

Impact of One: Faith

Two months ago I was eating breakfast out on our deck.

It was the week before our Centennial Celebration.

There was still no snow on the ground.

I love looking at the hills surrounding Drumheller while I eat my breakfast.

And I started thinking about how God prepared for our congregation.

God planned for us to be here at this time.

We are not here by accident.

It wasn't just someone's idea 100 years ago.

Our history goes back to God's creation.

When God created, everything was good.

The goodness did not last, however, because of one man's disobedience.

We have already looked at the impact of one sinful act.

The beauty of God's creation was marred by an act of disobedience.

It was one self-serving act.

But God used even that act of disobedience to prepare for us.

Because of sin we needed a Saviour.

4,000 years later Jesus came to this earth, born of a virgin Mary.

God in flesh appeared on this earth.

He was the Lamb of God who took away the sin of the world.

He died on a cross.

And through His death we were offered forgiveness.

Those who trust in Jesus for forgiveness are the body of Christ.

The Church of the redeemed.

2,000 years later we still remember the cross.

It is prominent in the life of the body of Christ.

God prepared for the Christian Church from the beginning.

But what about us specifically?

What about the Drumheller Church of the Nazarene?

God prepared for the birth of the Bride of Christ—the Church, in general.

But isn't it a stretch to think God planned for us?

Did He see The Drumheller Church of the Nazarene?

Did He plan for us, you and me, to be here at this place and this time?

I go back to my breakfast on the deck looking out at the hills.

The hills around us tell us why we specifically are here.

In this spiritually and physically fallen world winter would come.

God knew the day would come when people lived in brutally cold climates.

And to survive in that climate, heat would be a necessity.

God provided fuel for that heat.

One of those fuels was coal.

It wasn't an accident that huge beds of vegetation were buried.

It wasn't an accident those beds of vegetation became coal.

It wasn't just coincidence that a river carved out these hills.

God knew people would need exposed seams of easily accessible coal.

A gentleman by the name of Sam Drumheller saw some of the coal.

He bought some land from a Mr. Thomas Greentree.

He then sold some of his new land to the Canadian National Railway.

He also registered a coal mine.

CN laid tracks and the first shipment of coal went out in 1911.

Sam Drumheller started a coal rush.

That area where we now live bears his name.

By 1912 there were 9 working coal mines.

People started pouring in by the hundreds and the thousands.

Many communities were formed around these coal mines.

The Atlas Coal mine website says Drumheller became the fastest growing town in Canada.

Some of your parents may have come to Drumheller to mine coal.

The people of this new town needed God.

People from all over the world were coming.

All because God had a plan!

God always has a plan!

The Atlas Coal mine says it was luck.

Lucky geology and lucky timing brought Drumheller into existence.

Luck has nothing to do with it.

We are not here by accident or luck.

I thought about that while eating breakfast on my deck.

We are here for a reason.

God has a plan for our congregation.

I began to realize with greater clarity that I am here for a reason.

You are also here for a reason.

We are here to put our faith in Jesus.

When we choose to live by faith life no longer has limits.

That is what Paul tells us in Romans 4.

That is what the writer to the Hebrews says.

They are writing about a man called Abraham.

Did you notice how they both described Abraham?

Abraham was a man as good as dead.

His wife Sarah wasn't much better.

He was almost 100 years old.

Abraham and Sarah had no children.

But God made a promise to Abraham.

God told this childless, old couple they would give birth to a nation.

Fathering a nation was a crazy notion.

It was so crazy that Abraham fell to the ground in laughter.

Sarah was 90 years old when the news of giving birth came.

She wasn't quite as obvious as Abraham, but she laughed to herself.

She was well beyond child-bearing years.

But Sarah received power to conceive, even when she was past the age.

It's a good thing God has a sense of humour.

He told Abraham that he would call his son Isaac.

Isaac means "he who laughs".

Maybe you think it is crazy that God anticipated us being here 6,000.

And so what if He did?

We are now 100 years old.

And we live in a small town called Drumheller.

Our best years are behind us.

We should just put in time till we die.

There is something that prevents us from doing that.

It is called faith.

We are told something else about Sarah and Abraham.

Abraham and Sarah were people of faith.

I guess faith has its funny moments.

Things don't always make sense when we live by faith.

Impossible, miraculous things start to happen with faith.

A virgin gives birth to a son.

Angels appear to lowly isolated shepherds.

Wise men follow stars.

God takes on flesh.

Faith realizes something bigger than me is at work.

Faith sees things that don't exist.

Faith makes us move when it doesn't make sense like Hebrews shows.

"Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore." (v. 12)

Faith says "let's go live in tents."

"For he looked forward to the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God." (v. 10)

Faith changes the landscape like Romans reports.

"as it is written, 'I have made you the father of many nations' (v. 17)

"and calls into existence the things that do not exist." (v. 17)

Faith conquers things like death.

"the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead." (v. 17)

Abraham believed God.

Abraham put his faith in God.

The impact of one person of faith is huge.

"that is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants - not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham, for he is the father of us all" (v. 16).

You are not here by accident.

You are here because Abraham believed.

God has a plan for your life.

How will you respond?

God invites you to be part of something impossible.

God wants your life to impact nations.

Abraham was to be the fathers of nations.

But all he needed was to believe God for one child.

He could look at the stars and try to number them.

That's how many descendants he would have.

But it began with one.

That is where your faith begins too.

Maybe your faith in God needs to begin with you.

Maybe you have never trusted Him with your life and heart.

Maybe you are still caught in sin.

Maybe the only hope you have is the wages of sin which is death.

God's grace is enough for you.

His promises do not rest on you and your ability.

His promises rest on His grace and are guaranteed.

You can come to Him this morning and discover His wonderful hope.

"It will be reckoned to us who believe in Him that raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, who was put to death for our trespasses and raised for our justification." (vs. 24-25)

In a moment I'll invite you to take that step of faith.

Maybe your faith in God means you reach out to someone else.

Maybe your faith needs to be shared.

God gave us Christmas to share faith.

Who can you share your faith with this Christmas?

Whose life can you impact with faith?

In a moment I'll invite you to take that step of faith.

"No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, fully convinced that God was able to do what He had promised." (vs. 20-21)

Video - Share the Season

I invite you to reach out to one other person this week.

Next Sunday we will watch part of the Billy Graham **My Hope** video.

It is called **Defining Moments**, and shares the testimonies of three people.

Three true stories of people who discovered God had a plan for their lives.

Faith is a wonderful gift to share.

It is a gift God has shared with you.

As we sing our closing song I invite you to take a step of faith.

Maybe it is a step of personal faith in Jesus to save you today.

Maybe it is a step of faith for someone else who needs Jesus.

You can trust God this morning.

I invite you to come and stand at the front as the Praise Team sings.

Stay for the closing prayer

Song - Your Grace is Enough