

Through you, all will be blessed.

In Genesis 12, we have Abram and Sarai. They are about to go on a journey that God commands him to go.

When the Lord said to Abram, “Go from your country and your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you.” Genesis 12:1.

In his age of 75, he was asked to move to a place that was unknown to him. Probably, he didn’t expect to hear from God for such a high demand.

What kind of feeling or feelings did Abram feel? What was his first reaction?

It must have been hard for him to move, for he had many furniture and belongings. His back would soar, and his strength was not the same as it used to be, and so on. I wonder who helped him and how he managed packing and moving after 75 years of life in one place?

Because last week, we moved into the manse. We have lived in the Caringbah manse for 10 years. During the 10 years, we added up a lot of stuff, from my books to children’s books and clothing. Many, many things. I tried to throw many things that I think I don’t need anymore as I prepare to move. But still, it was a big move. I called a removalist. They came with two men, but still, it took a long time. I couldn’t have done it without my boys.

I guess that unpacking boxes is still waiting for me. And putting the stuff into the right place, also. You know all about it.

I wonder how Abram handled all his moving when he was 75 years old. It was possibly an overseas trip or a difficult one. I wonder how he managed packing and unpacking stuff. I guess that he did it with obedience.

Even more difficult was that he was travelling to an unknown journey, travelling without knowing where he was going.

In these difficult circumstances, at an awkward time of his age, God called him for a new mission.

The new mission would be “God would bless him, and he will be a blessing to one another. And through him, all people will be blessed.” Genesis 12:3.

God is calling Abram to be a blessing to all people. It is not something that he has to do in order to be a blessing, but it is God's promise for Abram and Sarai.

To become a blessing to one another is like one of the main themes of the Old Testament. It is also one of the God's promises for the Israeli people, and it demonstrates how God is active in keeping his promise for his people.

God begins his promise first through Abram, and his family as his mission.

You will be a blessing for others, for all, all nations, and all creation.

God's basic word to Abram is that God will make Abram a great nation, bless him, and his family. He will be a blessing for all people.

This promise is very similar to the words that we can find in John 3:16 and 17. John 3:16 explains how the promise of God becomes a blessing to all people. How God will keep his promise through Abram becomes more exclusive and detailed.

God so loved the world; he gave his only Son to the world. And save the world through him. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. John 3:16.

God chose Jesus to bless and restore relationships with people who are perishing.

God makes his promise clear and keeps those promises to his people.

Whoever believes in him is not condemned. Which means, God's love is inclusive; he embraces all people regardless of who we are or what we have done.

He is not selective when he comes to bless people; he is not blessing certain people or categorising special people and disregarding bad, unclean people. But he blesses all people.

A word world in John 3:16 in Greek, cosmos, it refers to a whole world, not just one part of the world, some people who are in the one small part of the world, but John is referring to the world, as the whole world. God is aiming to save the whole world.

God's promise continues in Genesis 28:5, how God keeps his promises. "I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will not leave you".

That is how God gave a promise to Abram when he was on the journey to the unknown.

God called Abram to be a blessing for all people.

The blessing that the message refers to is more than just feeling lucky or having a good day. Blessing means that we have a deeply rooted relationship or are empowered by someone.

When we are deeply related, have a relationship, that is when we are blessed. And the blessing stands as a gift of God to the world in the Scripture. It is a metaphor of a journey for the life of faith.

God is described as someone who is in charge, and Abram is the agent through whom God works. It is God who works on behalf of the world.

There is no doubt that we have many challenges and hardships all around us.

We recognise that our lives are busier compared to previous times.

We get challenges to make the gospel more relevant to make sense of this world where we are living.

Sharing the Christian message is more restricted by the regulations of the government in many places, including workplaces, and we can be anxious about our ability to do what we can do.

One of the challenges that we are concerned about is the future of our church and about our children, their relationship with the church.

Abram's story speaks to us, and John's message relates to us in this challenging time more than ever.

The promise of God speaks to us through Abram and throughout generations that "I will be with you always." God keeps his promise

through John's gospel message that Jesus came to save us from the condemned world in John 3:16 and 17.

In this unknown journey, we are like to begin a new journey. The journey that is secure and God's spirit accompanies us and empowers us to face a future that we may feel uncertain.

It's like moving a house in the age of 75, not easy, insecure, and unknown, but the promise of God is with us, that his Spirit accompanies us and empowers us in our journey.

We are blessed because we are in a deep relationship with God in our uncertainty. We are confident to go where God is leading us.

In this challenging time, we who are blessed by the relationship with God are to be a blessing to others. That is the mission that God passed on to Abram. God is sending us, wanting us to be a blessing to another.

Abram's journey reminds us of and calls us to be a blessing to one another, a blessing to our children, a blessing to our family, and a blessing to others.

God is calling us to deepen our relationship with God, with one another.

That is what the blessing for one another means in the context where we are living: to have a good relationship with God. For those who are in the relationship are really blessed.

Surely, our readings give us the main theme of the Bible, in John's gospel, 3:16: God loves you and me, the whole world.

And He has promised us that whatever happens to come, we have God's promise of redemption secured through Christ Jesus.

God speaks to us in this time, in the midst of fear and uncertainty of this world, in the midst of an uncertain future: the promise of God is ever with us, so that we become a blessing to one another.

Through you, all will be blessed. Amen.