

The Old Testament: Genesis 15:1-12,17-18

Reader: A Reading from the Book of Genesis.

The word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, “Do not be afraid, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.” But Abram said, “O Lord God, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?” And Abram said, “You have given me no offspring, and so a slave born in my house is to be my heir.” But the word of the Lord came to him, “This man shall not be your heir; no one but your very own issue shall be your heir.” He brought him outside and said, “Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your descendants be.” And he believed the Lord; and the Lord reckoned it to him as righteousness. Then he said to him, “I am the Lord who brought you from Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess.” But he said, “O Lord God, how am I to know that I shall possess it?” He said to him, “Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon.” He brought him all these and cut them in two, laying each half over against the other; but he did not cut the birds in two. And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away. As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram, and a deep and terrifying darkness descended upon him. When the sun had gone down and it was dark, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, “To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates.”

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

The Epistle: Philippians 3:17–4:1

Reader: A Reading from the letter of Paul to the Philippians.

Brothers and sisters, join in imitating me, and observe those who live according to the example you have in us. For many live as enemies of the cross of Christ; I have often told you of them, and now I tell you even with tears. Their end is destruction; their god is the belly; and their glory is in their shame; their minds are set on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven, and it is from there that we are expecting a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. He will transform the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, by the power that also enables him to make all things subject to himself. Therefore, my brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

The Holy Gospel: Luke 13:31-35

Some Pharisees came and said to Jesus, “Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you.” He said to them, “Go and tell that fox for me, ‘Listen, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my work. Yet today, tomorrow, and the next day I must be on my way, because it is impossible for a prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem.’ Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! See, your house is left to you. And I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, ‘Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.’”

Psalm 27

- 1 The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom then shall I fear? *
the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom then shall I be afraid?
- 2 When evildoers came upon me to eat up my flesh, *
it was they, my foes and my adversaries, who
stumbled and fell.
- 3 Though an army should encamp against me, *
yet my heart shall not be afraid;
- 4 And though war should rise up against me, *
yet will I put my trust in him.
- 5 One thing have I asked of the Lord;
one thing I seek; *
that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life;
- 6 To behold the fair beauty of the Lord*
and to seek him in his temple.
- 7 For in the day of trouble he shall keep me safe in his shelter; *
he shall hide me in the secrecy of his dwelling
and set me high upon a rock.
- 8 Even now he lifts up my head *
above my enemies round about me.
- 9 Therefore I will offer in his dwelling an oblation
with sounds of great gladness; *
I will sing and make music to the Lord.
- 10 Hearken to my voice, O Lord, when I call; *
have mercy on me and answer me.
- 11 You speak in my heart and say, "Seek my face." *
Your face, Lord, will I seek.
- 12 Hide not your face from me, *
nor turn away your servant in displeasure.
- 13 You have been my helper;
cast me not away; *
do not forsake me, O God of my salvation.
- 14 Though my father and my mother forsake me, *
the Lord will sustain me.
- 15 Show me your way, O Lord; *
lead me on a level path, because of my enemies.
- 16 Deliver me not into the hand of my adversaries, *
for false witnesses have risen up against me,
and also those who speak malice.
- 17 What if I had not believed
that I should see the goodness of the Lord*
in the land of the living!
- 18 O tarry and await the Lord's pleasure;
be strong, and he shall comfort your heart; *

wait patiently for the Lord.

Second Sunday in Lent—Year C

Welcome to our church. Today the liturgy gives us the account of the covenant between God and the first person of faith: Abraham. There are two parts to this covenant: God's promise and Abraham's faith. Abraham's faith becomes the model for us who have been brought into covenant with God in baptism.

The Gospel reading today tells of Jesus being warned that he is in danger of being killed. He responds by again foretelling his own death and resurrection, the three days in which he will complete his work. Jesus then laments his rejection by the leaders in Jerusalem because he wishes fervently that no one be lost and that he may gather everyone to himself.

The second reading today is concerned with contrasting those who do not live within the covenant and those who do. It reminds us that the self-denial and fasting of Lent are not ends in themselves and certainly are not meant to imply that pleasure is wrong. They lead us on toward the discovery that true joy and pleasure always come from God and always point us to the resurrection of our earthly life and desires, which is God's ultimate aim for us.

As we draw nearer to Easter and the renewal of our baptismal commitment, and as we pray for those who will be baptized then, the liturgy of Lent takes us ever deeper into the mystery of our redemption. Faith and repentance are our response to the redemption that began to be worked out in Abraham's day, was fulfilled in Jesus' dying and rising, and is renewed in us in baptism and Eucharist.

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