

Genesis 25: 19-34
Romans 8: 1-11
Psalm 119: 105-112
Matthew 13: 1-9

Homily: 16 July 2023

Faith, Hope and Patience

May the words of my mouth and the meditation of all our hearts, always be acceptable in your sight. Oh Lord, our rock and our redeemer.

When we look at the first reading today, Isaac's wife Rebekah could not conceive a child, it is said she was Barren. The Lord promised Abraham that he will have many children and there will be many descendants from his seed. Abraham trusted in the Lord fully and completely, as he was always with Abraham, but I would think Abraham himself would be wondering how this would come to pass, as he only had one son and with a wife who could not conceive. Rebekah was chosen to be the wife of Isaac, perhaps to be an example of Faith. Here, we can safely say, God doesn't always give us what we want when we want it!

It has been said, and heard many times, to "stay in faith." What does this mean exactly? It is trusting in the Lord and what he has planned for us, for you and for me. In Psalm 9:10 ... "Those who know your name will trust in you because you have not abandoned any who seek you, Lord." Our faith in the Lord is very important in our lives, especially today. To know that he will provide, bless and see things through, with us. To be filled with the belief that he is right there by our sides. What a comforting thought, isn't it?

Here's a little example: Let's say you heard that there will be a cut back in jobs at work or due to unfortunate circumstances there isn't enough money. There are many bills to pay, rent or mortgage that may be due. I'd like to think that with faith, it would help and be more calming and relaxing through stressful times and we need this, just like we need his love. To know he is there in our daily lives, as Abraham and Isaac knew he was there for them, they believed that somehow his promises will be delivered to them, but they didn't exactly know how, just as we don't know how...or when!

Those who are in his presence, he will not forsake, he will be there in our time of need. But, it is important to understand as we are his children (Romans 8: 15-16 ... For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father". The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children). His Spirit is with our spirit, so, just as we want our children to learn and grow, he wants us to learn and keep growing and mature. As children learn to self-soothe, they may be better equipped to cope during the more difficult situations to come.

The Lord will leave it up to us to trust ourselves and look past problems with solutions we can and will find. But, when it is something that's out of our control, this reminds me

of the serenity prayer, "God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I can not change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference." He surely wants us to persevere, through love, to learn discernment and to know when we need to let go... and leave it in his hands...

It is hard sometimes, to maintain faith when we are told (or have good reason to believe) something is definitive against our heart's desires or against what we believe is part of God's plan for us.

For example, in today's reading. Rebekah doubts herself with what the Lord has promised Abraham, as she has not conceived a child. It had been 20 years that she did not conceive, Rebekah is wondering what is going on here? It appears she thinks her sole purpose is to just bare children, as she puts aside anything else she has to offer in the world. Rebekah did in fact conceive and it was twins! Praise the Lord! We might find it very hard sometimes to be open to the idea that God may have a different plan.

God is working in our lives everyday. Jeremiah 29:11 – ("For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.")

Let our faith in our Lord grow and let us remember we might not know the plan he has for us and let us not forget that time and time again, our loving God has come through and has made the impossible possible.

As Christians what comes to mind when we think of Hope? What comes to my mind is Our Saviour, Jesus Christ (he is the light of the world) is a beacon of hope! Romans 12:12 ("Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, and faithful in prayer.") May hope be the foundation of prayer leaving the door open, for anything is possible through Jesus Christ.

I had a thought come to my mind the other day, Faith and Hope are like brother and sister walking hand in hand on the beach. I pictured them holding hands because they rely on each other. They are brother and sister because they are part of the family of virtues. Faith can not be complete without hope, and hope can not be feasible without faith. When we hope, we hope with the Lord in our hearts, in faith. When we have faith, we instill hope into our everyday lives.

In our lives we may often feel very strongly about what we desire for ourselves and for others. It can be very difficult when what we desire most doesn't happen, and we can find it quite frustrating and sometimes hurtful. Let's keep our faith strong, maybe it isn't the right time for ourselves or for others. Remember, we might find it very hard sometimes to be open to the idea that God may have a different plan.

Our hope in the Lord can guard our hearts from the doubts that may be knocking on our doors, at our lowest moments. Let us remember, our Lord knows our hearts and our compassion, patience will hold us firmly. We need to have patience, and hold onto

hope, in faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, we will see the way he has for us unfold as he knows what is right and what he wants for our lives.

Amen.