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We Live, We Love: Leaving Home"

Genesis 3:22-23

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Adam and Eve had the greatest home ever.

Yet, there came a time when God said it was time to "launch".

So, out of the Garden of Eden they went.

We have all had the experience of having to leave home – whether it be temporarily or permanently. For most of us, it begins at five years old, when we get on the school bus and head for kindergarten. Then, after high school we have a series of homes whether we go on to further education or begin our work life and career.

Every summer during college, I went "home" to live with my parents while taking on various summer jobs as Woolworth cashier or summer camp nature counselor. Upon graduation, I went to live in rural Kentucky and then I went off to seminary. Through those five year, I had my own place (a trailer, a house, and then an apartment). So, when seminary was over, I went "home" to live with my parents for a summer, so I could do a stint as a hospital chaplain, which the Presbyterian Church required of me before ordination. It was clear to all of us (Mom, Dad, and me) by the end of the summer, that our days of living together were over – too much had happened, much had changed, none of us were the same as we had been five years ago. Life needed to be different now.

Sometimes we leave home by choice, and sometimes we are asked to leave home. Yet, despite the sentiment of the "Wizard of Oz" "There's no place like home"; God chooses to view

“home” in light of our relationships and not according to geography.

Throughout scripture, beginning with Genesis chapter three, we see figure after figure, group after group, nation after nation on the move, transitioning from one place to another.

- How about Abraham being asked to leave his home and become of the father of many nation.
- How about Joseph loosing his home due to being sold and thus ending up in Egypt!
- How about the people of Israel, who were enslaved in Egypt, who then crossed into the wilderness, and then finally into the Promised Land, only to be carted off to Babylon and Assyria!
- Jesus himself, was not born at home – not in Nazareth, but in Bethlehem. A bit later on the child Jesus and his family had to flee to Egypt as they sought political asylum seeking to escape from what would be sure death.
- Then, we see Jesus referred to as the “Son of Man/Humanity who had no where to lay his head” (for he was itinerant or some would say, “homeless.”
- Did he not tell his disciples to leave their homes and follow him!
- How about Paul and all the other missionaries of the early church, who traveled long miles through many countries and across seas to give us the church we have today.

If we are not careful, we will assume permanence is what brings us happiness and peace. Yet, life is not like that, nor should it be.

Geography is not the constant in our lives, which brings us stability. Rather, the only constant in a shifting landscape is



you and the God who travels with you, wherever and whenever you go. Even when you need to leave paradise!

Did the expelling of Adam and Eve make them get a more accurate picture of how life really is – it is a journey, and as we change places we can't help, but change too. Does staying in one place and never moving cause us to be emotionally, mentally, and spiritually stagnant or do we also get stale?

Yet, we cling to home, because we want safety, we want the ease that comes with familiarity, we want what we had in the past to become our present and remain into our future.

Yet, does not the real growth and deeper diving in life come from deeper delving, and we do not want to go far when we think we already have all of what is. For it is in the venturing forth, taking risks, and moving out of familiar territory into the unknown that we become multidimensional and a person of greater substance.

Sometimes we must leave due to the action of another or our own actions. Yet, it matters not, as was the case of Adam and Eve – for leaving Eden behind provided the opportunity for their further depth and growth.

The important part on being in transition, or on the move, or between one thing and the next, or arriving at a new place: is in remembering the constants that serve to undergird and stabilize you in the midst of change. And where does the stabilizer come from – the only two constants in an ever changing picture – you and God. God was with Adam and Eve as much outside of Eden and God was in Eden. It was harder to see God, yet just because one did not see God in the same way

as before, did not mean and does not mean, that God is not there.

We cling to home because we want acceptance there. And some of can testify to the fact, that just because you want it, doesn't mean you are going to get it. Some environments are more friendly than others to the interaction between self-disclosure and acceptance. Geography can be hostile. Yet, God's accompaniment with us wherever we go, never entertains hostility. What I mean by that is, God is the best one in providing us with consistent acceptance and love. Humans will let you down every time. Yet, God does not.

Sometimes we cling to home because it is soft and easy. Yet, hard and difficult usually serve as impetus for our growth and depth. Rarely, do we grow from ease and living the good life. Could it be, that the necessity of leaving home has brought you to a place you could have never gone to or achieved by staying at home.

I remember a time, a few years after I had been living on my own, when I got a call from my mother. She told me I had three months to come and pick up my things, before she was going to put them out in the trash. She told me, they were taking up room in the basement, and she needed my bedroom closet to store her art supplies, since she had turned my bedroom into her art studio. I couldn't believe it! I was stunned! It seemed so harsh to me.

Yet, it really was an act of mercy on my mother's part. I had not fully moved on and into the next phase of life God had for me, because I still had that ace in the hole, those things that tied me bound me to that place and those people. So, with fear



and trepidation, I went within the 90 days to retrieve my stuff, as well as throw some of it out.

That's what leaving home does. It causes us to take with us what we need to keep, and throw out those things that are no longer needed. Life is about embracing and letting go. It is not about clinging and remaining.

So, when it comes to leaving "home" either by your choice or another's, receive the gift that is soon to be yours. A clarification of the fact that God is not limited by time or space, and that the Constant Companion is just that – constant, with us wherever we may need to or be forced to go. And receive consolation that it is not in being at home that gives one the greatest growth and depth, but rather that is saved for times in which we are in transition or in new territory.