**Series Road Map**

**Series Overview:** What does it take to have the courage to go first? In a world that so often tries to pressure us onto certain paths, how do we blaze our own trail? How do we walk the straight and narrow path that Jesus set before us? Lean in as we learn from some of the heroes of the faith of what it means to be #TRAILBLAZERS.

**Week Overview:** Abraham became the father of many nations, but only after he made the decision to step out—in faith—and trust that if he went first, God would meet him.

***Outline:***

**Grab the Room (Intro):** Intro Vision (Gen 45:5). Abraham 🡪 Genesis 11 & Genesis 12

**Tension (what’s the struggle):** Abraham has to make a choice and so do we. Genesis 11 = All about what man can do. Genesis 12 = All about what God can do. “I will” 6 times in 3 verses by God. “Make you a great nation.” 🡪 Abraham was 75 years old with NO kids!

**Text:**

**THP**: #TRAILBLAZERS GO FIRST.

**Supporting Points:** Partial obedience leads to partial blessing.

As you move, God will assure (12:7)

**Application (call to action)**:

What is God calling you to go first in?

What’s it going to take to work up the courage

Re-establish rock shazack chant?

*Red – Scripture*

*Blue – Personal Story*

*Green – Prop*

*THP/Main Points – Bold*

**Intro:**

NORTHVIEW STUDENTS! WELCOME TO TRANSITION WEEKEND!!! Who’s excited to back in school? No? Didn’t think so. Who’s excited to be back in CHURCH though?! That’s more like it. Hey, I am SO glad to see you guys.

I am SO excited for tonight because not only have we just unveiled our BRAND NEW logo and Northview Students branding, but we are starting a BRAND NEW series tonight that is going to serve as THE word or vision for ALL of Northview Students during the 2020-2021 school year. And THAT is the idea of being a #TRAILBLAZER. We’re going to take a deep dive—over the next five weeks—into this idea and concept of Trailblazers and really identifying what it takes the blaze the trail and to lead the way.

And here’s what I know: each and every one of you is a leader. An influencer. A trailblazer. And we—as a community—are going to seek over the next 5 weeks and throughout the rest of the school year the potential inside of you that God wants to unlock. We’re going to look at some of the heroes of our faith—mostly people who were broken, fractured and sinful like us—that chose to lean into the unknown and IN FAITH walk in step with God down the path He was leading them. And I’m believing that as we choose to follow their examples and ultimately—Christ’s example—we will unleash an army of students who will infiltrate our communities, our city, our state, our nation and this WORLD, blazing trails for Christ in a way that has never been seen before.

Students, I want you to know that tonight, you’re in the right place. Maybe with a new school year, you worked up the courage to give church a try. Maybe this is the year you put yourself out there and decide to finally step into community. Maybe this is the year that you stop making excuses or stop blaming yourself or stop demeaning yourself and you start the search for all God has called you to be. Whatever the case may be, I want you to know, you’re here—tonight—for a reason. For a purpose. For such a time as this. The best is yet to come this year for you. We’re believing it. We’re declaring it. This year is the year that we are choosing to step into the future with boldness, with confidence and we’re choosing to believe that despite the adversity we’re going to face, despite the hardship we’re going to endure, we’ve been called to be TRAILBLAZERS. Amen? Amen!

If you have your Bible, go ahead and turn with me to Genesis chapter 12 (repeat) and I want to read just one verse to you before we jump in tonight and it’s verse 4. And it says this, it says, *“So Abram went as the Lord had told him” (repeat).*

Will you pray with me?

*Prayer.*

*Amen.*

**Tension:**

I think most of us in the room will admit that there have been moments in our life where we feel like we’ve been put at a crossroads. Right? A point where we feel like we can go right or go left and for most of us, one of the choices is usually easy. For most of us, one of the choices is the path of least resistance. And for most of us, one of the choices leads to us missing out on or fulfilling the God-given potential inside of us.

It’s not easy to go right when our mind, our heart, the WORLD is screaming at us to go left. However, as followers of Christ and as Trailblazers, Jesus challenges us to be counter-cultural and obedient to his calling.

**Personal Story:**

*(Story of a time you went right when you could’ve gone left).*

**Text:**

It’s fascinating to read story after story after story in Scripture about men and women—some of whom we’re going to talk about the next few weeks—who chose the difficult, less-traveled, unforeseen path and blazed a trail to GREATNESS. And see, the hard concept for so many of us in 2020 is we are constantly surrounded by “greatness.”

You can get on Instagram, Snapchat, Bleacher Report, ESPN, CNN, E! News and be overwhelmingly inundated with the “greatest” athletes, actors and celebrities who are at the top of their craft. And we WISH that we could be great like that. We PREDICT that we will be great like that. Yet, we fail to recognize that the path to greatness is a path full of adversity. And only those who are strong enough to endure and sustain are the ones who see the fruits of greatness in their life.

I want to focus in tonight on the story of a man named Abram—who was soon renamed Abraham. If you turn with me to Genesis 12, we are met with what’s titled, “The Call of Abram” and it says this, chapter 12, starting in verse 1, it says,

*The Lord had said to Abram, “Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you. “I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing.[*[*a*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+12&version=NIV#fen-NIV-301a)*I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will cursed and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”[*[*b*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+12&version=NIV#fen-NIV-302b)*] So Abram went, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Harran.*

Such a fascinating interaction, isn’t it? Here you have Abram and God—we presume audibly—speaks to Abram and says, “Leave everything and blaze a new trail!” God says, “Abram! Leave everything and follow me! If you do, I will make you into a great nation, I will bless you, I will make your name great. You will be blessing.

Abram is faced with a CHOICE, students. He has God—the CREATOR of the Universe—telling Him, “GO!” Go where? “To the land I WILL SHOW YOU.” Hmm. That’s dicey. I don’t know about that God. You’re not going to tell me where we’re going? This path is untraveled. This path is grown over. This path is unpassable. And God says, “trust me and blaze the trail.” So, what’s Abram do? Verse 4, *“So Abram went as the Lord had told him.”*

God placed a fork in the road in front of Abram. At 75 YEARS OLD with NO kids, God says, “Abram, will you trust me?” I know culture says you’re too old to have children. I know 75 year old’s having children is CRAZY. I know your wife Sarah has been unable to have kids your entire life, but IF YOU WILL TRUST ME, I’ll be with you. Blaze the trail.

And we see that at the essence of a Trailblazer—in their inner core—lies a supernatural courage, a supernatural strength, a supernatural FAITH…**THP: to go first (repeat).** There is no precedent for Abram. There’s no Bible for Abram to look at and say, “Oh yeah, God—the same God who carried \_\_\_\_ through \_\_\_\_. Abram wasn’t a Christian! He didn’t know who God was. Joshua 24:2, *“Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, ‘Long ago,*[*f*](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/joshua/24/2#footnote1)*your fathers lived beyond the Euphrates,*[*1*](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/joshua/24/2#footnote2)*Terah, the father of Abraham and of Nahor; and*[*g*](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/joshua/24/2#footnote3)*they served other gods.”* God got Abram’s attention and Abram listened. Abram chose to step up, to be a Trailblazer, to go FIRST.

Now, why would Abram have the courage to step up and do this? That’s a lot of responsibility for Abram to carry, isn’t it? But go back, read the text, what’s it say? I will show you. I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you. I will make your name great. Six times in 3 verses, God says, “I WILL!” And I want you to know students, that TODAY, He says the same thing. Jesus says, “Come, FOLLOW ME. I will uphold you with mighty right hand.” I have the strength, I have the courage, draw it from me. If you will choose to go all in, if you will choose to jump—face first—into the chasm of faith, God promises to meet you. When he calls, will you obey?

**Truth:**

Man, if only it were that easy, right? Like if only we could just be fully courageous and fully surrendered, our lives would be AWESOME. But, what happens with so many of us? The same thing that happened with Abram. We obey…partially. Ohh, y’all didn’t catch it? We’ve talked Abram up like he’s some god himself, haven’t we? “Man, Abram is just the perfect example. Abram’s a trailblazer! **THP: He went first!** God said go and he said okurrr and went!” “What an amazing guy, I want to be like that!” And you should, Abram is a great example. But he wasn’t the perfect example.

See, Abram, like so many of us, is flawed and selfish and corrupt. And so, God says, “Go! LEAVE EVERYTHING and go! And Abram says okay…and he goes…BUT! Verse 5, he brings Lot with him. Who’s Lot? Lot is Abram’s nephew. And Lot became nothing but trouble and inconvenience in Abram’s life. “Why does that matter, Micah?” Because Abram was commanded to verse 1, “Go out from your family.” Partial obedience. He brought Lot with him. He couldn’t go on his own. **And it shows us that partial obedience leads to partial blessing (repeat).**

And for so many of us, we feel God calling **us to go first**, to blaze the trail, to step into the gap of the unknown, and we’re dipping our toes in, while desperately clinging to whatever we FEEL provides us security. And God is so gracious, that he’s giving you a taste of the blessing, he’s giving you a taste of the life he offers when lived IN him. But, our absence of full obedience is leading to our inability to experience the full blessing of faith in God. Students, hear me, God is calling us to be Trailblazers. To go first and to go full-fledge, all out, all in to the chasm of the unknown.

And this doesn’t mean that we jump irresponsibly. It doesn’t mean we just start jumping into everything, “in the name of the Lord.” It means that we be prayerful. That we be wise and discerning. And when we feel God calling us to blaze the trail, we go, full of obedience and devotion to God—the Great I AM—who will see us through.

**Application:**

The question then becomes, “well, how do I do that?” I’m glad you asked. I think Abram’s story shows exactly how we can step into the unknown with boldness and courage and how we can be a generation that leads the way and paves the path. And the first way we can do that is **1) when God calls, go (repeat).** There are going to be times in your life where you find yourself really comfortable and God might call you into something uncomfortable. There might be times in life where everything is easy, and God might call you into something difficult. There might be times in your life where everything around you is peaceful and God calls you INTO the chaos. Will you go?

Abram couldn’t see and didn’t know the land he was going to, but he packed up his stuff and went. When we commit to the initial “yes” that God is asking from us, it sets in motion a JOURNEY, not a destination. The initial yes is the first of many you’ll have to continue to make.

But, rest assured, because we can be Trailblazers by **2) leaning into the assurances of God.** Because hear me students; **as you move, God will assure (repeat).** Look here, verse 6*,*

*“Abram traveled through the land as far as the site of the great tree of Moreh at Shechem. At that time the Canaanites were in the land.****7****The Lord appeared to Abram and said, “To your offspring[*[*c*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+12&version=NIV#fen-NIV-306c)*] I will give this land.”*

Progress was made. Abram was doing it, he was moving. As far as the site of the great tree of Moreh at Shecem. Abram was making moves and out of his obedience, God came alongside of him and reassured him. He REMINDED Abram WHY he was doing what he was doing.

*“To your offspring, I will give this land*.”

One chapter later, chapter 13, verse 14,

*“The Lord said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, “Look around from where you are, to the north and south, to the east and west.****15****All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring[*[*a*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+13&version=NIV#fen-NIV-334a)*] forever.****16****I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted.****17****Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you.”*

There’s the promise! There’s the reassurance. As you move in obedience and in faith to what God is calling you to students, God will be there every step of the way to reassure you why you’re doing what you’re doing.

And finally, if you want to be a Trailblazer **who goes first**, you have to **3) develop the strength and courage to see the promise through (repeat).** Abram was 75 YEARS OLD when God promised him that he would be a “father of many nations.” And it wasn’t until 25 YEARS later that the promise was fulfilled. After 25 years and a name change, Abraham’s wife, Sarah, gave birth to a son named Isaac at the pristine age of 100. Abraham developed the strength and the courage and the fortitude necessary to withstand 25 YEARS of waiting for a promise. God called Abraham to be a Trailblazer and to go first. In faith, Abraham stepped out, said yes and was taken on a 25-year long journey that led to the fulfillment of God’s promise. Through one child—Isaac—came Jacob and David and Solomon and eventually…Jesus. Abraham not only was the “father” of many nations but the FIRST in the line of the Messiah—Jesus Christ.

**Landing:**

So tonight, I simply want to ask, what is God calling you to go first in? What does this new school year hold for you? How are you going to step out and step towards righteousness when your friends are heading toward destruction? How are you going to go first towards goodness, kindness, wholeness while the world around us seeks fulfilment that leaves them empty? What’s it going to take to work up the courage and the strength necessary to not just tip toe into the chasm of the unknown but jump, feet-first, knowing that God will be there to catch you, uphold you and see you through the entire way?

About a year ago, this guy named Steve came and spoke at our church. And towards the end of his message he made everyone stand up and scream and it was super awkward…but it was powerful. Why? Why do so many of us remember that moment? Because it was a defining moment for us as a community where we declared that we would be STRONG and COURAGEOUS! And so today, I want to reaffirm that commitment. That as we step into this next school year, as we’re pushed and pressed to fall in line, I’m believing and declaring over our community that we will step up, that we will step out, that WE WILL GO FIRST. With strength and courage.

And as some of you know, the Hebrew army as they marched toward the battle, as they marched toward the unknown, they would scream out this chant that would reaffirm that God—YAWEH—was with them, providing them with STRENGTH and COURAGE. It was a battle cry that every step of the way, God is with you each and every day.

**Closing:**

And so, as we close tonight, I just want to declare that together today as a community. We’re not going to be fearful. We’re not going to be timid. We’re going to lean in—together—and we’re going to declare that with STRENGTH and COURAGE—we’re going to GO FIRST. This is the year that Hamilton County will look to Northview Students and say, “They are TRAILBLAZERS. They are fearless. They are courageous. THEY GO FIRST.” \

And we will do that by rallying together and declaring together with one voice, “Rak Chazak!” Rak Chazak, if you don’t know, is the Hebrew term for, “STRONG AND COURAGEOUS.” This was the battle cry that the Hebrew armies would shout in unison as they charged into battle. This year, I want US--the YOUTH--to lead the way. To run into battle with STRENGTH and COURAGE--together!

So here’s what I’m going to do, I’m going to have the tech booth turn my mic off. And then I’m going to make sure everyone is ready; we’re going to stand. And then 3 times, we’re going to declare this together. I will go first and you will follow. Do not hold anything back. With conviction and authority, declare to God that this year, we will have the strength and courage to go FIRST.

RAK CHAZAK!

RAK CHAZAK!

RAK CHAZAK!

I love you guys.

Stack chairs and have a great night!

**(Alternative Closing):**

And so, as we close tonight, I just want to declare that together today as a community. We’re not going to be fearful. We’re not going to be timid. We’re going to lean in—together—and we’re going to declare that with STRENGTH and COURAGE—we’re going to GO FIRST.

I have up here with me a banner with our new Northview Students Logo on it. This banner represents an unpaved road, an unblazed trail, a BRAND NEW path. What’s going to define this new season? What is the legeacy going to be left by YOU—the students?! So, what we’re going to do is the band is going to come up and play one more song. And if you feel led, if you feel like God is calling you to be a #TRAILBLAZER, then I want you to stand up and simply come sign your name on this.

Now, do NOT come sign this if you don’t mean it. I want some TRAILBLAZERS up here. I want students who are all in. Who mean it. Who want to lead the way, who want to go a different way, who want to blaze the trail, who want to create the future! If you’re with me, then I’m going to pray and come up here and declare that you’re in. That this is the year that belongs to the bold. This is the year that belongs to the fearless. This is the year that belongs to the trailblazers.

*Let’s pray.*