

Sunday, February 25, 2018
Second Sunday in Lent

INTRODUCTION

The second covenant in this year's Lenten readings is the one made with Abraham and Sarah: God's promise to make them the ancestors of many, with whom God will remain in everlasting covenant. Paul says this promise comes to all who share Abraham's faith in the God who brings life into being where there was no life. We receive this baptismal promise of resurrection life in faith. Sarah and Abraham receive new names as a sign of the covenant, and we too get new identities in baptism, as we put on Christ.

PRELUDE

"When I Survey the Wondrous Cross"

Darwin Wolford

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS **Kneel or sit as you are able*

P Merciful God,

G you sent Jesus Christ to save the lost.

**We confess that we have strayed from you
and turned aside from your way.**

**We fail in love, neglect justice,
and ignore your truth.**

Have mercy on us and wash away our sin.

**Create in us clean hearts
for the sake of Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen!**

P Behold, now is the acceptable time;

now is the day of salvation.

Almighty God have mercy on us,

forgive us all our sins,

and bring us to everlasting life.

G Amen!

*GATHERING SONG

"In the Cross of Christ I Glory"

ELW 324

**In the cross of Christ I glory,
tow'ring o'er the wrecks of time.
All the light of sacred story
gathers round its head sublime.**

**When the woes of life o'ertake me,
hopes deceive, and fears annoy,
never shall the cross forsake me;
lo, it glows with peace and joy.**

When the sun of bliss is beaming
light and love upon my way,
from the cross the radiance streaming
adds more luster to the day.

Bane and blessing, pain and pleasure,
by the cross are sanctified;
peace is there that knows no measure,
joys that through all time abide.

***GREETING**

P *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*

G And also with you.

***CANTICLE OF PRAISE**

“Kyrie”

ELW 157

P In peace, in peace, let us pray to the Lord.

G Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

P For the reign of God, and for peace throughout the world,
for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

G Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

P For your people here who have come to give you praise,
for the strength to live your word, let us pray to the Lord.

G Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

P Help, save, and defend us, O God.

G Amen.

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P *O God,*

G by the passion of your blessed Son you made an instrument of shameful death to be for us the means of life. Grant us so to glory in the cross of Christ that we may gladly suffer shame and loss for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen!

ANTHEM

“Standing On the Promises”

arr. Mark Hayes

Chancel Choir

FIRST READING

Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16

As with Noah, God makes an everlasting covenant with Abraham and Sarah. God promises this old couple that they will be the ancestors of nations, though they have no child together. God will miraculously bring forth new life from Sarah's old womb. The name changes emphasize the firmness of God's promise.

¹When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless. ²And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will make you exceedingly numerous." ³Then Abram fell on his face; and God said to him, ⁴"As for me, this is my covenant with you: You shall be the ancestor of a multitude of nations. ⁵No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you the ancestor of a multitude of nations. ⁶I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. ⁷I will establish my covenant between me and you, and your offspring after you throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you."

¹⁵God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. ¹⁶I will bless her, and moreover I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall give rise to nations; kings of peoples shall come from her."

Reflection

What is God's word to Abram in verse 1? (God Almighty is footnoted in my Bible as the "traditional rendering of Heb[rew] El Shaddai.) Where does God want Abram to walk? What is God's promise to Abram through the covenant God is making with him? (verses 2-3) Why do you think the author of this text felt it was important to begin with Abram's age? What is the significance of Abram's change of name to Abraham? (verse 5) I think of some religious traditions in which at baptism or some other entrance rite the person is given a new name. Abraham is a new name for a person entering into a new relationship with God. When will this covenant relationship end? (verses 6-7) What is God's promise to Sarai? (verses 15-16) Note that Abram already has a son, Ishmael. (See Genesis 16) What is Sarai's role in this covenant relationship? What is the relationship between God's covenant with Abraham and Sarah and our baptism?

PSALM 22:23-31

²³*You who fear the LORD, give praise! All you of Jacob's | line, give glory.
Stand in awe of the LORD, all you off- | spring of Israel.*

²⁴**For the LORD does not despise nor abhor the poor in their poverty; neither is the LORD's face hid- | den from them;
but when they cry out, | the LORD hears them.**

²⁵*From you comes my praise in the | great assembly;
I will perform my vows in the sight of those who | fear the LORD.*

²⁶**The poor shall eat | and be satisfied,
Let those who seek the LORD give praise! May your hearts | live forever!**

²⁷*All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn | to the LORD;
all the families of nations shall bow | before God.*

²⁸**For dominion belongs | to the LORD,**

who rules over the nations.

²⁹Indeed, all who sleep in the earth shall bow down in worship;
all who go down to the dust, though they be dead, shall kneel before the LORD.

³⁰**Their descendants shall serve the LORD,
whom they shall proclaim to generations to come.**

³¹They shall proclaim God's deliverance to a people yet unborn,
saying to them, "The LORD has acted!"

Reflection

This psalm text is the end of the psalm that begins, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" The psalm begins with suffering and despair. What is the tone in this part of the psalm? (verses 22-23) How can the psalmist now praise God? (verse 24) Who are those who now praise God? (verses 25-26) The promise that "all the families of the nations shall worship before him" reminds us of God's promise to Abraham about the everlasting covenant. What happens in verses 28-31—who is included in those who worship God? Have you ever had a sense of being abandoned by God, of wondering how any good can come of what is happening to you? What can change your pleas of help into words of praise?

SECOND READING

Romans 4:13-25

Paul presents Abraham as the example for how a person comes into a right relationship with God not through works of the law but through faith. Though Abraham and Sarah were far too old for bearing children, Abraham trusted that God would accomplish what God had promised to accomplish.

¹³The promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. ¹⁴If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. ¹⁵For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation.

¹⁶For this reason 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 all of us, ¹⁷as it is written, "I have made you the father of many nations")—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. ¹⁸Hoping against hope, he believed that he would become "the father of many nations," according to what was said, "So numerous shall your descendants be." ¹⁹He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was already as good as dead (for he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. ²⁰No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, ²¹being fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. ²²Therefore his faith "was reckoned to him as righteousness." ²³Now the words, "it was reckoned to him," were written not for his sake alone, ²⁴but for ours also. It will be reckoned to us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, ²⁵who was handed over to death for our trespasses and was raised for our justification.

Reflection

*What is Paul's argument about the importance of grace and faith over the law? When did God make the everlasting covenant with Abraham? (see our first reading, including verses 8-14, which are left out of our text) This covenant came about **before** the commandment for male*

circumcision, which is a primary sign of being part of the covenant people. What did Abraham do to deserve this covenant, according to Paul? How old was Abraham when God made the covenant with him? The answer—as good as dead. How do we Gentiles become heirs of the covenant with Abraham? (verses 16-17) What was Abraham’s faith based on? (verses 18-21) What does it mean to “hope against hope”? If I hope that I’m going to win the lottery, even though I’ve never bought a lottery ticket, I’m hoping against hope. Abraham and Sarah had never had a child, even though they were both “as good as dead.” (verse 19) How do we participate in Abraham’s faith? (verses 23-24)

***GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

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**Let your steadfast love come to us, O Lord.
Let your steadfast love come to us, O Lord.
Save us as you promised; we will trust your word.
Let your steadfast love come to us, O Lord.**

***GOSPEL**

Mark 8:31-38

After Peter confesses his belief that Jesus is the Messiah, Jesus tells his disciples for the first time what is to come. Peter’s response indicates that he does not yet understand the way of the cross that Jesus will travel.

³¹[Jesus] began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.³²He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. ³³But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, “Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.”

³⁴He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ³⁵For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. ³⁶For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? ³⁷Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? ³⁸Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”

Reflection

*What does Jesus teach his disciples? (verse 31) How do his disciples (Peter is the representative here) receive this teaching? (verse 32) What does Jesus call Peter? (verse 33) Satan is about the worst name (although not the most vulgar) anyone could call a person of faith. What does Jesus accuse Peter of doing? I am reminded by Emily Heath, who wrote a meditation on this text for *The Christian Century*, that another name for Satan is “the adversary,” that is, anything or anyone that stands in the way of our doing what God is calling us to do—“doubt, fear, pride, addiction, hatred, anger, greed, insecurity.... In what ways do you experience the presence of the adversary in your life of faith? What does Jesus have to say about following him? (verse 33) What do you fear will cause you to lose your life? What does Jesus say about trying to save ourselves? (verses 35-37) When we want to save ourselves, we want the world to love us for our power, riches, intelligence, cleverness.... There’s a hymn that I really love, “I Want Jesus to*

Walk With Me.” What will happen to our lives if Jesus walks with us? What will happen to us if we walk with Jesus?

CHILDREN’S MESSAGE

Kris Langdon

TEMPLE TALK

Eugene Lickenbrock

SERMON

“When Divine and Human Collide”

Rev. Roger Lenander

HYMN OF THE DAY

“The Old Rugged Cross”

On a hill far away stood an old rugged cross
The emblem of suff’ring and shame
And I love that old cross where the dearest and best
For a world of lost sinners was slain

Refrain

So I’ll cherish the old rugged cross
Till my trophies at last I lay down
I will cling to the old rugged cross
And exchange it some day for a crown

O the old rugged cross so despised by the world
Has a wondrous attraction for me
For the dear Lamb of God left His glory above
To bear it to dark Calvary *Refrain*

In the old rugged cross stained with blood so divine
A wondrous beauty I see
For ’twas on that old cross Jesus suffered and died
To pardon and sanctify me *Refrain*

To the old rugged cross I will ever be true
It’s shame and reproach gladly bear
Then He’ll call me some day to my home far away
Where His glory forever I’ll share *Refrain*

***APOSTLES’ CREED**

☒ I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;

he descended to the dead.*
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen!

***PRAYER SONG**

"Hear Our Prayer, O Lord"

Hear our pray'r, O Lord;
hear our pray'r, O Lord;
Incline Thine ear to us
and grant us Thy peace.

***PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Renewed in the promises of baptism, let us pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

We pray for the church. Make us and the South Sudanese Congregation bold to proclaim your love. Give us courage to carry the cross that confronts us each day and follow Christ. Strengthen pastors, bishops, deacons, and all who minister in your name. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the world. For flowing streams and still waters. For urban parks and wilderness reserves. For pastures and forests. Instill within us a reverence for the earth as your creation and our fragile home. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the nations. Teach us to honor our common humanity within diversity. Turn enemies into friends. Lead us away from hatred, fear, and misunderstanding. Show our hearts the way to peace and fill us with compassion. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for those in need. For people whose struggles we fail to acknowledge. For those who leave their homes and families in search of safety or employment. For those who grieve, and for all who are ill *especially* Roxanna, Mary Anna, Kay, and Linda and for those we name before you aloud or silently in our hearts (pause for 10 seconds). Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for this assembly. For those who prepare this space for worship. For ministries of fellowship and hospitality. For those preparing for baptism or confirmation, and for all who provide care and support to those who are homebound. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

We remember with thanksgiving those who have gone before us in the faith. Bring them to the fullness of their inheritance in Christ and into the joy of eternal life with you. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Trusting in your covenant of mercy, O God, we lift our prayers to you, through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior.

Amen!

***SHARING OF THE PEACE**

P *The peace of Christ be with you always.*

C **And also with you!**

OFFERTORY

“Give Thanks”

Give thanks with a grateful heart

Give thanks to the Holy One

Give thanks because He's given

Jesus Christ His Son

And now let the weak say I am strong

Let the poor say I am rich

Because of what the Lord has done for us

And now let the weak say I am strong

Let the poor say I am rich

Because of what the Lord has done for us *(repeat)*

Ending

Give thanks

***OFFERTORY RESPONSE**

“As the Grains of Wheat”

**As the grains of wheat once scattered on the hill
were gathered into one to become our bread;
so may all your people from all the ends of earth
be gathered into one in you.**

***OFFERING PRAYER**

P *Merciful God,*

C **receive the sacrifice of our praise and thanksgiving and the offering of our lives, that following in the way of the cross, we may know the joy of the resurrection; through Christ our Lord. Amen!**

***DIALOGUE**

P *The Lord be with you.*

C **And also with you.**

P *Lift up your hearts.*

C **We lift them to the Lord.**

P *Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.*

C **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

***PREFACE**

P *It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,
that we should at all times and in all places
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,
through our Savior Jesus Christ.*

*You call your people to cleanse their hearts
and prepare with joy for the paschal feast,
that, renewed in the gift of baptism,
we may come to the fullness of your grace.*

*And so, with all the choirs of angels,
with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:*

***HOLY, HOLY, HOLY**

**Holy, Holy,
Holy Lord God of hosts.
Heaven and earth are full,
are full of your glory.
Hosanna! Hosanna!
Hosanna in the highest.**

***THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE**

P *In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.*

*Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.*

***LORD'S PRAYER**

P *Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.*

C **Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen!**

***INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

P *Return to God with all your heart. Receive bread for the journey, drink for the desert.*

***BLESSING**

P *The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and
keep you in his grace.*

C **Amen!**

***PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

P *Compassionate God,*

C **you have fed us with the bread of heaven. Sustain us in our Lenten
pilgrimage: may our fasting be hunger for justice, our alms, a making of peace, and our
prayer, the song of grateful hearts; through Christ our Lord. Amen!**

***BENEDICTION**

P *May God who has called us forth from the dust of the earth,
and claimed us as children of the light,
strengthen you on your journey into life renewed.
The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord's face shine upon you with grace and mercy.
The Lord look upon you with favor
and give you ✠ peace.*

C **Amen!**

***SENDING SONG "Oh, How He Loves You And Me" & "Oh, How I Love Jesus"**

Oh how He loves you and me
Oh how He loves you and me
He gave His life
What more could He give
Oh how He loves you
Oh how He loves me
Oh how He loves you and me

Jesus to Calv'ry did go
His love for this world to show
What He did there
Brought hope from despair
Oh how He loves you
Oh how He loves me
Oh how He loves you and me

There is a name I love to hear
I love to sing its worth
It sounds like music in my ear
The sweetest name on earth

Refrain

O how I love Jesus
O how I love Jesus
O how I love Jesus
Because He first loved me

It tells me of a Saviour's love
Who died to set me free
It tells me of His precious blood
The sinner's perfect plea *Refrain*

It tells me what my Father hath
In store for every day
And tho' I tread a darksome path
Yields sunshine all the way *Refrain*

It tells of One whose loving heart
Can feel my deepest woe
Who in each sorrow bears a part
That none can bear below *Refrain*