

March 1st, 2026

“The Call of the Spirit to Faith”

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Genesis 12:1-4a, Psalm 121, Romans 4:1-5, 13-17, John 3:1-17

Friends in Christ, today we stand among stories of people who heard the Spirit’s call and stepped into a future they could not see. These texts are not simply ancient stories. They are invitations. They are the Spirit whispering, “Come. Trust. Step forward. I am already ahead of you.”

For Abram, faith begins with a call. When the Lord speaks to Abram, the words are startling: “*Go from your country... to the land that I will show you.*” No map. No timeline. No guarantees. Just a promise and a presence.

Abram’s story reminds us that faith rarely begins with clarity. It begins with **disruption**, a nudge, a stirring, a holy restlessness that says, “There is more for you than this.” And Abram goes. Not because he understands, but because he trusts the One who calls.

Sometimes the Spirit’s call feels like that, a tug toward forgiveness, or courage, or a new beginning. Sometimes it’s quieter: a longing for deeper prayer, a desire to serve, a whisper that says, “It’s time.”

Faith begins when we say, “Yes, Lord... even if I don’t yet know the way.” Our hearts say, “I trust in you to lead me, Lord.”

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In our reading from Psalm 121, Faith walks with a keeper. If Abram shows us the **risk** of faith, Psalm 121 shows us the **comfort** of it. *“I lift up my eyes to the hills, from where will my help come?”*

The psalmist answers with confidence: *“My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth.”*

Faith is not blind wandering. Faith is walking with a keeper who does not slumber. A God who watches our going out and our coming in. A God who stands guard over our fears, our hopes, our fragile hearts.

If Abram teaches us to step out, the psalmist teaches us that we never step alone.

In Paul’s letter to the Romans Church, we are encouraged to explore Abraham’s faith and our own. Paul looks back at Abraham and sees not a hero, but a human being who trusted God’s promise.

In Romans 4, Paul insists that Abraham’s righteousness came not from achievement, but from faith; faith in a God who brings life out of what seems dead, hope out of what seems impossible.

Paul is speaking to a community trying to figure out who belongs. And he says: **Everyone who trusts in God’s promise belongs.** Not by birthright. Not by accomplishment. But by grace.

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Faith is not something we earn. Faith is something the Spirit awakens in us. Think about how is the Spirit encouraging in your walk? How are you feeling the call towards a deeper faith?

In our gospel from John, the Spirit moves Nicodemus in the night. We meet Nicodemus, slipping through the shadows to find Jesus. He is a Pharisee, teacher, a leader, a man who knows the Scriptures. But something in him is unsettled. Something in him is searching. Nicodemus' spirit is restless.

This is at a time when Jesus is making a name for himself, teaching, preaching, healing. And right before Nicodemus's visit, Jesus has just cleansed the temple, furiously flipping tables and condemning the practice of excessive taxes on the poor, and the temple becoming a business not a sanctuary.

Perhaps Nicodemus has felt the Spirit's tug within him, as he witnessed Jesus' bold actions on behalf of the people.

So, he moves through the night, to find out for himself...is this a man of God, a true healer or some charlatan, feigning holiness? Nicodemus comes to Jesus with so many questions.

Jesus tells him, "*You must be born from above.*" Not a second physical birth, but a spiritual one, a birth into trust, into surrender, into the wide-open life of God.

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Nicodemus wants answers and explanations. Jesus offers transformation. Nicodemus wants clarity. Jesus offers the Spirit; the wind that blows where it will, grace that cannot be controlled, love that cannot be contained.

And then Jesus speaks the words that have carried generations of believers: *“For God so loved the world...”* Not condemned it, nor abandoned it...Loved it. A love that inspires faith, builds trust in our God who is steadfast!

The Spirit’s call is always rooted in God’s love for us, moving, transforming, sanctifying.

So, what does the Spirit call us to today?

A call to trust.

Like Abram, we are invited to step into God’s future even when the path is unclear, rocky or even dangerous.

A call to assurance.

Like the psalmist, we lift our eyes and remember that God is our Keeper. That God walks beside us even in the shadows of human sin...especially in dark times.

A call to grace.

Like Paul teaches, faith is not our achievement, it is God’s gift. Freely given, out of pure love. We are so blessed by this incredible generosity.

A call to transformation. Like Nicodemus, we are invited to be born anew into the life of the Spirit.

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Especially in times of restlessness, let us seek God in these times and be transformed as agents for God's unwavering love for the world.

The Spirit's call is not always dramatic. Sometimes it is as gentle as a longing for peace. Sometimes it is as persistent as a question that won't go away, like our friend Nicodemus. Sometimes it is as bold as a new beginning.

But always...always...it is a call into deeper life with God.

Imagine standing at the edge of a forest path at dawn. The trail ahead is misty. You cannot see where it leads. But you hear birds waking. You feel the air shift. You sense that something beautiful is waiting.

Faith is stepping onto that path. Not because you know the way. But because you trust the One who walks with you.

Benediction

May the God who called Abram, the Keeper who watches over our life, the Spirit who gives birth to new beginnings, and the Christ who came not to condemn but to love, save, lead us, keep us, renew us, and call us ever deeper into faith.
Amen.