

Today is Thursday, April 11, 2019 - Day 37 of the Lenten Season

"May these words and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer." - Psalm 19:14

Thank you for joining me on my Lenten journey of faith. I am enjoying our journey together. A life of faith is sometimes lonely, and the way difficult at times. However, through the Grace of God and the support of family and friends, we will all get there.

Today's suggested readings:

(OT) The Book of Genesis 17:3-9 (RSV) "The Covenant"

(NT) The Gospel of John 8:51-59 (RSV) "Jesus and Abraham"

A Reading from the Book of Genesis: *Then Abram fell on his face; and God said to him, "Behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come forth from you. And I will establish My covenant between me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you. And I will give to you, and your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God." And God said to Abraham, "As for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations."*

A Reading from the Gospel of John: *"Truly, truly, I say to you, if any one keeps My word, he will never see death." The Jews said to Him, "Now we know that You have a demon. Abraham died, as did the prophets; and You say, 'If any one keeps My word, he will never taste death.' Are You greater than our father, Abraham, who died? And the prophets died! Who do You claim to be?" Jesus answered, "If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing; it is My Father Who glorifies Me, of Whom you say that He is your God. But you have not known Him; I know Him. If I said, I do not know Him, I should be a liar like you; but I do know Him and I keep His word. Your father Abraham rejoiced that he was to see My day; and he saw it and was glad." The Jews then said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?" Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am." So they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself, and went out of the temple.*

Again, today's Old Testament reading shows why it is helpful to have a study Bible nearby. Something I did not know: What's in a name? "Abram" means "exalted father". "Abraham" means "father of many". Who knew that a name could have so much importance?

In the New Testament, Jesus has a debate with the Jewish priests and leaders. Over the centuries they had taken God's Law and made it man-made. They had become literalists so much so that the words had lost their original meaning and this served to hide God's original intent. Justice demands that we follow the spirit of the law and not the letter of the law. The Jewish leaders claimed to be children of God, but their actions would indicate otherwise. If we were to take a deep look at ourselves, would we discover that we are a "Child of God" or a "Child of Satan"? Our actions speak louder than our words. As faithful followers of Christ, do we imitate the example of Jesus and obey the will of God, our Father? It is a hard question that Jesus asks.

In this case, Jesus forces the hand of the Jewish priests and leaders. He pronounces His claim to be eternal, just as the Father. The Jews thought "Blasphemy!" and wanted to stone Him. We know He told the truth and we believe that Jesus is the Son of God!

Let us pray. Jesus, help me to not look away from your pain and suffering. I know that it is for my sins that You gave up Your life for me. I am so, so sorry! Please forgive me. Jesus, I believe, help my unbelief! Amen.

As we near Easter Week, I pray that our faith in our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, will grow and the grace of the Holy Spirit will lift us up as we prepare for the celebration of the Resurrection. Amen.