

“Blessed to be a Blessing: Living Missionally”

Sermon Reflection Questions May 24, 2009

Genesis 12:1-3, Unlocking the Old Testament

This weekend we celebrate Memorial Day. It is a time where we thank God for those who have given their lives in the service of protecting and defending this country. No matter what political persuasion you might be, I think we can all agree that we are blessed to be Americans. We have resources and opportunities that are not available to the majority of humankind. Individually we can probably consider ourselves blessed; sure we have difficulties and hardships, but hopefully we can all affirm that we are blessed by God.

But why does God bless people? In Genesis 12:1-3 God blesses people for the express purpose of partnering with Him to bring His purposes on earth. God blesses us to be a blessing. This message focuses on our need to take our blessing and live as people who are sent into our communities and contexts to bring about God’s purposes on earth. This concept has been recently called “missional living”. Missional living is where we see ourselves as sent agents of God, ambassadors of Christ to lovingly and sacrificially give of ourselves to others in order to bring the good news of Jesus Christ.

1. God’s first words to Abram (who later becomes Abraham) were to leave his country and his kindred (parents and extended family) and to take his wife and children to an unknown destination. When was a time when you have had to leave a place where you were comfortable (or the comfortable situation left you)? How did it feel? Looking back what did you learn or could you have learned through that process?
2. In Genesis 12:2 what are the three things that God promises to do for Abram? What do those three things mean?
3. In what ways has God blessed you?
4. Genesis 12:2 says that God blessed Abram so that he can bless others. Read the following passages what does it mean to bless others? (Isaiah 58:6-8, Micah 6:8, 1 Peter 2:9, Isaiah 42:6-9, Matthew 5:43-48, Mathew 22:34-40)
5. One way that the church has often seen its role is to minister to people who come to them, but scripture emphasizes our need to go and minister to people in the world. Notice, for example, God didn’t say to Abram “I will send people to you for you to bless them, but that you will go and be a blessing as you go.” The great commission says “**GO** and make disciples.” God has already sent you into your communities, into your places of work and He has sent you there to be a demonstration of His love. With that understanding, who (specifically or generally) might God be sending you to in order to be a demonstration of His love?

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6. Another pattern that I see in our lives (mine as well) is that we want to serve in the name of Jesus where it is comfortable. Yet Jesus never tells us it is going to be comfortable to serve in His name, in fact He tells us it is going to be costly.

a. What are the costs of authentically following Jesus? Matthew 10:37-39, 2 Timothy 3:12, John 15:18, 19

b. What costs are you willing to pay? Be honest, what costs are you not willing to pay?

7. Finally, what I see is that even though we have to risk and even though it will cost us, the power of God’s Spirit is with us. Abram, which means “father of many” didn’t have a child with Sarah for many years (Sarah was 90 and Abraham was 100, Genesis 21:5). Why did God wait so long (15 years) to begin to deliver the promise of a child for Sarah and Abraham? How does this give you encouragement as you live missionally for the Lord?

8. What are two or three things you can do to begin to live as God’s person sent into your context to bring about God’s purposes?