

NEXT STEP: STUDY & SHARE

READINGS

Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16

Psalm 22:23-31

All the ends of the earth shall remember & turn to the Lord. (v27)

Romans 4:13-25

Mark 8:31-38

PRAYER OF THE DAY

O God, by the passion of your blessed Son you made an instrument of shameful death to be for us the means of life. Grant us so to glory in the cross of Christ that we may gladly suffer shame & loss for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior & Lord, who lives & reigns with you & the Holy Spirit, one God, now & forever. Amen.

SERMON TEXT- Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16

¹When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram, & said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before me, & be blameless. ²And I will make my covenant between me & you, & will make you exceedingly numerous." ³Then Abram fell on his face; & God said to him, ⁴"As for me, this is my covenant with you: You shall be the ancestor of a multitude of nations. ⁵No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you the ancestor of a multitude of nations. ⁶I will make you exceedingly fruitful; & I will make nations of you, & kings shall come from you. ⁷I will establish my covenant between me & you, & your offspring after you throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you & to your offspring after you." ¹⁵God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. ¹⁶I will bless her, & moreover I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, & she shall give rise to nations; kings of peoples shall come from her."

LISTENING TO . . .

GOD- *Christian life is rooted in the Father, Son, & Holy Spirit*

1. Read the entire account in *ch17*. Where does the work of circumcision fit in the covenant? Review what happens before in *ch12-16*. *Just a few hints:* Gen *ch12* Abraham is chosen, *ch13* increase of wealth, *ch14* gives tithe to Melchizedek, possibly meets Jesus as Melchizedek, *ch15* covenant ceremony, reiteration of the promise, *ch16* birth of Ishmael (outside the promise). How does this fit with what St. Paul writes about Abraham? *See Romans 4:1-13; Galatians 4:21-31*
2. The law of circumcision follows (*vv9-14*) as the embodiment of the covenant. Though not unique to Hebrews, what practical purpose would it serve in the days before ID cards? How would it connect *Genesis 1:28a, 9:7* with *vv4-7*? Following that thinking, why circumcise babies, not waiting until adulthood? *See also Luke 2:22, Romans 2:29; Colossians 2:11-12*

EACH OTHER- *Sharing & growing with our brothers & sisters in Christ*

3. Consider *v11* in your Bible & its footnotes. God's Word makes the covenant & circumcision is the real symbol & common ritual (not a mere souvenir & celebration). How do you see this logic in other areas of your faith life?
4. To reject circumcision is to reject the covenant; the New Testament continues this logic (*cf. Matthew 7:17-19, 12:30-37*). How is a failure to read the Bible, pray, worship, give offerings & the like demonstrate that one is in danger of rejecting the New Testament covenant? *See Hebrews 6:4-8*

NEIGHBORS- *Bearing fruit for those not yet our brothers & sisters*

5. The Church is one of the last institutions to nurture & support the growth & stabilization of families. Outside of allowing Sunday school/ confirmation/ youth events or hosting weddings, what actual steps does your congregation take to this end?
6. What would it take for your congregation to become radically, publicly, unabashedly pro-family (traditional/natural) in your neighborhood? Which of your neighboring congregations have the most families with school children? Why do you think that is? What do they do differently?

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Second Sunday in Lent

02.25.24

Series: Guaranteed!

Rev. Jared Stillions, STS

God doesn't go back on his word

A Son's Father

In order to be a new father, Abraham must give up his old self

-Notes-

KEY VERSE: 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. (v5)

-NEXT STEPS MEMORY VERSE-

May I never boast of anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world is crucified to me, & I to the world. (*Galatians 6:14*)

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