

PILGRIM HOME CHURCH

The smaller groups in our church community are inside our homes where we go deeper, build friendships, and walk out the Christian life with each other.

HOME CHURCH GUIDE

- + "Breaking the Ice" question (group facilitator)
- + CHECK-INS: Introduce, check-in
- + CARE: Needs in the group
- + COMPASSION: What is the group planning? Are you inviting your neighbours to join in?
- + GROUP ANNOUNCEMENTS Church-wide, group-only
- + DIG IN: Discuss questions as a group
- + END AND HOMEWORK: Final questions, prayer huddles for personal requests. Consider breaking into small groups (huddles) of 2-4, by gender, if large enough.

WARM-UP QUESTIONS:

- When were you on a journey and wanted it to be over? Why? What was happening?
- Have you been on a trip where your transportation broke down? What happened?
- It's somewhat popular to say "the journey is the destination" or "getting there is half the fun". What do you like about this thought? What is troubling?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

The Texts

- Read the story of Abram again. In terms of leaving to find a home you're longing for but never been to yet, what speaks to you in this passage?
- Abraham was challenged in his old age to journey. How is this countercultural to most of us?
- Read **Hebrew 11:8-14**. How do we live in this world while realizing we were made for more? What does this tension teach us? What happens if we give up on it?
- Deconstruction. A journey where we leave something, someone, or some idea behind is a kind of deconstruction. How can this be good or bad?
- Read the **Luke 15:11-31** passage. What was the younger son leaving? What did he hope to gain by deconstructing his life in his father's house?
- J.K.A.Smith reminds us, we really are not so original when we seek to deconstruct and hit the open road. The road is already somebody's idea of where you should go. "*Even when you're alone on the open road you're following somebody. To answer the call of the asphalt is to follow 'them'*" (60). What do you think?
- Do you have other thoughts on these passages or the idea of pilgrimage as a way of deconstruction, and that there is more than one general direction these paths can lead?

PRAYER:

MARCH 1, 2020 LENT 1

DECONSTRUCTION & RESTORATION

WANDERING, DECONSTRUCTIVE IMPULSES, AND THE DECISION TO LIGHT A MATCH AND WALK AWAY...

Deconstruction is the systematic pulling apart of the belief system you are/were in... a major faith transition.

During Lent, we will look into Deconstruction and Restoration phases of life and faith. Many Christians "are deeply fearful and traumatized by their own curiosity, because of the structure in their community and theology." What are we seeking when we feel the impulse to "burn it all to the ground"? Is this journey unique? Where does deconstruction start, continue, or stop? What's next? This Sunday, hear two stories of wandering from home while we sketch out questions to wrestle with through the Lenten Sundays leading to Easter.

KEY TEXTS: Genesis 12:1-9, Luke 15:11-31

Genesis 12:1-9 (NET Bible)

The Obedience of Abram

^{12:1} Now the Lord said to Abram,

"Go out from your country, your relatives, and your father's household to the land that I will show you.

² Then I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you, and I will make your name great, so that you will exemplify divine blessing.

³ I will bless those who bless you, but the one who treats you lightly I must curse, so that all the families of the earth may receive blessing through you."

⁴ So Abram left, just as the Lord had told him to do, and Lot went with him. (Now Abram was 75 years old when he departed from Haran.) ⁵ And Abram took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, and all the possessions they had accumulated and the people they had acquired in Haran, and they left for the land of Canaan. They entered the land of Canaan.

⁶ Abram traveled through the land as far as the oak tree of Moreh at Shechem. (At that time the Canaanites were in the land.) ⁷ The Lord appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." So Abram built an altar there to the Lord, who had appeared to him.

⁸ Then he moved from there to the hill country east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. There he built an altar to the Lord and worshiped the Lord. ⁹ Abram continually journeyed by stages down to the Negev.

Luke 15:11-31 (NET Bible)

The Parable of the Compassionate Father

¹¹ Then Jesus said, "A man had two sons.¹² The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the estate that will belong to me.' So he divided his assets between them.¹³ After a few days, the younger son gathered together all he had and left on a journey to a distant country, and there he squandered his wealth with a wild lifestyle.¹⁴ Then after he had spent everything, a severe famine took place in that country, and he began to be in need.¹⁵ So he went and worked for one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs.¹⁶ He was longing to eat the carob pods the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.¹⁷ But when he came to his senses he said, 'How many of my father's hired workers have food enough to spare, but here I am dying from hunger!¹⁸ I will get up and go to my father and say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you.¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired workers."²⁰ So he got up and went to his father. But while he was still a long way from home his father saw him, and his heart went out to him; he ran and hugged his son and kissed him.²¹ Then his son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'²² But the father said to his slaves, 'Hurry! Bring the best robe, and put it on him! Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet!²³ Bring the fattened calf and kill it! Let us eat and celebrate,²⁴ because this son of mine was dead, and is alive again—he was lost and is found!' So they began to celebrate.

²⁵ "Now his older son was in the field. As he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing.²⁶ So he called one of the slaves and asked what was happening.²⁷ The slave replied, 'Your brother has returned, and your father has killed the fattened calf because he got his son back safe and sound.'²⁸ But the older son became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and appealed to him,²⁹ but he answered his father, 'Look! These many years I have worked like a slave for you, and I never disobeyed your commands. Yet you never gave me even a goat so that I could celebrate with my friends!³⁰ But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your assets with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!'³¹ Then the father said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and everything that belongs to me is yours.'

Opening Story

The "Burn it to the Ground" Wandering, Deconstruction Impulse

- + When we call the journey the destination, there are some false hopes we have on the road.

TWO PILGRIMAGES: ABRAHAM JOURNEY VS. PRODIGAL SON JOURNEY

Genesis 12:1-9, Luke 15:11-31

- + Two kinds of restlessness

Abram's Journey

Prodigal Son Journey, Itching for 'Freedom'

"On the road, you're always already following somebody. The question is: Who are you following and where are they headed?"

"When you've been eaten up by your own freedom, and realize the loss of guardrails only meant ending up in the ditch, you start to wonder whether freedom is all it's cracked up to be—or whether freedom might be something other than the absence of constraint and the multiplication of options" (Smith, 63).

Learning from St. Augustine

NEXT STEPS: What kind of Pilgrim are you?