

All That We Can't Leave Behind

This poemprayer is based on the song Walk On, from U2's album All That You Can't Leave Behind, which reflects on the experiences we carry with us on life's journey. Here we put the song alongside the story of Abraham and Sarah as they set out on their journey.

It's too heavy
we've packed too much stuff
travel light you said
but where are we going?
what will we need?
I like to plan,
make lists
pack all those items
that might come in handy
you say, just pack
all that you can't leave behind
what's that supposed to mean?
the only things we can't leave behind
are those things we carry inside ourselves
our memories
our stories
our relationships
our pain
our despair
our hopes
our dreams
all that we can't leave behind

Abraham and Sarah
just laughed
called on a journey
into the seemingly impossible
a mixed blessing
different names
yet carrying
the future generations
inside themselves
they made a mess
of the journey
of the things
they carried
with them
their despair
their impatience
their jealousy
misusing and abusing others
carving a different journey
a different race and religion
all they couldn't leave behind
all that we can't leave behind

Forgive us
when we make a mess
of life's journey
when we fail to understand
the gravity of what we carry with us
when we fail to allow others
to share the burden
or fail to lighten the load
of those who journey with us
when we argue about the direction to go
or the past that we cannot leave behind

God of all that we cannot leave behind
help us to value and treasure
the past that we cannot change
to learn the hard lessons
that history's mistakes have to teach us

God of all that we cannot leave behind
help us to share our stories and our pain
to weave our diverse inner landscapes together
to journey into the unknown with Abraham and Sarah and Hagar
and walk the path of reconciliation and peace.

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