

Rambling Home to Him
Genesis 12:1-9
Sermon
03/05/2023

I am a rambling man!
“Lord, I was born a ramblin' man
Tryin' to make a livin' and doin' the best I can
And when it's time for leavin', I hope you'll understand
That I was born a ramblin' man”, the chorus goes for that great Allman Brothers Band song
titled *Ramblin' Man*.

I believe it's a song most called church workers can identify with, as the Lord takes us where
He will and we rarely end up near family.

Especially here at Faith, with nearly everyone moving from the North to being here in the south,
some so definitively, their family followed them down!
But I identified with this song long before having moved 6 times before I left high school for
the Army and 7 more moves since then.

Now don't worry, I am pretty settled in, so don't take this as I might be ramblin' again, I'm
most likely not, unless I get swallowed by a great fish like Jonah or Blinded like Saul who
became Paul. After nearly 15 years here, it's the longest I have lived anywhere by double.

And Marcy and I do consider it home for the foreseeable future.

But when I was younger, I was always ready for the next stage of life and willing to go
anywhere for whatever opportunity God saw fit.

And I am grateful for that. I would simply not be who I am today if it were not for all that
ramblin'.

Now I can understand how that probably broke my parents' hearts, because *my boys ramble too*,
and whilst Marcy and I hope and pray for their safe return here, to their roots in Eustis, we
know they're ramblin' men too, and will likely only come for visits from now on.

It is an amazing time in a young man or young woman's life when they can ramble. They're
not tied down yet with permanent jobs, or family or the pressure of finding a good school for
their college age kids.

They don't have the need for security and planning for retirement and insuring against calamity
that ties up precious resources.

In a way they are free, like they will, likely, never be free again.

This is why our young single men are actively recruited for the military! This is why we send our youngest single pastors to the most remote parishes. This is why missionaries to the jungles of Africa and peace corps volunteers are young single men and women.

They are still free to explore the most remote regions of the world and learn about the incredible educational and maturing opportunities that lie outside of the protective care of hometown friends and family.

And there are cases when young couples can go anywhere as well. No mortgage yet, still driving old paid for cars, fresh out of college, and ready for the world. They ramble because they can and can likewise make great followers of the aforementioned vocations.

That was Marcy and me nearly 30 years ago. We could move anywhere, anytime, in a heartbeat, and we did. From college in Nebraska to Denver for work, then to Seminary in St. Louis, then to Memphis TN, then to Middleburg FL. Almost all before we had kids, although Micah had to move a couple of times too, but definitely no real roots to speak of.

So, we rambled and rambled and rambled again, *because*...God knew we could.

Now Abram, that was a ramblin' man, and God knew he could ramble for Him too. And Abram does not initially appear to be a ramblin' man by nature like we talked about before. He seemed settled in Haran, until the Lord said, "Go..."

Now I think many of us can identify with that reality as well. We are perfectly happy and then, we have to ramble. The factory closed, the layoffs came, the community declined, the parents said, "sorry, Dad got a great opportunity somewhere else, or we're taking over the family farm, or we're branching out on our own for a new job away from the family business, and we're gonna have to move out of town."

And you knew it was time to move again, time to make new friends, start at a new school, be ready for the next bully that always picked on the new kid, be humiliated by the insensitive teacher that was irritated by this new kid disrupting their class dynamic. Try to break in with the "closed" social group for the neighborhood mothers. Find the new sports leagues and after-school opportunities. Oh, the joys of moving when you don't want to!

While the circumstances are different for Abram the emotion was likely the same for himself and Sarai.

So, God begins with a remonstrance to Abraham that is unfortunately lost in our common translations which reads it, GO.

But if you look carefully at the word, it's actually 3 words, in English GO for Yourself!

Now normally I wouldn't care, but I think it really matters this time, that we understand that Abraham was not going just because God wanted him to, but also because God knew it was for himself as well as for God.

And this makes sense when you read in Joshua 24:2b, what Abram's family was all about, which says, "Terah, the father of Nahor;...served other Gods"

Some have speculated that they had as many as 4000 known God's in that region at that time. And if you think about it, that means the entire culture, the idol making guilds and trade that went with it, and even the language itself would have lent itself to these false God's.

So, God was indeed doing this move for Abram, to not only save his people, but likely Abram and Sarai first.

This is a powerful message about the love of God for us.

He is willing to pursue us even into the mouth of the idolatry of thousands of false God's to save us Himself by the simple calling of His voice through His Holy Word.

Then He is willing to make our names great because He has placed His blessings upon us to be a blessing to everyone, by giving them the very same blessing of God's grace and forgiveness from all their sin.

"God calls an idolater to faith, giving him a promise that God Himself would fulfill for all people. God's Spirit works faith, when and He pleases, through the Word. He is faithful to do as He has said. He made Abram into a great nation, blessing all the world through the Son as Abram's offspring by faith, we have a blessing of God's forgiveness and life without end."
(*Lutheran Study Bible* Text Note 12:1-9 Page 34)

But that does not mean we will be settled in and good to go in the comfort of our community with no problems to speak of.

Because "although God promises Abram that he will possess the land that God will give him, Abram still finds no secure place in which to dwell. At times we find ourselves in circumstances that show the opposite of what God says. In Abram's case, he went forth – even out of the land of promise – trusting that God would fulfill His Word. God returned Abram and Sarai, in time, to Canaan, and there they kept all that He had promised to them."
(*Lutheran Study Bible* Text Note 12:10-20 Page 35)

As I read this text I was reminded of another who was truly called in a way none of us could but benefits us most of all.

When you think about it, just like Abram, Jesus was called eventually for Himself, but unlike Abram, from the heavens by His' Heavenly Father and His glorious resurrection, eventually to be seated at the right hand of the Father in eternal glory.

Like Abram Jesus left His' family, but unlike Abram his family was holy. The family of Father Son+ and Holy Spirit.

Like Abram Jesus left His' Fathers' House, but unlike Abram, Jesus found himself back in His Father's house again as a little boy teaching the learned ones in the Temple in Jerusalem. Telling Mary and Joseph who lost him in the caravan, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?"
(Luke 2:49b ESV)

Like Abram Jesus had no secure place to dwell saying himself, "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no where to lay His head."
(Luke 9:58b ESV)

Truly, during Jesus' ministry, He had no home of His own, but had to depend on the hospitality of others.

And I think that is true of all Christians too. We do not have a home, rather we are ramblin' too.

I would like to destroy the notion of the forever home right now.

Now If you are living in your forever home, I am not suggesting you burn it down or leave it for theological reasons. I am simply asking you to think about it in a different way.

Living in an old Florida Cracker home with the reality of constant repairs, I am often mystified that it has held up as well as it has over the years. Some suggest they simply build them better today, and I suppose that it true in some cases, but with termites, hurricanes, tornadoes, and wood rot, it seems they wouldn't last long any way.

But people have obviously lived there before, and they took care of it so we can live in it today. And I wonder all the time if they called it their forever home?

Obviously, it wasn't, because we live there now, totally unrelated to them.

Your home likewise will be lived in by someone else one day, so it is not really your forever home. Oh, I know some dream of keeping their homes in their families, but I have noticed over the years if the kids didn't want the house, the grandkids certainly didn't.

That is exactly what is happening with my Grandma Everts home in Omaha Nebraska. Oh the incredible memories I have of playing in the snow and in the woods behind the house in the summer. The huge house with a great basement my brother and cousins used to stay in together. The crabapple trees we ate from and climbed in, the rhubarb we ripped out of the ground to make rhubarb pie. Riding our big wheels up and down the long driveway, all built by the hands and sweat equity of grandpa Max, my mother's father. If ever there was a forever home for me, that was it.

Thankfully it is still in the family because my favorite uncle, uncle Jim, bought it from the family, but alas, his children, my cousins don't want it, and it will undoubtedly now become someone else's home.

And as much as that makes me sad, it's actually good. Because it's not my forever home, nor should it be.

For our real forever home, is in the New Heavens and the New Earth with the Many Mansions our Savior went to, to prepare our place to live forever with Him. While Jesus had no place to lay head, his hands were nailed in place that faithful day, and those feet that walked all over Israel were nailed down with em'. To ramble for only one final time in the flesh, when He rose from the dead.

Rambling now, at the right hand of the Father and waiting for us children to ramble home to Him.
AMEN

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