

As I write this, I imagine Abram setting out on his journey
with the family and servants, cattle, and sheep,
belongings, and possessions.

They head off moving west.

They have no idea where they are going,
but they are going west.

No one knows what is happening,
other than Abram has said
the storm God Yahweh has spoken,
and he must go.

Which means everyone goes.

These people are not individuals,
they are clan,
they are many
and they are one.

Where Abram goes,
they go.

They are all together Abram,
they are all together Sarai.

They are all together the called,
the chosen,
the waiting.

Yahweh speaks and Abram goes,
responding to a call.

A call to get up and get moving.

A call to pick up,
pack up and move out.

They respond to a promise.

A promise of land.
A promise of progeny.
A promise of descendants to fill the world.

A promise that Abram
will be the Father of Yahweh's people.

This promise is important.
This promise is huge.
This promise is vital.

This people are barren.
They are empty.
They are futureless.

They have no children.

Genesis 1-11 humanity,
is at an end.
They are no more.

Yahweh's promise is
"That they will become many."

Yahweh speaks
and into the silence of death,
is given the shout of life.

Yahweh speaks and Abram goes.

This speaking and going,
this calling and responding,
this promising and waiting
is a bible thing.

Yahweh and Abram.
Yahweh and Moses and the Egypt people.
Yahweh and the prophets
and the Babylon people.

Yahweh and the Magi.

Yahweh and Jesus.
Yahweh and the Apostle Paul.

Yahweh and the church.

Yahweh's promise is
"That they will become many,"
and it needs to be spoken and heard often.

As I write this,
I imagine the promised little Jewish children
in Egypt under a yoke of slavery,
in the far away city of Babylon,
in 1930s Germany,

hearing the story of Abram and Sarai
and Terah, and the promise,
and saying to themselves and one another,

this is us.

This is our story.

This is our father and mother,
this is our grandfather and our household.

Yahweh speaks,
and into the silence of death,
is given the shout of life.

I imagine the promised little Christian children
in 2nd Century Rome,
in 16th century Europe,
in 20th Century Russia and China,
Today in North Korea,
and Indonesia,

hearing the story of Abram and Sarai
and Terah, and the promise,
and saying to themselves and one another,

this is us.

This is our story.

This is our father and mother,
this is our grandfather and our household.

Yahweh speaks,
and into the silence of death,
is given the shout of life.

It is Lent 2.

We pick ourselves up,
pack ourselves up,
and move on out
in this 6 weeks with Jesus and the disciples,

with Abram and Sarai,
with Moses and the people out of Egypt,
with the prophets and the people out of Babylon,

the Magi,
the Apostle Paul
and all the church,

and we journey on.

Whatever barrenness befalls us.

Whatever fears fold over us.
Whatever circumstances challenge us.
Whatever of our humanity hinders us.

This is our story,
and we have been here many times,
before.

Yahweh shouts to us,
in the silence that engulfed Abram
and his household,

“You will become many.”

Yahweh shouts to us

in the Apostle Paul,
who in turn shouts to us
in the resurrection of Jesus,
of Abrams God,

”Who gives life to the dead
and calls into existence
the things that do not exist.”

Yahweh shouts to us
in the Gospel of John,

as we come by night
not understanding what is happening,

telling us once again
that only miracle is sufficient here,

“Do not be astonished...
you must be born from above.”

Whatever befalls us
the promise is the same;

life.

To Abram; much life.
In Paul; resurrection life.
From John; new life.

All of it; miracle life.

Into the silence of death,
Yahweh shouts life,

again
and again
and again
and again.

This is our story.

In Lent,

we journey with all the promised children
who sat in different and difficult places
and heard this story,

and we say with them all;

this is us,
this is our father and mother,
this is our grandfather and our household.

This is our story.

Yahweh speaks and Abram goes.
Yahweh speaks and the church goes.
Yahweh speaks and we go.

Yahweh promises and Yahweh fulfils.
Abram is the father of Yahweh's people.
Thanks, be to Yahweh.

Amen.