

Rev. Luke C. Werre
Peace, Sun Prairie
February 20, 2005
Lent 2

Genesis 12:1-8

FAITH IS NO BLIND LEAP

The king announced to his knights, lined up along the side of the alligator infested moat, that he would give his daughter in marriage to the man who could swim across the moat unscathed. All the sudden someone was in the water flailing arms and legs, splashing furiously and dragging himself up the other side. While the young horseman lay on his back gasping for air the king remarked, “Son, you must love my daughter greatly to take such a risk.” “Risk, nothing!” replied the soaked knight. “I’d just like to know who pushed me in!”

Sometimes faith is described as a blind leap as though you take a risk and blindly hope God will come through for you. But if we take that approach to faith we’ll end up like the king’s knight flailing and exhausting ourselves in the struggle to stay alive. Maybe that’s a reason why we are so tired so much of the time. If we try anything without God’s express command or promise backing it up –then we’re only doing it on our own energy –and that’s a pretty limited resource.

It’s one thing to say, “I’m going to try this, and if it doesn’t work then I’ll have a plan B ready because God hasn’t revealed to me in His Word what His will is in this matter.” But it’s not faith to say, “I’m going to do this even though God has given me no express command to do it, nor has He promised that it would succeed, -and then I’m going to expect God to back me up and bless my efforts just because I tried. Like we are thinking, “After all, what’s God for? Isn’t He supposed to back me up in whatever I do?”

Faith isn’t like that –treating God like our lackey. Faith is no blind leap either. Abraham, here in Genesis 12 was not taking a blind

leap of faith. From this account of the Call of Abraham let us learn that Faith is no blind leap. First, It relies on a promise. And secondly, It responds to a promise.

Practically in the same breath with which God told Abraham to leave his homeland, God also swamped him with promises. 7 promises. Far-reaching promises.

The 7 promises are:

- I will make you into a great nation.
- I will bless you.
- I will make your name great.
- You will be a blessing.
- I will bless those who bless you
- Whoever curses you I will curse.
- All peoples on earth will be blessed through you.

We could make it 8 promises if we want to include the fact that God promised to show Abraham the land he was to journey to.

Implicit in God’s web of promises was that Abraham had been chosen by God to be the ancestor of the promised Savior of the world. Through Abraham’s family tree the Savior Jesus would one day be born. Abraham understood this. Through his body all the nations of the earth would be blessed. What higher honor could there be? This was no subtle or vague inkling. Abraham would never have been so outrageous as to ever imagine such a thing for himself. It never would have occurred to him. But he had God’s express promise. He did not have any blind faith. His faith relied on a promise.

We might think it was easy for Abraham to believe it because God spoke to him in a special revelation after all. But you and I have a much better vantage point. We have God’s written Word in its entirety –something Abraham didn’t have. We get to view God’s plan for our salvation as an already completed fact in Jesus Christ. God has given us some special signs to make His promises to us unmistakable –namely the sign of water and the sign of bread and

wine. It seems to me if faith was no blind leap for Abraham it definitely does not need to be any blind leap for us.

Abraham's faith in God's promises translated into action. Faith is no blind leap because it responds to a promise.

What could have been more unnatural than what Abraham did? On his own it never would have occurred to him to pull up his tent stakes, leave his relatives being almost certain he would never see them again, and go hundreds of miles by caravan to a strange, vast, unpoliced wilderness harassed by petty kings and local warlords. Though God's command to go to the new place should have been enough, only God's numerous assurances prompted Abraham's feet to take the first steps.

Abraham's response was immediate. It's quite striking the way we are told, "*So Abram left, as the LORD has told him.*" No arguments, no hesitation, no procrastinating. He left. Abraham was only able to do that because God had overwhelmed him with so many promises. Humanly speaking, Abraham left behind a lot. But compared to what God was promising him, it was nothing. In this way, God's promises carried Abraham to the new land as on eagles wings.

Faith responds to a promise. When you trust that what God says is true you are willing to take action. That's what makes it no blind leap. According to our sinful nature we often want to hold back and preserve ourselves. But as we see how Christ suffered and died on the cross to erase our sin, how He has promised us never-ending life in glory, how He treats us like royalty and cares for us like a loving Father—all things that are promises, it prompts us into action. We become freer to give ourselves up to serve and bless others. We no longer feel compelled to hold back. In some areas of life like parenting, or giving church offerings, or making conversation He gives us very specific commands and promises.

God's power is in His promises. Being guided by His commands and being carried by His promises is a lot less exasperating than trying to make a go of it on our own with things that we thought up

ourselves to do. God doesn't deal in indefinites. He even came to earth to reveal Himself to us in the flesh and to save us in the most definite, real way. You know whom you are trusting and you can keep growing in your knowledge of the things He has promised you. That kind of faith is no blind leap.