Take the Adventure the Lord has for You!
The Voyage of the Dawn Treader

Vienna Presbyterian Church
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Genesis 12:1-4

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Let’s talk about adventure. There are several words with overlapping meanings that we often use to describe the ways our lives unfold. There is Journey, in which we often speak more about the experiences of the journey than its destination as in, “Life is about the journey.” Then there is Quest, which is more about the destination, the worthy goal than the experiences of getting there. We have Pilgrimage, which can be a journey or a quest to a sacred person or a sacred place. Finally, the word adventure carries the sense of an undertaking – perhaps with some risk – perhaps with excitement or danger. An adventure may be a part of any journey, quest or pilgrimage.

Adventure may simply be the events of an ordinary day. Wednesday morning, I was at my desk at home. I had decided not to come into the office in order to do other things. My cell phone rang. It was Ann Marie, who thought I’d left the house. “Honey, would you pick something up for me at the tailor across the street from VPC?” I knew she was flying the next day and that she needed that article of clothing. “Sure, honey.” As I headed out the door, I thought the track of the entire day had changed and it was time to take the adventure our Lord had for me. Somethings transpired that would never have happened if I’d stayed home! It was all an ordinary daily adventure. Yesterday, Brian and Courtney Molle were married beginning an adventure for a lifetime.

A few weeks ago, I flew to Los Angeles to attend the Memorial Service of a dear friend, Don Berns. Don was an amazing athlete, a varsity tennis player at Duke, a brilliant golfer and so on. When he was around 30 years old he was diagnosed with Parkinson’s, which he battled for 40 years. His son told me he took 28 pills seven times a day! Yet, I saw Don do so many things an ordinary person
would have been terrified of trying. Don saw life as the adventure God gave him and he took that adventure with all his heart. My mentor, Jim Tozer, summarized the Book of Psalms in this simple but profound sentence, “We walk together in hard and in pleasant places and we know the presence of our Lord in all of them.” Some of our adventures are very hard. Some of them quite pleasant.

So, when you think of your own adventures, you may think of a trip you are going to make or a house project you are working on, or some aspect of your employment, or an upcoming golf game, or an illness you are coping with, or a person in your life who requires your full attention. An adventure is virtually any experience of life that absorbs your energy and captures your mind as you trust our Lord to be with you.

Our text for this morning, Genesis 12:1-4, describes the beginning of one of the greatest adventures ever recorded, that of Abram and Sarai, later known as Abraham and Sarah. They are living the good life in an upper crust community known as Ur of the Chaldees. Abram is seventy-five years old. Retired. I imagine he was a member of “C.A.R. P.” - the Chaldean Association of Retired Persons! He’s just minding his own business when God speaks to him. “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you.” I can just imagine Abram’s later conversation with Sarai. “Move? Move where?” “I don’t know, Sarai. The Lord said, ‘To the land which I will show you!’” God was asking them to trust Him and to leave the safe and familiar and to take the adventure the Lord had for them – just as our Lord is asking you to take the adventures He has for you!

All of which brings us to the movie for today. We are having a lot of fun with our summer “At the Movies” series. I absolutely love the seven books of the Chronicles of Narnia by C.S. Lewis. They give me a fresh perspective on the concept of adventure. Our movie this morning is an adaption of the book of Narnia, “The Voyage of the Dawn Treader.” Let me introduce you to a few of the characters. There are Edmond and Lucy who had been to the special land of Narnia before and where they had reigned as high
King and Queen with their brother and sister, Peter and Susan. There is their cousin, Eustace, who begins as a brat, a snob and a snot! There is Caspian, the current King of Narnia and there is Reepicheep, the valiant mouse. Finally, there is Aslan, the Great Lion, the creator of Narnia and whose role in Narnia is that of Jesus Christ in our own world.

“The Voyage of the Dawn Treader” is very much about adventure. High adventure. Joyful adventure. Terrifying adventure. Selfish adventure. Redeeming adventure. Watch this trailer and just watch it for the sense of adventure that shines through it. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IwaFwqR0mJo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IwaFwqR0mJo)

Can you sense the press of adventure — gratifying, satisfying, electrifying and terrifying adventures that came their way? That’s how life and how adventure works. Sometimes you take the adventure and sometime it takes you. Which do you think happens in this scene? [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aGV9-jqDTzc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aGV9-jqDTzc)

Clearly at first the adventure takes them. However once in Narnia, Edmund and Lucy, who had been there before, immediately grasp and enter boldly into this new adventure whereas Eustace only wants to escape back to England.

Years ago, Ben Johnson, a friend of mine, was a professor at Columbia Seminary in Atlanta. Ben also ran a modest Christian publishing company by the name of CTS Press. Ben called me one day to say, “Stan I am retiring from my work at the seminary and I am going to sell CTS Press and I am going to sell it to you.” I said, “What?” He said, “You heard me. I am going to sell it to you?” I said, “Ben, I know a thing or two about being a pastor but I don’t know a thing about publishing, marketing, accounts payable and receivable, shipping and so on. I’ve got to pray about this.” He said, “Fine, Stan, you pray about it, but then I am selling it to you!” Morning after morning I awoke at 5 a.m. in a cold sweat. Could I do it? Should I do it? After six weeks of that, I was lying awake one morning thinking if I keep waking up this uptight, can this really be the will of God? Out of the blue and completely unbidden
these words came vividly to my mind: “Take the adventure the Lord has for you!”

Now I knew instantly that those words were a quote from the many books of The Chronicles of Narnia, stories like the “Voyage of the Dawn Treader.” Whenever the leading characters in Narnia are given a task, a difficult, even terrifying task, they would say to one another, “Let us take the adventure Aslan has for us.” For in the fictional world Narnia, Aslan the Lion is the same as the Lord Jesus Christ in our real world. As you read these books, you begin to see its not the external circumstances that are the real adventure – that adventure is the great adventure of trusting our Lord in every moment of our lives. It’s not just take the adventure. It’s take the adventure with the Lord. So, lying in bed, I said to my Lord, “Yes, Sir!

We obtained CTS Press in conjunction with the Vital Churches Institute and that is what launched my work training church leaders around the country. There have been countless blessings – but adventure has also been every bit the mess I imagined it would be. When you say take the adventure the Lord has for you, you say “Yes to the mess” of that adventure, trusting our Lord to carry you through.

Significantly, the Book of Genesis doesn’t say what went through Abram’s mind when God asked him to leave his home. It doesn’t say what Sarai felt, doesn’t indicate how complex the preparations to travel were or how difficult the journey would be. Yet, Abram and Sarai took the adventure our Lord had for them and the world was turned upside down.
Adventures do have a way of revealing our truest character to ourselves and to those who are around us. Let’s look at the character of two persons in the *Voyage of the Dawn Treader*; first Reepicheep and then Eustace. This video captures the spirit of Reepicheep. It is from another movie about Narnia, “Prince Caspian.” [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LSQCecY9rFU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LSQCecY9rFU)

You can’t miss the character of Reepicheep. He is the valiant one. A mouse with the heart of a Lion and the honor of the highest king. Facing a daunting challenge in the *Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, Reepicheep says, “This is a very great adventure and no danger seems to me so great as that of knowing when I get back to Narnia that I left a mystery behind through fear.” If you are nervous about taking some adventure that you are facing, Reepicheep would say, “Buck up little camper and take the adventure the Lord has for you!”

Now let’s look at Eustace. In the movie, even before they land in Narnia, we see he is a brat. In this movie clip we see Eustace stealing food, a serious crime aboard ship. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9iuetrhn2y0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9iuetrhn2y0)

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1 C. S. Lewis, *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, Macmillan; (1973)
In another scene, he runs away from a fight out of cowardice. He complains constantly. You and I often have the opportunity in the midst of our adventures to choose to behave in ways that demean the people who are with us or to reveal our own cowardice and lack of faith. At times, we may take part in adventures that are the result of poor judgement or sin on our part and the truth of our inner selves is plain to see. We know that the heart of God’s big story is Creation – Fall – Redemption. Eustace falls. He acts in such inappropriate ways that he finds himself turned into a dragon! This was a horror to him and to those with him. This clips shows what happened to him. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i9mMNeiY-w0&spfreload=10

Creation – Fall – Redemption. Eustace is redeemed! Aslan returns to the deeply repentant boy his humanity. Eustace no longer complains. He fights with the heart of a Lion. He is humble. Throughout his trials as a dragon, it was Reepicheep who stood by him and comforted him. There are moments in your adventures when you know you have fallen, that you too need someone to redeem you, to repair and restore you. In our real world that redeemer is Jesus. You also need Reepicheeps in your life; men and women who will stand by you even when you are still down.

We end with the great person in the Chronicles of Narnia, Aslan the lion. Near the end of “The Voyage of the Dawn Treader,” Aslan is about to send the children back to England. Lucy asks Aslan if she will ever see him again. Aslan replies, “Dear one, you must learn my name in your world.” In our world, Jesus Christ is the Lion of Judah and the Lamb of God. Jesus took the adventure God the Father had for him, the most profound adventure imaginable. It led Jesus to his self-sacrifice on the cross on our behalf and to his resurrection from the dead and the hope he gives us every day.

When you “take the adventure,” you trust Jesus and you face head on whatever is to come, because whether we live or die we are the Lord’s. You may pray simply, “Lord, whatever this adventure is going to be, whatever joy, heartache or challenge may
come my way, I am going to trust and follow you. *So Abram left, as the LORD had told him* (Genesis 1:4). Abram took the adventure our Lord had for him. Take the adventure our Lord has for you!

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