

February 25, 2021

Lectionary Passages:

Psalm 22:23-31

Genesis 15:1-6, 12-18

Romans 3:21-31



Selected Verses:

All the ends of the earth shall remember
and turn to the Lord;
and all the families of the nations
shall worship before him.

For dominion belongs to the Lord,
and he rules over the nations.

To him, indeed, shall all who sleep in the earth bow down;
before him shall bow all who go down to the dust,
and I shall live for him. – Psalm 22: 27-29

God brought Abram outside and said, “Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your descendants be.” And he believed the Lord; and the Lord reckoned it to him as righteousness. – Genesis 15: 5-6

Since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; they are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a sacrifice of atonement by his blood, effective through faith. – Romans 3: 23-25

Devotional:

In Genesis 12, God called Abram (later Abraham) to leave his home country and follow God. God had promised Abram and Sarai (Sarah) would have children. Abram and Sarai left everything and followed. Now years later, they still did not have children. God came to Abram again and told him to have faith. Part of that faith would include the history of the enslavement in Egypt. Abram would have more descendants than the stars, yet they would be oppressed for 400 years. Then, they would be a great nation. Because of Abram’s faith, he was considered righteous.

Being righteous, or in a right relationship with God, is not from following the law. Faith is trusting God to keep his promises. All people have sinned, all people fall short when measured by the law. It is by the grace, the gift, of Jesus Christ that a justified. We have the opportunity to be in a right relationship with God because of his grace, his gift. It is not what we do. Faith is trusting what God did in the death of Jesus Christ, and trusting that God will continue to keep his promises.

Some of these promises will not be fulfilled in our lifetime. Abram had to have patience that God would provide a child. Israel had to have faith that after 400 years as slaves in Egypt, God would bring them to the Promised Land. As followers of Jesus Christ, we have to trust that

all nations will worship the Lord as a result of the faith of Abram. Through one nation, all nations will receive the blessing of God.

This comes to fulfillment in the sacrificing blood of Jesus Christ. Both Jews and Gentiles, women and men, free or slave, can find salvation in the sacrifice of Jesus. It comes when we have faith that Jesus died for our sins and for the sins of the world. That in the death of Jesus Christ, we are given life and life eternal.

In the Psalm, David stated that this faith is not just for this life, but for the life to come. When we have faith that God keeps his promises, we have faith that God will rule over all the nations, and over death itself. In the end, even those who have gone down to the dust, will live in him. This takes faith. To trust that only in death, we find life eternal. In faith, we are to share this hope of salvation with our children and our children's children.

There may be times of trial and tribulation, yet God's promises are eternal to all generations. This faith ultimately calls us to live by the law, not as a way of salvation, but in response to the free gift given by Jesus Christ.

Prayer:

Almighty God, we praise you for your continued faithfulness. May we have faith like Abraham and Sarah to follow you. Even when we cannot see the fulfillment of your promises, give us faith to follow you. During the times of struggle and oppression, keep our eyes focused on you and your promises. We praise you for the gift of redemption we have in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord. In life and in death, give us faith in your word. In Jesus' name, we pray, Amen.