

## **Genesis 12: 1-9**

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.

<sup>2</sup>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.

<sup>3</sup>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.’

<sup>4</sup> 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.

<sup>5</sup>Abram took his wife Sarai  
and his brother’s son Lot,  
and all the possessions  
that they had gathered,  
and the persons  
whom they had acquired  
in Haran;

and they set forth  
to go to the land of Canaan.

When they had come  
to the land of Canaan,

<sup>6</sup>Abram passed through the land  
to the place at Shechem,  
to the oak of Moreh.

At that time  
the Canaanites were  
in the land.

<sup>7</sup>Then the LORD appeared to Abram,  
and said,

‘To your offspring  
I will give this land.’

So he built there  
an altar to the LORD,  
who had appeared to him.

<sup>8</sup>From there he moved on  
to the hill country  
on the east of Bethel,  
and pitched his tent,  
with Bethel on the west  
and Ai on the east;

and there he built an altar to the LORD  
and invoked the name of the LORD.

<sup>9</sup>And Abram journeyed on by stages  
towards the Negeb.

## **Matthew 9:9-13, 18-26**

9 As Jesus was walking along,  
he saw a man called Matthew  
sitting at the tax booth;  
and he said to him,  
'Follow me.'

And he got up and followed him.

10 And as he sat at dinner in the house,  
many tax-collectors and sinners came  
and were sitting with him and his disciples.

<sup>11</sup>When the Pharisees saw this,  
they said to his disciples,

'Why does your teacher  
eat with tax-collectors and sinners?'

<sup>12</sup>But when he heard this,  
he said,

'Those who are well  
have no need of a physician,  
but those who are sick.

<sup>13</sup>Go and learn  
what this means,  
"I desire mercy, not sacrifice."

For I have come to call  
not the righteous  
but sinners.'

18 While he was saying these things to them,  
suddenly a leader of the synagogue came in  
and knelt before him, saying,

'My daughter has just died;  
but come and lay your hand on her,  
and she will live.'

<sup>19</sup>And Jesus got up and followed him, with his disciples.

<sup>20</sup>Then suddenly a woman  
who had been suffering from haemorrhages for twelve years  
came up behind him and touched the fringe of his cloak,

<sup>21</sup>for she said to herself,  
'If I only touch his cloak,  
I will be made well.'

<sup>22</sup>Jesus turned, and seeing her he said,  
'Take heart, daughter; your faith has made you well.'  
And instantly the woman was made well.

<sup>23</sup>When Jesus came to the leader's house  
and saw the flute-players and the crowd making a  
commotion,

<sup>24</sup>he said, 'Go away;  
for the girl is not dead but sleeping.'  
And they laughed at him.

<sup>25</sup>But when the crowd had been put outside,  
he went in and took her by the hand,  
and the girl got up.

<sup>26</sup>And the report of this spread  
throughout that district.

## Reading Torah This Week

The church hears selections from Genesis this season –  
Last week, the creation myth, this week, the Avram legend  
We shift from Gen 1-11 universal myths, to flood and Babel,  
to Gen 12-25 Avram, one people, our people, among others

In synagogue sabbath readings, this is called *lech lecha*  
'get up and go' – from what, to what?

Gen 12 claims a trip from south Iraq mouth of Tigris Euphrates,  
up through Aram, our Turkey and Syria,  
pausing at future key worship sites in Canaan,  
ending up in Egypt tempting Pharaoh with Sarai's beauty!

This is 'etiological legend' stuff –  
stories that from our 'us here now' with 'them there then'  
as John L did last week, it's UCC tic-tac-toe comparing roots  
there's an abbreviated version for Isaac,  
then a much longer one for Jacob-Israel

We are to read this from the pov of descendants of Avram:  
'my ancestor was a wandering Aramean'  
and the next phrase claims Exodus and a bit of Gen 12:  
'and we were slaves in Egypt'

from Palm Sunday 2017 – see Fox translation of Gen 12  
<http://www.billbrucewords.com/2017/04/get-up-and-go-palm-passion-sunday.html>

from Picnic Sunday 2005- 'channel-surfing' before 'streaming'  
<http://www.billbrucewords.com/2005/06/surfing-abraham.html>

J. Kameron Carter's "Race: A Theological Account" haunts me:  
we can read Avram as racists, 'us' out to hegemonize,  
or as leaving our subculture, to make a people among peoples  
Avram claimed, and abused, by Judaism, Christianity, Islam!

## Reading Gospel This Week

The church gets back to Matthew for the summer –  
Jesus' ministry in word and deed, after Sermon on the Mount:  
known by the company he keeps, bringing life, healing

In the 'post-it note' picture of making gospels:  
Mt 9:9-13 parallels Mk 2:13-17 and Luke 5:27-32  
The others call the tax collector 'Levi'  
(tradition uses this to claim 'Matthew' as author of this book)  
v13 adds a quote of Hos 6:6 on mercy and sacrifice

Jesus is allied with collaborators with Rome, taxing agents  
and with 'sinners' or '*am haares* contrasted with Pharisees  
was it class, ethnicity, or religiosity that resonated most?  
my best guess is to call this a 'big tent' gospel

We skip a 'post-it' note in v 14-17 in the lectionary  
paralleled in Mk 2 and Luke 5 as above...

We start again with a woman and a girl healed –  
much shrunk from Mk 4:21-43, Lk 8:40-56 Jairus' daughter  
this version closer to Luke than to Mark

Tied to the first note, the issue of 'unclean' comes up –  
the bleeding woman's touch makes Jesus ritually unclean  
she takes initiative, miraculous power flows from him

taken as a pair of actions, the issue of 'healing' stands –  
from chronic incurable bleeding, or even infant mortality –  
how does your modern worldview square the miraculous,  
or your special providence of intercession fit general laws?

- I suspect that you've heard sermons on both issues:
1. I resist supersession, Jesus offering 'new improved' replacement of rule-bound Judaism with free grace
  2. I accept that gospels pile up miracles and exorcisms, Jesus not just 'making us think' teaching, but also 'making a change' healing/acting/realigning