

Genesis 12:1-8

If you've seen the movie, Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade, you probably remember the scene where Indy is standing at the edge of a **cliff**. The room he needs to get to in order to save his father's life is on the other side of a wide **chasm**. The **problem** is that there's **no bridge** across the seemingly bottomless pit. Indy needs to take **A Leap Of Faith**, so he slowly holds his foot out, and then steps forward into the abyss, but as soon as he **does**, he finds **solid ground** beneath his foot. To his surprise, there actually **is** a **bridge** there - a bridge which was painted to look exactly like the **pit**, so that no one would be able to **see** it when they looked down. It's a pretty **dramatic** scene, as anything involving a **Leap Of Faith** usually **is**. Today, we're going to take a look at the story of the Call of Abram, and as we do, we'll see how **his** great **Leap Of Faith** is an encouragement to **us**, for those times when **we** are asked to make **Leaps Of Faith** in **our** lives.

Our sermon text for today introduces us to one of the most important figures in Bible history - **Abraham**. At the time of our text, he was still known as **Abram**. We don't know very much about Abram's life up to this point, and that's really not very important. Who he **was**, what he **did** for a living - how much **wealth** he had accumulated - all these things are **secondary** compared to what **God** was going to do **through** Abram from this point **on**. Actually, this story isn't really about **Abram** at all. It's about **God**, and how He **chose** Abram, and **called** him to be the father of His **special** nation. Here's how that call **sounded** to Abram, "*Get out of your **country**, and away from your **relatives** and from your father's **house** and go to the land that I will show you.*" Abram didn't know **where exactly** this call would **take** him. He only had the command: "*Get out.*" **Following** that command was going to take **A Leap Of Faith**.

Now, if these were the **only** words that Abram heard from the LORD, following this command would have been a very **frightening** thing for him to do. How could he even be **expected** to give up **so much**? How could he know that he and his family were even going to **survive** on this journey? And what about the family he was **leaving behind**? What was going to happen to **them**? All these questions and **more** would have been circling through Abram's brain. But that's **not** what happened, because the LORD **did** say more to Abram - **much** more. God went on to say, "*I will make you a great **nation**. I will **bless** you and make your name **great**. You will be a **blessing**. I will **bless** those who **bless** you, and I will **curse** anyone who **dishonors** you. All the families of the earth will be **blessed** in you.*" God didn't send Abram off into a dark **abyss**. He gave him the **promise** of a **bright** and **successful** future.

When was the last time **you** were asked to take **A Leap Of Faith**? I don't think the LORD has ever asked **any** of us to do exactly what He asked of **Abram** - to leave our **home** and our **family** and go to some **unknown** place. But perhaps we **have** been asked to make **A Leap Of Faith**, and we haven't even **realized** it. Every time we have an opportunity to share the **Gospel** with someone who doesn't know **Jesus**, God is asking us to take **A Leap Of Faith**, and to be a **witness** for Him. Those of us who have been blessed with a **spouse**, have **also** been asked to take **A Leap Of Faith**, by carrying out our God-given responsibility to live as Christian husbands and wives. And of course, if we have **children**, we know that being a Christian **parent** requires taking **lots** of **Leaps Of Faith**. And the list of **Leaps** goes on and on. Should we **move** or **stay put** - should we **buy** a house or **rent** - should I **take** the job offer or **not**.

Sometimes those **Leaps Of Faith** can be **frightening**, and unfortunately, that might cause us to be **timid** - to **hesitate** - or even to **pass up** on an opportunity which the LORD has placed on our doorstep. Therefore, it's important for us to recognize that the LORD is **never** just asking us to take **A Leap Of Faith**. But rather, whenever He asks us to **Take A Leap**, He also gives us the **promise** that He will be **with** us, and that He will **bless** us. Just take a moment to think about all the promises God has made to **us** - the promise to be **with** us and to **bless** us - the promise to always **love** us no matter what - the promise to **forgive** us for the sake of His Son, Jesus - the promise to build up our **faith** as we turn to Him in His **Word** and **Sacraments** - the promise to give us the proper **words** to speak when we're **witnessing** for Him - the promise to **strengthen** us through His Holy Spirit in all our times of **weakness**. These are promises we can **count** on, because they are promises which have come from our faithful **God**.

Now let's go back and take a look at how God was faithful in carrying out all the promises He made to **Abram**. God had promised, "*I will make you a **great nation**,*" and Abram's descendants became as **numerous** as the sand on the seashore. And not only were they great in **number**, but as God's chosen people, they were greatly **blessed** beyond any other nation on the face of the earth. God had promised, "*I will make your **name** great,*" and apart from **Jesus** Himself, is there any name **greater** than the name of Abraham? **All believers** are his spiritual descendants. Both the **Jews** and all the **Arab** nations trace their human ancestry through him, and nearly everyone **else** in the world has at least **heard** of him. How much **greater** could his name **be**? And then there is God's **greatest** promise of all, "*All the families of earth will be **blessed** through you.*" Through Abram and his descendants, God brought **Jesus** into the world. And Jesus brought **eternal**

blessings to all people through His perfect **life**, and His innocent death on the **cross**. Jesus brought full and free **forgiveness** for the sins of the whole world, and there can be no greater **blessing** than that.

Our reading tells us that Abram responded **immediately**. We read, “*So Abram **went** as the LORD had told him.*” Abram **obeyed**. He was **faithful** to his calling. But it’s important for us to know that it **wasn’t** because Abram was such a **good person** that he packed his bags, and loaded up his donkeys. His **obedience** was a fruit of the **faith** which God had placed in his heart. The author of the letter to the **Hebrews** tells us, “*By **faith** Abraham **obeyed** when he was called to go to a place that he was going to receive as an inheritance, and he **left** without knowing where he was **going**.*” Abram had a strong **faith** in God’s promises. So, at God’s command, Abram **went** - and then when he **arrived** at his destination, he **praised God**. Our text continues, “*There he built an **altar** to the LORD and proclaimed the **name** of the LORD.*” Abram knew that it was the LORD who had brought him this far. And he knew it was the LORD who would **continue** to be with him **wherever** he went. It was the LORD that made his **Leap Of Faith** possible.

It’s the same God who makes it possible for **us** to take those **Leaps Of Faith** day after day. He hasn’t just **made** promises to us. He has **kept** His promises. He sent His Son, **Jesus**, to be our Savior. He has washed us **clean** of our sins. He **strengthens** us through the Gospel. He is **with** us. That’s our **reality**. As we trust in our faithful **God**, and believe His **promises**, we are then able to **respond**. We can say **yes** to the **opportunities** God places into our lives. We can carry out our God-given **roles** in ways that are God- **pleasing**. And in the end, **God** is the one who will receive all the **praise**, because our **Leaps Of Faith** are not all about **us** and the great things **we** can do. They are about our great **God** and the things He has done **for** us.

So the next time you are faced with **A Leap Of Faith**, remember **Abram**. The next time you are standing at the edge of the **cliff**, and you are asked to step **out** of your comfort zone and do something **challenging** for the LORD, don’t be **afraid**. We can **take** that step because we know that our foot will land **solid ground**. We have the firm promises of a **faithful God** to rely on. And there is **nothing** more solid than **that**. Amen.