

STP Lessons and Discussion Questions  
Lent Two, Feb. 28, 2021

On Sunday we will begin our Zoom Live Worship Service. Following our service those who desire may stay online to participate in a modified "Coffee Hour." We will begin our worship at **12:00 noon**. Our virtual doors will open at **11:55 a.m.** I ask for your prayers and continued support as we seek to live into being God's church in this season of pandemic.

**Old Testament**

**Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16**

When 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. And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will make you exceedingly numerous." Then Abram fell on his face; and God said to him, "As for me, this is my covenant with you: You shall be the ancestor of a multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you the ancestor of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. I 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.

God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. I 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."

**The Psalm**

**Psalm 22:22-30**

***Deus, Deus meus***

22 Praise the Lord, you that fear him; \*  
stand in awe of him, O offspring of Israel;  
all you of Jacob's line, give glory.

23 For he does not despise nor abhor the poor in their poverty;  
neither does he hide his face from them; \*  
but when they cry to him he hears them.

24 My praise is of him in the great assembly; \*  
I will perform my vows in the presence of those who worship him.

25 The poor shall eat and be satisfied,  
and those who seek the Lord shall praise him: \*

"May your heart live for ever!"

26 All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord, \*  
and all the families of the nations shall bow before him.

27 For kingship belongs to the Lord; \*  
he rules over the nations.

28 To him alone all who sleep in the earth bow down in worship; \*  
all who go down to the dust fall before him.

29 My soul shall live for him;  
my descendants shall serve him; \*  
they shall be known as the Lord's for ever.

30 They shall come and make known to a people yet unborn \*  
the saving deeds that he has done.

## **The Epistle**

### **Romans 4:13-25**

For the 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. 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.

## The Gospel

### Mark 8:31-38

Jesus began to teach his disciples 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. He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But 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.”

He 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. For 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. For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? Those 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.”

### Discussion Questions

Please share your thoughts in your groups. Each question is not seeking a simple answer. The intent is to cause dialogue and thoughtfulness.

**Group One:** Abram and Sarai knew a great deal about waiting on the fulfillment of God’s promise. Have you experienced a time when waiting for **better** exhausted you? What did you do to “keep the faith?”

**Group Two:** Jesus mentions the necessity of suffering as part of his purpose. How would you explain the words, “deny yourself, take up your cross and follow me?” Does Jesus mean this literally?

**Group Three:** In our current climate of wealth, fame, and recognition at all costs, what comes to mind when you hear: ***For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life?***

**Group Four:** ***For 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.*** Doesn’t the Lord believe in self-care? How can we give all and yet have something of ourselves left?