

Lessons for the Second Sunday in Lent

March 5, 2023

Psalm 121 ~ *This pilgrimage psalm expresses trust in God's protection along the road and through life.*

Genesis 12:1-9 ~ *Abram went out in faith, trusting the Lord to lead him to a new land.*

Romans 4:1-8, 13-17 ~ *Just as Abraham lived by faith, so we receive life, trusting God's promise.*

John 3:1-17 ~ *Jesus explained to Nicodemus that the new life of faith is the gift of the Spirit.*

GATHERING THE TEXTS: Faith is the Child of Promise.

God promised better things for Abraham, and for the whole world, so Abraham trusted God's promise and made his home in the new land to which God led him. Nicodemus learned that the birth of a new life comes from the power of the Spirit working faith in God's children. Abraham's family includes all who hear God's promise of salvation in Jesus and believe in his name; they are children of God. Promise gives birth to trust, especially when it is God who gives the Word.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERVICE: Most gracious Father in heaven, I know that your Word promising eternal life through Jesus Christ your Son carries the power to create and strengthen faith in my heart. Help me stay close to your Word so that my trust in you may be kept strong. Amen.

STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT: God has promised to use Abram, and all who, like Abram, trust God's promise for life, to bring blessings to all the people of the world. God's gift in Christ has blessed us. We are privileged to use our lives and goods in God's service to bless others.

OFFERING PRAYER: Father Abraham has many sons and daughters,
All who live by faith, refusing schemes and barter.
These receive Your blessings, God, in flesh and spirit,
Sharing Gospel news with those who need to hear it. Amen.

CONVICTION AND COMFORT: God has promised to give us great blessings, including an abundant life in Him that continues forever. When we see death and disaster all around us, we cannot understand how such things can be. We limit God to actions that are logical to our way of thinking, but God's promise to Abram, and all who believe Him, finds completion in new spiritual birth for all who look to faith in Christ Jesus, lifted up on the cross to remove the condemnation of our sin.

Questions to Consider: What does God's given word call forth in us?

- Where did Abram gather strength to strike off on a journey to a land he did not know?
- How is God's promise to Abraham fulfilled to us?
- Why is the serpent in the wilderness a representation of Christ on the Cross?
- What is God's promise in Baptism that gives birth to new life?

Bonus on next page: Our faith is evidence that God's Word is true.

Evidence to Bolster Faith

*“Now faith is being sure of what we hope for
and certain of what we do not see.” - Hebrews 11:1 NIV*

A single word of Yours, O God,
a promise given in this world
of life eternal yet to come,
calls forth a faith that clings to things
unseen and holds against all hope
to blessings of a heavenly home
secured through Christ our risen Lord.
May we give faithful witness here
as evidence to bolster faith,
that others, trusting in Your grace
might dwell with us forever there.

- Gilbert A Franke, 8/3/2010