

Inaanyayahang tumayo po ang bawat isa

**Welcome Pre-Service Song**

“Praise to the Lord, the Almighty” #327:1-3

ENTERING INTO GOD'S PRESENCE

**\* Call to Worship**

Psalm 96:7-9

Ascribe to the Lord, O families of the peoples, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength! Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; bring an offering, and come into his courts! Worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness; tremble before him, all the earth!

**\* Invocation**

“We lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does our help come? Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.”

Psalm 124:8

**\* God's Greeting**

**Romans 1:7**

To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

**\* Opening Prayer**

Tayo po ay manalangin

**\* Song of Praise**

“Give Thanks to God, for Good Is He” (Psalm 136) #284:1-3

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**\* Scripture Lessons**

**Genesis 12:1-5a**

12 Now the Lord said[a] to Abram, “Go from your country[b] and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. 2 And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”[c]

4 So Abram went, as the Lord had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. 5 And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people that they had acquired in Haran, and they set out to go to the land of Canaan.

**Hebrews 11:8-11, 13-15**

8 By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. 9 By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. 10 For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God. 11 By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised.

13 These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. 14 For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. 15 If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return.

**\* Song of Preparation**

“I Love to Tell the Story” #412:1, 3-4

**\*Prayer before Sermon**

Heavenly Father, open the mouth of thy servant, and fill it with thy wisdom and knowledge, that I may boldly proclaim Thy word in all its purity. Prepare our hearts to receive it, to understand it, and to preserve it. Inscribe Thy law, as thou hast promised, upon the tablet of our heart, and give us the desire and the strength to walk in the ways of thy precepts, to the praise of Thy name and to the edification of the Church. All this, gracious Father, we implore in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord- Amen

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## The Church Part Three: Foreigners Desiring a Better Country

*Genesis 12:1-5a; Hebrews 11:8-11, 13-15*

Rev. Nollie Malabuyo • July 9, 2023

Mga kapatid kay Kristo, Ito po ay ang ikatatlong sermon na nakapaloob sa serye ng mga sermons patungkol sa biblical, theological at historikal na aspeto ng “Church” or ng Iglesia. Sa serye po na ito ating matutunghayan ang ibat-ibang pangalan na ginamit ng bibliya sa usaping pang iglesya. Ilan sa mga itinawag sa “Church” ay **redeemed of Israel, Zion , vineyard of the Lord, temple of God, his flock at ang Bride of Church (or Bride of Christ)**

The first in the series was “The Church, Gardeners and Guardians,” an exposition of the Garden of Eden as **God’s temple** and Adam and Eve as the **first church**. Sila ay inatasang gampanan ang paggawa at pangangalaga sa halaman bilang pangunahing taga-pangasiwa. Inatasang magtrabaho sa ikasasagana ng lupain at upang mapangalagaan din na hindi makapasok ang kasamaan , na kanila naman hindi natupat nuong hindi nila na-itaboy palabas si satanas.

The second in the series was “The Church, Shipbuilders and Lifesavers,” Ito naman ay ang aralin patungkol kay Noah at sa kanyang sambahayan bilang isang iglesya at ang Arko na nagligtas sa kanila ay bilang si Kristo .

Today, we will meditate on “The Church, **Foreigners Desiring a Better Country**,” Na kung saan ating pagninilayan ang buhay ni Abraham, Sarah at Lot bilang mga dayuhan, o mga taga ibang bayan at manlalakbay sa mundo na nagnanais na maging mamamayan ng isang mabuting bayan, ang bayan sa kalangitan na kung saan ang nagdisenyo ay ang Diyos na kanya ding ginawa bago pa lamang lalangin ang sanlibutan

Therefore, our theme this Lord's Day is, **The Church Part Three: Foreigners Desiring a Better Country**, under two headings: first, **Foreigners on Earth**; second, **Citizens of Heaven**.

### The Church, Foreigners on Earth

God first called Abraham in Genesis 12:1, ***“Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you.”*** Sa Genesis 11, si Abraham's at ang kanyang ama na si Terah at ang buong sambahayan ay umalis sa bayan ng UR (na sa panahong ngayon ay matatagpuan sa katimugan ng Iraq) upang pumunta sa Canaan na may halos isang libong milya pa kanluran (west) ang layo. Ayon sa mga “archaeological findings”, ang Ur ay isang mayamang syudad, may mga produktong maganda ang pagkakagawa at sentro ng teknolohiya ng panahon na iyun. Sa hindi maipaliwanag na dahilan, si Abraham ay nanirahan sa siyudad ng Haran na anim na daan milya naman pahilaga (na sa ngayon ito ay ang southern Turkey.)

Sa aklat ng mga Gawa chapter 7, mababasa natin ang pahayag ni Stephen patungkol sa utos ng Diyos kay Abraham na pumunta sa ilang na lugar habang sya ay nasa UR, na sinasabi ***“The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran”***. Walang reklamo at pakikipagtalo, nilisan nya ang kanyang pamilya at ang kanyang kinalakhang bayan. Sa Genesis 12:4 mababasa natin na siya ay sumunod sa Diyos at nilisan ang bayan ng Haran.

Abraham believed God's promises in Genesis 12:1-3. There were two main promises there. The first was, ***“I will make of you a great nation.”*** But the Preacher says there was a problem with both of them: Abraham was ***“as good as dead”*** and Sarah was ***“past the age.”*** But Abraham and Sarah, though after 11 years had doubted God's promises, **still believed that God would give them “descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as many as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore.”**

The second main promise is, ***“all the peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”*** In Galatians 3:16, Paul says that the promises **were made to Abraham and his descendants through Christ** in whom multitudes from all nations became Abraham's children, heirs of the promises made to him (Gal 3:29). Lahat ng Hudyo at Gentil gaya natin ay mga anak ni Abraham sa pananampalataya kay Kristo bilang Tagapagligtas. Another part of the promise to Abraham is that all peoples **would be blessed through him**. This promise has everything to do with the **church, God's people today, not with Israel**. Christians will bless other Christians, and unbelievers will be enemies of believers.

When Abraham reached Canaan, what did he do? Verse 9 says, ***“by faith [Abraham] went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise.”*** Mahirap para sa kanyang sambahayan na lisanin ang mayamang lupain ng Ur at Haran. Lalong mahirap na manatili sa isang foreign land at manirahan sa isang “Tolda” na gaya ng ginawa ni Abraham. Dati po nuong maliit pa ang church, makailang ulit po kaming nagdaos ng camp sa Tagaytay, magtatayo lang kami ng Tent duon ng isa o dalawang gabi then uuwi na isa itong masarap na experience, pero ang ikaw ay manirahan sa tolda ng mahabang panahon, iyun po marahil ay hindi na ka-ayaaya, but Abraham lived in tent for the rest of his life.

Pero bakit ito nagawa ni Abraham at ng kanyang sambahayan? Ang kasagutan po ay nasa talatang 10 na nagsasabi..” **Sapagkat siya'y umaasa sa lunsod na may mga kinasasaligan,**

**na ang nagplano at nagtayo ay ang Diyos”.** Ang nag-iisang lupa na kanyang pag-mamayari ay yung puntod ng kanyang asawang si Sarah (according to Gen 23) and no more. Though he lived in the land of Canaan, **he lived in tents** with his family. **He lived a different life from his neighbors. He worshipped** one God, the creator in heaven, not many man-made gods. **His life was based on God’s law**, not man-made laws. **His life** was a life that Paul calls **non-conformed to this world, but transformed by the renewing of his mind through the Spirit** (Rom 12:1-2). He was a foreigner, an alien, a stranger, a sojourner, an exile (1 Pet 1:1, 17; 2:11), and a “pilgrim through this barren land,” a land where God does not pour out his spiritual blessings, except to Abraham and his household.

Mga kapatid, bilang mga Kristyano, tayo din po ay mga dayuhan, estranghero, nakikitira at manlalakbay lamang sa mundong ito. In this world, we are surrounded by all kinds of ungodly people who are apathetic to our God and our Savior Jesus Christ, and the Scriptures, if not hate them outright. When Abraham made his pilgrimage from Ur to Canaan, the church then was made up of himself, his wife Sarai, and his nephew Lot. During their sojourn in Canaan, their lives were marred by opposition from the sinful world.

Twice, powerful men—**the Pharaoh of Egypt** and Abimelech king of Gerar—had sinful desires for Sarah, kaya po si Abraham ay napilitang magsabi ng “Half-lie” na si Sarah daw ay kanyang kapatid. Of course this is half-truth ksi po ay half sister naman nya talaga si Sarah. Then **the men of Sodom** wanted to break down the door of Lot’s house to commit sexual immorality with the men visiting Lot. Ang mga churches po ngayon ay napapaligiran din ng mga makabagong kultura na minsan ay hindi natin aakalaing mag-eexist. And paglitaw ng mga moderno at progresibong “Sexual cultures” gaya ng LGBTQ, transgenderism at iba pa . at ang nakaka-bahala ay ito ay niyayakap na din sa ilang mga so called “Christian Churches.”

Evil men and culture surrounding us is not the only cause of troubles in the church; troubles can also **come from our own sinful selves**. How did Lot end up in Sodom? It was all about water rights and grazing rights (abundance of water source and grassland for pasturage). Both Abraham and Lot had great flocks and herds, that the land could not support both of them. So they parted ways. Abraham gave Lot the first choice, **and Lot’s mindset was earthly**. He chose the land close to the cities, particularly Sodom, even when he most likely knew that **“the men of Sodom were wicked, great sinners against the LORD”** (Gen 13:13). Lot was overcome by **“the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions”** (1 John 2:16).

As believers and as a church, especially being a new church like ours, we must guard against **these material desires and pride**. We might not have a big, beautiful worship building full of people, but God does not regard outward appearances and numbers. Nakatuon po ang Diyos sa mga bagay na ito: Ang puso at kaisipan na mapagpasalamat at may kagalakan sa anu mang pangyayari sa buhay, ang puso at kaisipan na nananabik sa dalisay na salita ng Diyos na maipahayag at maituro mula sa mga tapat na mangangaral. That worship according to God’s word alone; and that are united—not in a skillful, eloquent minister—but in **“one body and one Spirit... one hope... one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father”** (Eph

4:4-6). Ipinakita ng asawa ni Lot ang trahedyang na kanilang tinamo dahil sa hindi pag-bitaw ni Lot sa kanilang material desires & pride.

An incident in the life of Abraham has a striking parallel to the most major event in the Garden of Eden. After the serpent tempted Eve, Eve gave the forbidden fruit to Adam, so he also ate the fruit. When God confronted them, **the age-old blames shifting started**: Adam blamed Eve for giving the fruit to him, and Eve blamed the serpent. In the case of Abraham, Sarah offered her servant Hagar to him so she could bear a son for him, and Abraham willingly accepted her offer. After Ishmael was born to Hagar, and Hagar had contempt for Sarah, Sarah blamed Abraham for her troubles. Like Adam and Eve, both Abraham and Sarah had sinned. Abram **“listened to the voice of Sarai”** (Gen 16:2), and Adam in effect also listened to Eve’s sinful offer. Both of them took God’s promise into their hands, doubted God’s promises, and instead listened to their sinful hearts. Abraham and Sarah’s doubting hearts had a disastrous consequence: Na ang mga lahi ni Hagar ay patuloy na may pag-aalitan at hindi pagkakasundo sa mga lahi ni Abraham hanggang sa mga panahong ito.

These two incidents characterize the church from the very beginning: troubles arise often from inside the church. **False teachers, false prophets and heretics** have been around in old covenant Israel and in the new covenant church. The early church, from the first six or seven centuries, was beset by heretical teachings so that councils were called, Kaya po ang mga “Creeds & Confessions” ay naisulat upang maiwasang magkaron ng division sa Church . This situation is still with the church today. Madaming mga tao ngayon sa church ang nakikinig na lamang sa sinasabi ng mga “False teachers” na may hawak na biblia sa isang kamay at ang kanilang mga material na kayamanan naman sa kabilang kamay . But troubles in the church does not end in false teachers. Many in the church listen to ministers who divide the church because of, for examples, their heavy-handed leadership, bad decisions resulting from unwise counsel, preaching from the Internet.

Yun pong paggamit ng tinatawag na “Artificial Intelligence” ay laganap na din po particular sa paggawa ng Sermon. Kaya ng gumawa ng Sermon ang isang pastor sa tulong ng isang APP or application sa loob lamang ng ilang segundo. *Christianity Today* concluded, “A chatbot can **research**. A chatbot can **write**. Perhaps a chatbot can even **orate** (maglahad/magreport). But a chatbot **can’t preach**.”

However, even when Abraham doubted God’s promise with its dire consequences, **he was a faithful and obedient man of God all the way to the end**. He fought against the sinful culture surrounding him **because he was looking forward to God’s heavenly country**. We too must be counter-cultural, **in this world, but not of this world**. He was truly **“set apart”** by God to be holy and righteous, different from the godless world around us. May we reflect this “set-apartness” by our mindset and behavior among our unbelieving neighbors, so they too would ask why we think and behave so differently from them (1 Pet 3:15). The church then and now is God’s chosen people who live on this earth, surrounded by a sinful, godless world and culture, and desiring to live in an eternal, better country.

## **The Church, Citizens of Heaven**

Abraham obeyed because of God's promise of a land, but ultimately, his gaze was heavenward, ***“he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God”*** (v 10). And his desire was ***“a better country, that is, a heavenly one”*** (v 16). The heavenly city is the new heaven and new earth (Rev 21:1-2). Its foundations are the teachings of the twelve apostles of Christ and his prophets (Rev 21:14; Eph 2:20). **But the main foundation is Christ himself, the chief cornerstone of the church (Eph 2:20; Psa 118:22).** As the hymn says, “the church’s one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord.” God is the only designer and builder of the church. He is at the same time the architect, engineer, and building contractor of the church. If God is not the foundation, designer and builder of a church, **then it is not a church.**

Although we are citizens of our earthly countries, we desire and look forward to a better citizenship in a better country where we will all dwell with God forever. All people in that country will be of one faith, one Lord, one mind, and all will be in perfect communion with God and with one another. No more conflicts within God’s people, sufferings, persecution, and death. No more living in tents and campers. There, we would have arrived, no longer aliens, strangers, sojourners and pilgrims, but full-fledged citizens of heaven.

Bagamat tayo mga mamamayan dito sa bansang ito, tayo ay nagnanais at tumitingin na magkaroon ng mas mabuting bayan na kung saan makakasama natin ang Diyos magpakailanman. Na ang lahat ng mamamayan nito ay may iisang pananampalataya, isang Diyos, isang kaisipan, at ang lahat ay may perpektong ugnayan sa Diyos at sa kapwa. Walang hidwaan sa bawat isa, walang paghihirap, paguusig at kamatayan. Wala na ding maninirahan sa tolda o tent. Duon tayo ay dadating at maninirahan hindi bilang dayuhan, estrangero o bilang isang manlalakbay lamang **kundi bilang ganap na mamamayan ng langit.**

Like Abraham, **all true believers must look forward to their final home**, God’s holy, heavenly city. God also calls us to live like Abraham did in our earthly pilgrimage. But our ultimate gaze must always be our eternal residence, the heavenly city (Heb 11:9-10, 13). Though we live in our own homes and own cars and other earthly possessions, we must acknowledge that all of these are temporary and are ***“passing away”*** (1 John 2:16-17). We are dual citizens: citizens of heaven first (Eph 2:19; Phil 3:20), and citizens of our nation second (Rom 13:1-7).

As you think about your life as “pilgrims through this barren land,” Colossians 3:1-2 exhorts us, ***“If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.”*** We are often too occupied and too focused on the cares, thorns and thistles of our earthly existence. Rather, we are to look heavenward, because everything on earth will be of no value; only things that are above matters in eternity. Again, in Romans 8:5, Paul reminds us, ***“For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit.”***

Sa panahong kagaya nito na tayo ay nananambahang sa Diyos, we are transformed from earthly pilgrims to heavenly citizens. In this great reversal, all unbelieving citizens of the world become

the foreigners, aliens and strangers, **while we who worship the true God are changed into permanent citizens of a better, holy, and heavenly country.**

Dear brothers and sisters: Peter says that we Christians are “sojourners and exiles” in this world (1 Pet 2:11). **We are temporary residents of this world,** and exiles in a foreign country.

We must fully participate in the civil, social and cultural life of our cities and nations. We have no enduring earthly city (Heb 13:14), but citizens of heaven (Phl 3:20). Therefore, **we are dual citizens of two kingdoms:** the **earthly kingdom of man** and **the heavenly kingdom of God.** But our **ultimate citizenship is in heaven,** so we also see ourselves as only sojourners and exiles, aliens and strangers in this world.

Yamang natutunan natin na ang kaharian ng Diyos sa lupa ay ang Iglesia , atin pong tandaan ang mga salitang ito : that we are to **participate** in the life of the church. We are **commanded to assemble together** every Lord’s Day for worship; to be **united** in one Lord and one faith; to **obey** God’s commandments; to **repent** whenever we sin; to **hear** the word of God read and preached; to **partake** of the sacraments; to **pray** for the church, for one another, and for our civil authorities; to **use** our spiritual gifts for the building up of the church; to **guard** the church from all false teachings, errors, and divisions; to **live** godly and holy lives; and to **witness** to the world by proclaiming the good news of salvation in Christ to those around us- Let us pray.

\* **Song of Consecration**

*“Take My Life, And Let It Be” #462:1, 4-5*

\* **Doxology** (unannounced)

*“Gloria Patri” #491*

*Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost;  
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.*

\* **Benediction** 1 Peter 5:10-11 - And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. 11 To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

\* **Three fold Amen**