

CELTIC ADVENT: WANDERING

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Genesis 12:1-4

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. ²I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'

⁴ So Abram went, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.

Genesis 17:1-2

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said to him, 'I am God Almighty; walk before

me, and be blameless. ²And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will make you exceedingly numerous.'

REFLECT & DISCUSS

1. Read the passage(s) slowly. Then take a deep breath and read it again. What word, phrase, or image stands out to you?
2. The call of Abram (later renamed Abraham in Genesis 17:5) is a challenging one: leave your homeland and go, with no precise destination given.
 - a. Have you ever set out on a walk, hike, trip, or journey where you didn't know where you were going, only that you would get somewhere eventually? What was that like? What did you learn along the way?
 - b. Have you ever "left home" for a new chapter in your life—moving towns, going off to college, relocating for work, a relationship, or a new opportunity? What were the challenges and uncertainties? What were the excitements and possibilities? What did you learn along the way?
3. Deeply inspired by the story of Abram/Abraham, Celtic Christian

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monks practiced something called *peregrinatio* or “wandering for the love of Christ.” They would set out from Ireland in a boat with no oars or rudder, and trust the ocean current and the sea breeze to take them somewhere God-inspired. Arriving at one of the many small islands nearby, they would prayerfully discern if this would be the “place of their resurrection.” If they determined it was, they would build a home (and later monastery) there. But if they did not sense that it was, then they would get back in the boat and trust the wind/current to take them somewhere new.

- a. What about this practice frightens you?
 - b. What about this practice inspires or excites you?
 - c. What do you think we can learn from this ancient spiritual practice for our 21st lives?
4. Abram was 75 when he was called by God. God’s sudden and life-changing calling does not happen when he is young and free, but aged and well-rooted. How might his example challenge, inspire, or impact your life and faith journey?
5. Even 24 years later, God calls Abram again to “walk before me.”

- a. While professional ministers might often speak of their “calling,” it is not reserved only for those who become clergy. Every person at every age is called by God in some way, shape, or form. How do you listen for and discern God’s calling on your life?
 - b. How is God calling you to serve God’s purposes in this chapter of your life’s journey?
 - c. In what ways has your sense of spiritual calling changed over time?
6. In what ways might you try “wandering” as a spiritual practice? Suggestions:
 - a. *Take a walk* with no destination in mind, just wander your neighborhood or a park, and give mindful attention to your surroundings.
 - b. *Wander through a bookstore* and just browse titles, volumes, and gifts, looking for something unexpected that might speak to you.
 - c. *Wander through your thoughts* by journaling whatever comes to mind—no need to create a story or connect the thoughts, just let them flow and see where they take you.

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