

“Taking Calvary to the Community: Homes”

Brian Henderson • August 7, 2011

Text: Genesis 18:1-8

When we think of “home” many of us probably think of something different. I like the phrase...home is where the heart is. For some of us when we hear “home” we think of where we live. We think of our house, apartment, condo, townhome, cabin or place in the mountains. We may think of that place where we grew up.

I’ve shared with many of you about the first “home” I remember growing up in, in Masango, Virginia, on Virginia’s Eastern Shore. Our house had no indoor plumbing or even electricity on the second floor. My parents made that old, rustic place into a home in which me and my older brothers still keep many good memories of days long past.

As many of you know...Tara and I left our home, a church parsonage in Pennsylvania just about three years ago to today. And now...for us...our home is in the city of Centennial. I’ve been running for exercise lately in and around Centennial. At one point for one of my runs...I run out of the city limits and then back into Centennial.

As I cross the city line...there is a sign that reads: Welcome to Centennial...the spirit of the past and city of the future.

The spirit of the past and city of the future. As I've thought about this motto this week...I couldn't help but think of our text for today. In one sense our text is about the past and the future. Our text takes place in Abraham and Sarah's home.

This is a fascinating story the depths of which we can only begin to scratch in our time today. At one level...the welcome Abraham and Sarah offer their visitors is reflective of ancient, Bedouin hospitality...hospitality that Bedouin families to this day offer their guests. One chapter later in Genesis, we find Abraham and Sarah's nephew Lot offering similar hospitality to two visitors in his home.

Overall...in the Book of Genesis...Abraham and Sarah's story is just getting started. Abraham and Sarah have encountered God and God has promised them both...even in their advanced years (Abraham is close to his Centennial year) a child. At first we read in chapter 17 that Abraham laughs at this thought.

Here in our text...just a little past where Linda finished reading this morning...we read of Sarah laughing at this idea. Both Sarah and Abraham are then asked the question: "Is anything too wonderful for the LORD?" or as other translators put it: "Is anything too hard for the LORD?"

Might this be a question we should be asking ourselves today? Is anything too hard for God? In some ways...technologically speaking and otherwise...I've come to wonder if maybe we leave God out of our homes...out of our lives a little too much. Perhaps because of our education...because of our level of success...because of our sophistication...because of what we fear others may think of us...we don't welcome as much as we should the reality of who and how God is into the spaces of our lives.

Don't get me wrong...it is important for us to think critically and analyze and contemplate...it is important for us to use our minds. Benjamin Franklin is said to have said: "A house is not a home unless it contains food and fire for the mind as well as the body."

But sometimes...I wonder if we just forget what it is to have faith...even to believe that God can do immeasurably more than we think or can imagine.

Tara, the kids and I were at the Denver Aquarium on Friday. We had a great time. The exhibits at the aquarium are excellent. As we were exiting the final exhibit I overheard one mother say to another mother, "After seeing all of this, I can't help but be more grateful for the amazing and wonderfully creative God we serve."

Is anything too hard for the Lord? As we live and work and play where we do...as we live and work and play together even here in our church home...will you give this question more thought and consideration?

We can be assured that God will do God's part. The challenge often is for us to do ours. What can you do to make your house or apartment or townhome or wherever you live be a home in which people can gather and feel safe and be welcomed and loved and cared for...what can you do to make your home be a place that reflects an understanding of God...of faith...of service for others to emulate?

Someone said to me this week, "Brian...don't forget...God is at work too." I must admit, even as your Senior Pastor...I need to be reminded every now and then that *God is at work too*. What we do...we do not just with our own strength and effort...but God is at work with us and through us and yes...even for us.

God is at work in the past...in the present...and God will be at work in our future. This was the story of Abraham and Sarah...and this is the story of the meal we're about to share.

For in truth...this meal is intended to remind us of the past so that we can live in the present always with a sense of hope for the future.

At the risk of sounding overly simplistic...how can you make more room in your home for God today? How can we make more room for God in the work we seek to do together here at Calvary?

I know several of our children and youth made commitments of faith at Green Lake and Quaker Ridge this year...children and youth...you know who you are...I encourage you to not forget the commitments you've made...keeping making room for God.

Together...as seek to reach out to our community...let's not limit God. Let's not limit ourselves. I'm fond of quoting William Carey, one of our Baptist forebears...William Carey said: "Expect great things from God [then] attempt great things for God."

Calvary...let's do no less. Amen.