

SERMON: “CHOICES: Go.”

Rev. Geoff Ross: St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Brampton, Sun., Oct., 1, 2017

[Indiana Jones/Leap of Faith: Can't intellectualize: Go/Leaving takes faith. Just Do It.]

For the past 3 weeks we have been talking about choices and how they can define, make, break, or change our lives. We've heard how God longs for us to choose life/to start following God's plan, to stop running/hiding from God and, having chosen to return, to stay the course by being faithful. Each choice has been internal/inward decisions; today we shift to a choice that requires an external/outward action: the choice to “go.”

*“The Lord said to Abram: **Leave** your country, your family, and your relatives and **go** to the land that I will show you.”* Did you catch that: it seems obvious; to go somewhere else you have to leave where you are – leave what you know, where you're known, it's comfortable, safe/secure, to go somewhere unknown and not. Sure God promises blessings beyond his imagining – childless/descendants will become a great nation; unknown, unknown/his name will become famous; alone/God will watch over/protect him – and that through him *“everyone on earth will be blessed because of you.”* But he still had to leave, and go. Abram did, and everything changed.

[Every journey starts with a single step – but first; the choice to “go!”]

Abram stepped out in faith and God changed his life – and name: his past was now behind him; the new “Abraham” became a ‘child of God’ – by grace he had been saved/changed, through faith – not anything he had thought of/did, but through a gift from God. (Eph 2:8-9) God met Abram where he was and revealed to him that there was another plan for his life: that he was made for greater things. God met Abram at the fork in his road/life and told him the story He had written for Abram's life. God gave him a vision/offer of a life of purpose lived out according to God's plan – that he couldn't/didn't refuse. And the rest is history – and our story.

[Pet Peeve: Abram Called to “Go”/Not Arrive. “Go” means trust/be faithful]

Abram's/Abraham's story is the archetype “call” story: created, called/commanded, then changed by God's love/grace/promises Abram became who God had planned/prepared for him to be all because of his faith – lived out in/through his obedience to God's will/plan for him. We see this in four simple – yet life changing – words; *“He obeyed and left...”* taking his wife, nephew, and all they had, off into the great unknown. His obedience/faith led him to his destiny – but it wasn't easy. [Never is! Ont-PEI 1800Ks!] Call to “Go” is easy for God, hard for us. It makes us trust God more: it may test us but it steels our relationship with God. So, where is God calling you to “go”?

But, maybe, the question isn't ‘Where is God calling you to go?’ but rather should be; ‘what is God calling you to leave?’ So what is it? It might be something like Tradition; something we know/that is comfortable/safe/easy, something that it itself has become toxic/septic/dead. Or, maybe, it isn't a question of going/leaving, but is instead a

question of whether you think you're worthy or not: it's a matter of questioning whether God would even ask you. Do you think about that? I know I have. The Good News is that this is the opportunity for God's grace to change our lives! Friends, God is a God of today/tomorrow – God loves us and will forgive our past/yesterdays/mistakes – because God wants us to live fully. But first we must let go of what is holding us back/down, blocking our way forward. God offers us a better life/story/eternity: you can have it, but we have to choose it – to make that next step of faith.

Last week we heard about Paul – how he talks about his story, about how he hadn't 'reached his goal/isn't perfect' but that that's ok since we're all 'works in progress' – that God isn't finished with us yet, that God isn't a quitter. And it's true. Throughout this series we've heard how, despite our faults/sins/choices, God didn't quit on us – on Adam/Eve, Abram/Abraham, Moses/People, Ruth/Naomi, on Paul; me/you. This is the extent of God's grace/love revealed in/through Jesus' coming to be-with us to die for us: proof of the lengths to which God would go to save us. As we turn toward the Table, it's fitting that today – [WCSunday/Communion: Jesus/revealing God's saving plan for all of us (slave/free, Greek/Jew, male/female) – we heard the story of how God came to Abram – how God chose to meet with us where we are/as we are – to offer grace; promised blessings; redemption/salvation/eternal favour: ours through faith alone.

The call to “go” is a faith forward choice: it's that leap of faith – take the first step, go/let go and let God do the rest. Trust in God's plan for you. Receive the gift of grace. Exercise faith in the God who gave His Son for you. Make the right choice: Take the first step. Go. Amen.