

Second Sunday after Pentecost - A Proper 5 (2026)

Genesis 12:1-9

Psalm 33:1-12

Romans 4:13-25

Matthew 9:9-13, 18-26

‘Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. *So Abram went, as the LORD had told him....*’ In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

It could not really have been that easy, could it? Abram, presumably a good fellow minding his own business, tending to his household, being a good relative to the rest of his kin, and settled in a time and place that he considered his homeland, has this amazing encounter with the LORD, a divine being of whom he had no prior knowledge. He and his family lived in Ur of the Chaldeans, a people who worshiped a pantheon of gods, most notably the moon god. Then a great turning point in human history takes place; this encounter between the One True God and Abram, in which God tells Abram to pack up all his belongings, family, livestock, *everything*, to begin a journey to an unknown location. God has directed Abram to leave all forms of security behind: his homeland, his relatives, and his father’s house, to embark on this divinely ordered journey interwoven with the promises of blessings of land and people. Abram obeys this out-of-the-blue and unsuspected call from God without question or complaint. Abram is the archetype of the perfectly faithful man: He is called to ‘go’ and he ‘goes.’ This is a story of God telling Abram ‘what’ to do before telling him ‘how’ to do it. Abram’s story is one of trust, faith, and obedience; of promises made and promises kept.

Today’s readings focus on the concept of ‘faith.’ Abram’s ‘faith’ in response to a call from this previously unknown deity. The synagogue leader’s faith was that, though his daughter was dead, he nonetheless had faith that Jesus would, not *could*, by just the touch of Jesus’ hand, bring her back to life. The ‘faith’ of a woman who had battled not just a chronic blood disease, but a condition that left her

ostracized from her community. Her faith that through just the touch of the fringe of Jesus' cloak would bring healing and restoration. And what of the faith of Matthew, the Jew turned traitor in the eyes of the Jewish community, who left his lucrative position and gained his life when he willingly followed this itinerant preacher, Jesus of Nazareth.

But we also hear the strands of 'trust.' Abram trusted that the LORD would somehow, someway, guide him and his family's path to a new land; that somehow, someway, this same God would bestow upon him the blessings of others as he, in turn, would be a blessing to others. A 'faith' that was grounded in trust in the promise that the LORD would somehow, someway bring him to a new land that would have some sort of eternal implications. He traveled by faith, not knowing where he was going and with whom he would interact. The promises of God were good enough for Abram because he found his LORD to be trustworthy.

Faith. Trust. Obedience. Faith and trust are incredibly intertwined and generally refer to believing in something. Relationships are built on trust that someone will do what they say or promise. Trust is built one building block upon another. Trust is fragile and can easily be broken. Yet trust is the glue that holds relationships together. Trust and faith lead to obedience because those in whom we place our trust and faith have proven, over and over again, that they are reliable, and by our obedience, we reflect our confidence through the actions we subsequently undertake. It's a circle that grows stronger over time, and if we place our trust and faith in the Triune God, we have all the confidence we need to live lives without fear and anxiety. We can live lives where we don't need to be in control because we have faith that God will not only be with us, but that his purpose for us is good, honorable, pleasing, and joyful. Our trust and faith in this Triune God are not foolish because we rely on our God, who is both faithful and good. And yet even the one called 'perfectly faithful' failed on occasion to wait upon the LORD as he took matters into his own hands. We remember his lack of faith that resulted in the birth of Ishmael. We read of his telling Egyptian authorities that Sarai was his sister, for fear that she would be taken from him. So, Abram was not perfect, but nonetheless is one of the pillars of faithfulness celebrated within the Christian community.

The writer of Hebrews puts it perfectly: ‘Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.’ The central feature of faith is confidence in God, who will fulfill his promises. With this confidence, we can boldly take action that enlivens our worship, empowers our service to others, and breaks the bonds of fear and anxiety that so often hinder our ability to honor the command to ‘make disciples’ and invite others into the kingdom that is coming near.

Faith is a gift from God. Trust is built through our ongoing interactions with God. Obedience to the leading of the Holy Spirit becomes second nature as a result of our growing confidence that God is trustworthy, which in turn expands our faith. They are all interrelated and form the foundation upon which we are to live our lives.

Ultimately, it seems to me, is our willingness to trust that God will do what he says he will; our willingness to take a leap of faith into the darkness and unknown when God places such a call on our hearts; our willingness to let go of those things or people or circumstances that hold us back; our willingness to encounter the divine in ways, people, and places that we had not previously even considered. You want joy in your life, start trusting God. You want peace in your life, even in the midst of turmoil, and start trusting God. You want to realize the purpose God has for you; start trusting that God is who he says he is and will do what he says he will. Our pride, fear, desire for stability, and need to be in control challenge us to ‘let go’ and trust in God's leading and work.

Abram seemed to have everything under control. We can imagine that he was content with his life. Yet God had far bigger plans for him, and you know what, God has bigger plans for all of us. Jairus, the leader of the synagogue, was desperate after the death of his young daughter, but in faith, he sought out Jesus for the miracle he knew would come through him. The woman dealing with chronic disease and living on the outside of her community worked her way through the crowd and put her faith in the healer of healers to bring her wholeness.

Faith is the gift that keeps on giving. “Take heart, daughter,” Jesus tells the woman, “Your faith has made you well.” By the touch of his healing hand, amidst all the laughter and skepticism, Jesus brings life back to a ‘sleeping’ young girl. By faith, Matthew encountered the divine purpose for his life. By faith, Abram, now Abraham, set in motion the turning point in human history.

You think you’re too old for new adventures and a deepening relationship with God, think again. You think you’re not devout enough for God to do something powerful in your life, think again. You think your problems are too big for God, think again. You think miracles cannot happen, think again. You think you’ve got it all on autopilot, I suggest you get prepared for something new and exciting.