



Promises at the Crossroads of History and Hope

Warm-up Question

*When have your past and your future intersected?
Was the intersection positive, negative, or neutral?*



Photo by [Hadija](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Discussion Questions

1. What do you see in this image?
2. What do you feel looking at this image?
3. What stories from your own life does this image bring to mind?
4. What stories of the world does this image bring to mind?

Promises at the Crossroads of History and Hope

Primary Reading [Genesis 12:1-4](#)

Bible Story Reflection

New beginnings can be both exhilarating and challenging. Sometimes, new beginnings happen because of things we choose or decide. We decide to start something new, take a new job, move to a new place, try a new hobby, begin a new relationship. Other times, we face new beginnings because of things that are beyond our control. A parent gets a new job, and the whole family moves to a new city, new neighborhood, new school. We or a loved one gets sick, and that requires new routines, new practices, a new outlook on both the present and the future. A company or business shifts focus and employees are required to retrain and learn new skills. New beginnings -- we can't avoid them, and however they come upon us, they change our lives.

We never experience new beginnings in a vacuum, however. The past and the future intersect at the crossroads where what has been meets what will be. At that intersection, history and hope become woven together in our life experiences. What has gone before is never completely absent from what is on the horizon, and what is on the horizon cannot fully escape what has already been. At the crossroads of history and hope we live our lives.

The story of Abraham is a story of a new beginning for both God and Abraham, a beginning that marks a significant crossroads of history and hope for the world. The flood has come and gone. People sought to "build a name for themselves" with a tower that reached to the heavens, and God confused their language and scattered them across the earth. History. Now, with Abraham, God does a new thing: God calls one person, and with that call comes the promise of blessing for the whole world. Hope.

Through it all, God remembers. God remembers Abraham. God remembers God's promises. God does the same for us. God calls. God promises. God remembers. Amid the everyday living of our lives, it can be easy to lose sight of this. And so, we turn to the story of the call of Abraham to be drawn again and anew into this new beginning for us and for the whole world. In so doing, we proclaim that God remembers God's promises. We proclaim that in mercy and steadfast love, God remembers each of us – and all of us in all of our new beginnings – at all of our own crossroads of history and hope.

Discussion Questions

1. Abram was called to an extraordinary new beginning. What do you think this was like for him and for his household?
2. When have you faced a new beginning that you did not anticipate? What was it like?
3. God's call of Abram marks a new beginning for God: God chooses one individual for the sake of the whole world. Why is it important to consider the call of Abraham in light of what has gone before it in the Bible story?
4. Share about a time when your own history has clearly informed your present and your future.
5. When God calls Abram, God also makes promises to Abram. Why is this important?
6. How do God's call and God's promises intersect in your own life?
7. How do you think Abram would tell this part of his story?

8. Abram did not volunteer “for the job.” God chose him. God chooses us, too. What does this mean for you?
9. To what are you being called through this story of the crossroads of history and hope?
10. To what is your congregation of faith community being called through this story of the crossroads of history and hope?

Activity Suggestions

Make a “Crossroads of History and Hope” depiction of a significant new beginning in your life. With words and/or images, illustrate what “came before” the new beginning and what came after the new beginning. Reflect upon how history and hope intersected in the new beginning.

In many ways, the cross of Jesus is the ultimate “crossroads of history and hope.” Jesus takes all of our history to the cross and gives us hope. To remember this, do a “cross and band-aid” prayer exercise.

Materials needed:

- A cross that can have things stuck to it. A paper cross will work just fine.
- Band-aids
- Marker

Write on each band-aid the name of a person, place, or circumstance in need of the hope of Jesus. Stick the band-aids on the cross as an act of prayer. Keep the cross in a place where you can add to it throughout the season. Write your own name on a band-aid and keep it in a place where you will see it to remind yourself that Jesus is your hope at any and every crossroads you experience.

For young children: Read [Psalm 25:1-7](#) from a child-friendly Bible. Do a child-attentive variation of the above “cross and band-aid” prayer exercise. Give each child this repeat-after-me blessing: *Jesus loves me. Jesus remembers me. Jesus is always with me. Jesus is my hope. AMEN.*

Prayer Concerns

Those experiencing new beginnings, those starting new jobs, children beginning at a new school

Closing Prayer

Remember me, O God, according to your steadfast love. In the name of +Jesus, Amen.

