# Congregational-Presbyterian Church

 **“Abram to the Rescue”**

**Genesis 14:11-16**

 **June 19, 2022**

When I was eight years old I was kidnapped from the front lawn of our home by a mentally unbalanced homeless man who had somehow convinced me to go with him. Having locked me in the basement of an abandoned building, he returned to my house with the intention of demanding money for my return. By then, the police had arrived and, knowing him from past arrests, they convinced him to take them to where he had hidden me. My dad went with them while my mom stayed home with my four younger siblings. The first person I saw come through the door of my place of captivity was my father, and I knew that I was rescued.

While never again anywhere near as dramatic, my father was a man who rescued me in many ways throughout the years we had together. Whether as a teenager when life felt overwhelming and he’d take me out to breakfast to talk, or later as a young man making my way in the world and always having time to ask how I was doing and listening to my struggles, he was there for me. And when the road ahead was unclear, when Lauri and I wondered where the Lord was leading us, he shared with me his own life’s journey’s questions, doubts and disappointments. He was a father who stood by his son and his family, and I could have asked for no better person in my life.

Our summer sermon series is “Walking with Abraham” and while Abram will eventually become father Abraham, here in chapter fourteen of Genesis he has no children. Still, like my father, he was a man who came to the rescue of those he loved. In the first ten verses of this chapter we learn that a foreign alliance of four kings has gone to war against a local Canaanite alliance of five kings, including the king of Sodom where Abram’s nephew Lot lives with his family. The foreign alliance is victorious, and it is here that we pick up the story in Genesis 14:11-16. I invite you to join me as together we hear the Word of God.

The victorious invaders then plundered Sodom and Gomorrah and headed for home, taking with them all the spoils of war and the food supplies. They also captured Lot—Abram’s nephew who lived in Sodom—and carried off everything he owned. But one of Lot’s men escaped and reported everything to Abram the Hebrew, who was living near the oak grove belonging to Mamre the Amorite. Mamre and his relatives, Eshcol and Aner, were Abram’s allies. When Abram heard that his nephew Lot had been captured, he mobilized the 318 trained men who had been born into his household. Then he pursued Kedorlaomer’s army until he caught up with them at Dan. There he divided his men and attacked during the night. Kedorlaomer’s army fled, but Abram chased them as far as Hobah, north of Damascus. Abram recovered all the goods that had been taken, and he brought back his nephew Lot with his possessions and all the women and other captives.

When word reached Abram of his nephew’s plight, he didn’t sit back and say, “Well, that’s what you get for choosing to live in a place like Sodom.” Instead he quickly got his trained men together to pursue and rescue the hostages. Remember that Abram was in his late ‘70s or early ‘80s. Would you at that age consider going on a military rescue mission? Consider the hardships of such an undertaking, the strenuous journey just to reach the foreign armies, and then the battle to follow. With Abram there was no hesitation. He rushed to the rescue. Abram’s love and concern for his nephew Lot was an enduring and gracious king of love. But, it required a lot of effort.

How does your love and my love for others compare? Are we in the habit of rushing to the rescue, or do we find ourselves standing off to the side, counting the costs, and deciding that the effort will be too much? Abram knew that God had blessed him so he could be a blessing to others, and when the need arose he took that with which God had blessed him and used it to bless Lot and his family, and indeed to bless all the people who had been captured. With what has God blessed us, how is he calling us to use it to be a blessing to others?

People all around us have been captured by the consequences of their sin and the sin of others. Some are living a life of addiction to drugs or alcohol or pornography or a certain standard of living, all of which robs them of the peace and joy that God intends for his creation. Has God blessed you in a way that you can be a blessing to a person in that condition? Some are dealing with chronic illness or poverty or loneliness. Do you have something with which you can bless them? Some are lost spiritually and need someone to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with them. Are you that someone?

When you and I were in need of God’s rescue from our sin, God didn’t shrug his shoulders and turn away. Instead he rushed to our rescue, and look at the effort he made. He didn’t send his servants to fight it out with Satan; he sent his own Son. While there is no record of Abram sustaining any injuries in his rescue of Lot, the Son of God was tortured and killed for our rescue. If you and I are worth such an awesome rescue effort on the part of God, are not the needs of people around us worth our effort? With the Lord at our side and equipped with his blessings in our lives, we like Abram can be people who rush to the rescue of others.