram died, he was a father and grandfather of a large family, but hardly a "great nation." And Abram certainly didn't see the birth of his distant relative Jesus, which is exactly what God was talking about when he said that "all peoples on earth will be blessed through [him]."

Godly obedience isn't like a vending machine where you put in the right change and immediately get every good thing for which you were hoping. It's an act of faith; trusting that it's the right path, just because God says so, even when the only thing that you see come back is nothing but frustration or pain.

And Abram isn't the only one who knows how hard a journey that can be. Even his distant relative Jesus experienced it. As he hung on the cross, Jesus felt pain that you and I simply cannot imagine. But he did not move from that place. He stayed, because he wanted us to see not only that our place in the Promised Land of heaven is waiting, won for us by the perfect life and innocent death of Abram's seed, but also so that we would know that every act of obedience in grateful response to his love would always be worth it.

Prayer: *Dear God, thank you for the gift of eternal life in heaven. As we journey through life to our Promised Land, may we always follow in obedient faith as you lead the way; through Jesus our Savior. Amen.*

...See you in church.

Keep looking up because the Lord is always looking down – Psalm 121

Pastor Alan W. Gumm

Phone: [630-947-4317](tel:630-947-4317)

E-Mail: revagumm@hotmail.com