

**Genesis 12:1-9 "Are We There Yet?"  
Congregational Meeting Sunday**

**A Dramatic Reading  
June 26, 2011**

**Character 1 is a bit sentimental and gushy about the notion of "journey."**

**Character 2 is a little bit lecture-like and pedantic about the story.**

**Character 3 is the critical thinker, the smart-aleck.**

**Character 4 is the "straight (wo)man."**

4. May the words of our mouths, and the meditations of all our hearts, be graced by you, our Rock and our Redeemer. Amen.

When I was about seven, my best friend got lost one day. The little girl ran up and down the streets of the big town where we lived, but she couldn't find a single landmark. She was very frightened. Finally, a policeman stopped to help her. He put her in the passenger seat of his car, and they drove around until she finally saw her church. She pointed it out to the policeman, and then she told him firmly,

2. "You could let me out now. This is my church, and I can always find the way home from here."<sup>1</sup>

3. *(look around at the building, the walls, the windows)* This is my church.

1. My church.

4. My church.

All This is my church.

2. I can always find the way home from here.

3. Find the way.

4. The way home.

1. The way.

3. The spiritual life, and especially the life in Christ, has long been known as the way.

1. It's the metaphor of the journey. *(a little starry-eyed about journey)*

4. When you're on a journey, you're not settled.

2. When you're on a journey, you're not secure.

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<sup>1</sup> Anne Lamott, *Traveling Mercies*, New York: Anchor Books, 1999, 55.

3. When you're on a journey, there's an element of risk.
1. What's with this, "**When** you're on a journey" business? We're **all** on a journey! (*could fling arms open at this – others look askance, then...*)
4. **Since** we're on a journey, we're not settled.
2. Since we're on a journey, we're not secure.
3. Since we're on a journey, there's an element of risk.
2. Like Abram and Sarai. (*a little lecture-ish*)
- 1,3,4 Abram and Sarai?
2. Abram and Sarai had already left their ancestral home, with Abram's father Terah. They had already begun the journey to the land of Canaan, but they got stuck. They got stopped in Haran. Terah died. Sarai was barren. It seemed like the end of the story. Why go any further?
1. They were immobilized? (*pause, then...*) No **journey**?
2. They were stuck.
4. They were barren? No babies?
2. They were childless.
3. They were hopeless? No future?
2. They were done. At least, they were alive now...but once they died, it would all be over. (*nice pause for effect*)
- All And then God spoke.
4. God said to Abram, "Go."
- All GO! (*large, but gracious*)
4. "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you."
3. Leave your people.
2. Leave your father's grave.
1. Leave everything that has become familiar.
3. Relinquish.
2. Let go.
1. Breathe out.

4. Risk everything, and go.
3. *(the critical thinker)* But it isn't like God left them without any support, any promise, any hope. Actually, the call to go was accompanied by a huge promise. Listen to this: God said, "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. I 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."
2. They were blessed, to be a blessing.
  1. Blessed by God, in order to be a blessing to all the families of the earth.
  3. Blessed by God. No longer hopeless.
  4. Blessed by God. No longer barren.
  1. Blessed by God. No longer stuck.
- All Blessed by God. To be a blessing.
4. So Abram went.
  1. And so did Sarai. *(a feminist moment)*
  3. And so did Lot. *(well, if we're including her...)*
  2. And so did all their servants and all their belongings. *(in a yeah, yeah, yeah way)*
- All They went to Canaan.
  1. They went to Canaan, on the strength of the promise.
  2. They went to Canaan, at the provocation of God's word.
  3. *(matter-of-fact)* They went to Canaan, but what was the alternative? A dead-end in Haran. The end of the line. Safety, maybe, in the short-term, but barrenness in the long-term. No risk ... but no future.
  4. They went to Canaan. They were responsive to God's call.
    1. Ahhh, back to the journey. *(starry-eyed again)*
    2. And though they were traveling in unfamiliar territory, and Canaan was occupied by the people of that land ...
    3. The Canaanites!*(duh, a no-brainer!)*
    2. Abram and Sarai were on the way.
    4. People of God's promise, on the way.

3. Being on the way is kind of hard. The Canaanites weren't on the way. They were settled in the land. Much easier to be settled, don't you think? *(to 1)*
1. *(a touch petulant)* I think the idea of being settled is an illusion. We're all on a journey.
3. *(rolls eyes)*
2. *(taking the reins, lecturing again)* And Abram and Sarai journeyed on, in that promised land, listening for articulations of God's promise. Looking for the landmarks of blessing on the way.
4. The landmarks of blessing.
2. And everywhere they sojourned, Abram built an altar, and called upon the name of God.
4. The landmarks of blessing.
3. Abram built an altar.
2. And called upon the name of God. *(reminding)*
1. The landmarks of blessing.
3. On the way.
1. On the **journey**.
3. *(thoughtfully)* Well now.
- 1,2,4 *look at 3*
3. This is all fine and good to talk about Abram and Sarai, and their journey, and their faithfulness, and their landmarks of blessing.... But what about us?
1. We're ... on a journey ... *(tentatively)*
2. Yes, we are. Even though we have stewardship of this building, and sometimes we feel quite settled, and like our program to be quite predictable, that's an illusion. *(looks with surprise at 1, who raises eyebrows back at 2)*
4. Because God is still calling us to "Go."
- All: GO! *(as before)*
3. Relinquish?
2. Let go?
1. Breathe out?
4. Risk everything, and go?

*(Break formation and turn to one another, saying things like, "I'm not so sure about this" ... "we don't know what will happen" ... "I don't know, that sounds kind of scary" ... "why can't we just keep things the way they are?" then settle back into formation and into silence)*

4. We can only go if we know God will bless us to be a blessing.
  3. We can only risk if we trust God's promise, if God's word provokes us...
  2. If we can tell the difference between barren safety and fruitful risk...
  1. We think we have a choice, but really, safety is an illusion. We **are** on a journey. *(this time, with strength and no sentimentality)*
  4. Yes, we're on our way ... on our way ... home.
  3. Home, the heart of God.
  2. Which is ... everywhere.
  1. Wherever we go ...
  3. Wherever we gather ...
  4. Wherever we worship ...
  1. Our true home ... is in God.
  2. **And** in our relationships with each other.
  4. Which we take with us on the journey!
  3. Yes, the journey. We **are** on the journey ...
  2. And our way is marked by the landmarks of blessing.
  1. *(as if seeing the people again for the first time)* This is my church.
  2. *(gesturing to people, embracing arms)* Our church.
  3. I can always find the way home from here.
  4. This is our church.
  2. A landmark of blessing.
  1. To be a blessing on the way.
  - All Our church. A landmark of blessing. To be a blessing on the way.
- Thanks be to God!

(Written by Cari Copeman-Haynes, adapted by Michelle Slater)