



# DAILY FAITH PRACTICES

## Second Sunday in Lent (B) – Romans 4:13-25

Focus: *God's Promise*

### word of life

**“... he (Abraham) grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, being fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised.”** Romans 4:20 (NRSV)

Read Romans 4:13-25

The verses for today enter the reader into the middle of a theological argument about the centrality of faith. Time and again in Romans Paul addresses the tension of law and grace. There were some who believed that a follower of Christ had to follow Jewish law. (The rite of circumcision in the early Christian community is an example of this tension.)

For Paul, it is faith, not works of the law, that makes a person righteous or in a right relationship with God. Left to our own attempts to earn God's love and favor, we all fall short. Paul writes, “For there is no distinction, since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; they are now justified by his grace as a gift.” (See Romans 3:22-24 NRSV)

1. *Discuss the tension between faith and good works.*
2. *Is one more important than the other?*
3. *How do you define faith?*

Paul lifts up Abraham as an example of faith and righteousness. Abraham was promised that his descendants would be as numerous as the stars in heaven. The promise was given by God at the most unlikely of times in Abraham and Sarah's life. They had not had any children, and Sarah was beyond child-bearing years.

“Hoping against hope,” Paul writes, Abraham believed God's promise. (vs. 18) Despite his aged body “as good as dead;” despite the barrenness of Sarah, his wife; despite all evidence to the contrary, Abraham remained fully convinced that God would be able to do what God promised.

4. *Name some promises God has made. How have those promises been fulfilled?*
5. *Reflect on the phrase: “hoping against hope.”*
6. *How do we keep the faith when everything seems hopeless?*

It is not what Abraham did that brought about the fulfillment of God's promise. Rather, it was his unwavering faith and trust in God as a Keeper of promises. Abraham is the model of the faithful – one who relied on God's grace. It is his faith in God that makes him righteous before God.

7. *What do you know about Abraham?*
8. *Can he be a model of faith for us today?*

Paul concludes this section of his letter to the Romans by applying the example of Abraham's faith as an example for the Christian. Like Abraham, we are made right with God not through what we do, but rather through our faith and trust in what God has done. Jesus died for our sins and was raised from death. We are promised forgiveness and life. All we need to do – all we can do – is trust in the promise.

9. *Is it difficult at times to trust in God's promises? How so?*

## **word** *among us*

“Can he do it?” There was a buzz in the crowd as the basketball players stepped on the court after their final timeout. It was the championship game. The score was tied with a few seconds remaining. The star player on the team had promised before the game that his team would win and that he would be the “go-to” guy. The coach had drawn up a play to get the ball to the star player. The game was in his hands.

“Can he do it?” the TV commentator asked. “Can he keep his promise?”

The ball was thrown in to the player. The player spun around, avoiding a defender. The play worked to perfection; he had an open look at the basket. He stepped back, squared up, and took the shot. As the horn sounded indicating the end of the game, the ball bounced off the backboard, hit the rim, and fell into the basket. The winning coach ran onto the floor, shouting, “I knew it! I knew he’d come through. You just have to believe!”

Basketball games don’t always end in a win. Promises aren’t always kept. Faith in others does not always guarantee that they will come through.

1. *What are some promises we make in our daily lives?*
2. *Are they always fulfilled? Why or why not?*
3. *How does it feel when someone breaks a promise made to you?*
4. *How do you feel if you have to break a promise?*

We as humans don’t always keep our promises, but the same cannot be said about God. God is a keeper of promises. And unlike the basketball game where the winner is determined by what the player does, the victory is ours not because of what we do, but because of what God in Christ has done.

Even when we miss the goal – even when it seems that everything is going against us, God still keeps the promise of forgiveness and life. All we have to do is believe!

5. *What comes to mind when you hear about God’s promises made to you?*

## **faith practice** *in daily life*

### **Live among God’s faithful people**

St Paul lifts up Abraham as a model of the faith – as someone whose trust in God was unwavering. We all need examples and mentors in our life of faith to encourage and guide us. The gift of a caring, supportive community of faith equips us to remain steadfast in our trust in the promises of God.

6. *What traits of Abraham would you like to embrace for your daily life?*
7. *Who in your life models the faith?*
8. *How do you encourage others in their faith journey?*
9. *What else might you do to encourage others to have a faith like Abraham?*

### **Prayer**

O God, keeper of promises, help us put our trust in you alone; through Christ our Lord. Amen

## *last word*

Daily remind yourself this week  
of God’s promise for you.

*Daily Faith Practices*

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