

Sermon for March 1, 2026  
"Steppin' Out"

Genesis 12:1-4  
John 3:1-17

Let's get one thing straight from the beginning: Abram was already set in his ways. You have to understand that to grasp the significance of what is transpiring here between God and Abram. Abram was already 75 years old. They say you can't teach an old dog new tricks. Abram was definitely old in both dog and human years. He had lived in Haran most of his life. His family was there and his friends. The High School he graduated from and the barber shop where he always got his beard trimmed were there. Even his parents were buried there. A person doesn't just start all over from the beginning at 75. Most folks are just settling down at that age. They are not contemplating starting a new career. Oh, there are a few notable exceptions like Grandma Moses who didn't start painting until she was 80. 75 is generally not considered the age to forge new paths in life.

That is exactly what God asked Abram and Sarai to do. God said, "Abram, leave your hometown and your friends and family and go to a place that I will show you." God didn't say, "Go to Canaan" or "the Promised Land." God didn't tell them where they were going. Just that they would be shown the place, and why should they go! Because, "I, God, will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing to the world." That was an attractive promise to an old man with no children.

So Abram went as God had told him. He stepped out. Out of his comfortable peaceful life in Haran. Out of the rocking chair on the front porch of the old home place, and into the road ahead of him to spend his retirement years following a God with no name. No longer would they be Abram and Sarai of Haran, but they would be Abram and Sarai of some place that God would show them.

Now that is faith! God said "jump" and Abram didn't even ask in which direction, he just let God guide him. God said, "Step out," and in faith Abram and Sarai did it.

God is always asking people to step out in faith. Just look through the Bible. Consider Noah who was asked to build an ark just because God said there would be a flood. Or Moses, who was asked to go to Pharaoh and demand the release of the slaves, just because God told him to. Or the Prophets who were asked to prophesy all kinds of unbelievable things just because God said they would be so.

That is what faith is. Faith is steppin' out of our present patterns only because God is calling us to. It means trusting God's promises and God's word even though we don't understand or can't see how they are true. Faith means taking a chance on a promise we don't fully understand. For some it may mean changing even though they are 75 and set in their ways.

The Bible tells us it is by grace through faith that we are saved. Abraham couldn't make himself a great nation, but God did because Abram trusted God's promise.

Likewise we can't save ourselves. We can't find happiness and peace and joy on our own, but God can give us all those things. If only we will trust the Almighty to guide us.

This is what Jesus was talking about to Nicodemus. Nicodemus, like Abram, lived a comfortable life. As a Pharisee he had position, power and wealth, but that couldn't buy him what he really needed. What he really needed was a restored relationship with his Heavenly Father. He needed the Kingdom of God.

So by night he came to Jesus seeking help from God through Jesus a man of God. Jesus told him, "Surely you must be born over." You might say hold it pastor my Bible says "born again," and so it should, but the original Greek word for "again" also means "from above." From Jesus' discussion with Nicodemus it is clear that he means both from heaven above and again. So I prefer the translation "born over" because "over" can mean above or again too. Nicodemus didn't understand what Jesus meant by, "be born again." Jesus told him you have to be born of water and the Spirit. Jesus was referring to the water of womb, but he was also alluding to the water of Baptism, and the Spirit of God that comes only from above. In other words you have to start all over again, make a new beginning, but this beginning is not your own doing. It is not a work of the flesh. It must be God's work in you.

You see Nicodemus had lived his whole life trying to earn his salvation. Like many of the Pharisees he thought that he could keep the law and earn God's saving favor, and I am sure that many people told him he was doing well in his religious life and that he should just keep trying, but Jesus said, "No, you must start all over again with God's help." You must step out in a new direction and trust what God is doing. Because whoever places their faith in what God is doing in Christ has eternal life.

Faith is steppin' out in trust. It is trusting God's word and God's promises enough to take a chance. Abraham took a chance on leaving home at 75 to start new life. He didn't do it because he had a plan or an idea. He did it because God said, "Do this and I will bless you."

Jesus told Nicodemus to take a chance on making a new beginning. Not a new beginning created by the flesh. Not based on his own intuition, intelligence, and good works, but one based on the grace and forgiveness of God given through the Holy Spirit.

God calls all humanity to step out in faith. When we first turn to Christ we step out and take a chance. We place our trust in Christ and his promise of salvation, and God blesses us with the fruits of salvation: Peace, Love, Joy, and as we grow in Christ, God is always calling us to step out.

Step out with faith in God! Trust God's unfailing love. God blessed Abram and Sarai and made them a great nation. No matter what your situation is in life today, God wants to bless you in some way. God wants you to have happiness and Peace and Joy in your life. Just let the Almighty guide you, and if you don't know how to do that, then just ask and God can be trusted to show you. The record is clear: God blesses those who place their trust in him, and God will bless you, if you do the same.