

SUNDAY CLOSEST TO JUNE 8
Proper 5
Forth Sunday after Pentecost – 08

Genesis 12:1-9

As noted last week, the early stories come out of Mesopotamia, present day Iraq. Abram started out from the city of Ur of the Chaldeans (Gen. 11:28) in southern Mesopotamia and journeys up the Euphrates River to Haran. Where this passage begins. Haran appears on a “Google Earth” image as a lush green area so it must have taken some courage to pack up and leave a good well watered land.

Note: *Bethel and Ai are towns 10 – 12 miles north of Jerusalem and The Negeb is a desert in Southern Canaan today called the Negev.*

The Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

So Abram went, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. Abram took his wife Sarai and his brother's son Lot, and all the possessions that they had gathered, and the persons whom they had acquired in Haran; and they set forth to go to the land of Canaan. When they had come to the land of Canaan, Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. Then the Lord appeared to Abram, and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built there an altar to the Lord, who had appeared to him. From there he moved on to the hill country on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and there he built an altar to the Lord and invoked the name of the Lord. And Abram journeyed on by stages toward the Negeb.

1. Now Abe (Sari liked to call him Abe) was not just walking around by himself or exploring the region in a Hummer picking up essentials at the local Walmart and gassing up at the Stop and Go. This is lifetime camping out. List all the stuff he and Sari would need to survive in this new land.

Palm 33:1-12

Not listed a sa psalm of David; called a hymn to God the Creator.

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| 1. Rejoice in the LORD, you righteous; *
it is good for the just to sing praises. | and all his works are sure. |
| 2. Praise the LORD with the harp; *
play to him upon the psaltery and lyre. | 5. He loves righteousness and justice; * the
loving-kindness of the LORD fills the whole earth. |
| 3. Sing for him a new song; *
sound a fanfare with all your skill upon the
trumpet. | 6. By the word of the LORD were the heavens
made, *
by the breath of his mouth all the heavenly hosts. |
| 4. For the word of the LORD is right, * | 7. He gathers up the waters of the ocean as in a
water-skin * and stores up the depths of the sea. |

8. Let all the earth fear the LORD; *
let all who dwell in the world stand in awe of him.

9. For he spoke, and it came to pass; *
he commanded, and it stood fast.

10. The LORD brings the will of the nations to

naught; * he thwarts the designs of the peoples.

11. But the LORD'S will stands fast for ever, *
and the designs of his heart from age to age.

12. Happy is the nation whose God is the LORD!
* happy the people he has chosen to be his own!

Romans 4:13-25

*You see, Paul was writing to Jewish Christians and Jews in Rome. You had to have a knowledge of Judaism or this wouldn't make any sense. Jews were the direct descendants of Abraham and were people of The Law. Today, there is conjecture as to whether Abram/Abraham was a single historical figure or a composite character but it really makes no difference. The major point is that he/they believed and stepped out in faith and was/were considered righteous by God. **And this is before the Law.** The Law was given to Moses much later in history. There is no place in Genesis where Abram/Abraham is described as being particularly virtuous. Last week we read that Noah walked with God and was thus saved. Not so with Abram/Abraham. He actually pulls off some rather sleazy tricks by our standards. The more I read (and the older I get), the more I understand Paul. We are justified – made right with God – by faith; not by buying it with money or with works.*

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

For 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, as 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. Hoping against hope, he believed that he would become "the father of many nations," according to what was said, "So numerous shall your descendants be." He 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. No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, being fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. Therefore his faith "was reckoned to him as righteousness." Now the words, "it was reckoned to him," were written not for his sake alone, but for ours also. It will be reckoned to us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was handed over to death for our trespasses and was raised for our justification.

1. So we are not Justified by our good works but by _____.

2. What should logically follow if we have faith and truly believe? How will we conduct ourselves?

Matthew 9:9-13, 18-26

This is the calling of Matthew, called Levi in Mark and Luke in the village of Capernaum on the Sea of Galilee. Tax collectors were hated even more in Jesus' time than ours because they collected taxes for the Roman occupiers and were considered traitors.

As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth; and he said to him, "Follow me." And he got up and followed him.

And as he sat at dinner in the house, many tax collectors and sinners came and were sitting with him and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" But when he heard this, he said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have come to call not the righteous but sinners."

This quote is from Hosea 6.6.

While he was saying these things to them, suddenly a leader of the synagogue came in and knelt before him, saying, "My daughter has just died; but come and lay your hand on her, and she will live." And Jesus got up and followed him, with his disciples. Then suddenly a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years came up behind him and touched the fringe of his cloak, for she said to herself, "If I only touch his cloak, I will be made well." Jesus turned, and seeing her he said, "Take heart, daughter; your faith has made you well." And instantly the woman was made well. When Jesus came to the leader's house and saw the flute players and the crowd making a commotion, he said, "Go away; for the girl is not dead but sleeping." And they laughed at him. But when the crowd had been put outside, he went in and took her by the hand, and the girl got up. And the report of this spread throughout that district.

1. What should this mean to us that God desires mercy not sacrifice? God has been saying this for a good 2000 years.

2. In the Gospels of Mark and Luke, we find that it is Matthew/Levi that is throwing the banquet/party for Jesus and has invited his only friends who were

No wonder the "respectable" folk were scandalized that Jesus would eat with them.

3. In spite of the scandalous behavior of Jesus in eating with these folk, the leader of the synagogue had

4. And the woman with the hemorrhages was cured because she _____.

So, what is the theme of the scripture today? _____