

Prayer of Preparation: *We’ve come this far by faith. Leaning on the Lord. Trusting in his holy word. He’s never failed me yet. Oh....can’t turn around, we’ve come this far by faith.* God of wilderness journeys, send us a word to light our path and help us be a light to others. **Amen.**

Our faith comes with a promise and that promise has a history in Abraham. I’ve been talking about the messiness of Lent and how the 40 days of wilderness wandering has a way of helping us see ourselves honestly. Today, our readings in Genesis and Romans unveils one of the messiest people in scripture.

I’m talking about Abraham. The same Abraham of “Lord, when am I going to have a son” so he names his chief servant as his heir. The same Abraham who takes a second wife and has a son, Ishmael, with her. The same Abraham who sends his wife and child away....that’s messy. That’s Abraham.

The same Abraham who told his wife to pretend to be his sister, not once...but twice. The same Abraham who dragged his nephew Lot into the wilderness with him, turned around and left him, and then had to rescue him when he is captured cause he left out in the wilderness alone. The same Abraham who had to have God remind him of the covenant at least 3 times...Abraham was just messy. And his messiness was all over the wilderness.

Yet, as messy as Abraham was, God was with him. Abraham’s entire journey was one of faith borne of a promise from God. Abraham’s journey was one of messiest journeys in scripture, yet Abraham was guided by God’s promise.

Here’s the thing, as messy as Abraham was, Abraham knew God was with him. Through every part of his journey, Abraham was guided by God’s promise. When Abraham thought God had forgotten him, Abraham went back to God and complained. You know the type of complaint I’m talking about, it’s the: God, when is it going to happen? God, have you forgotten about me? God, where are you...I’ve made a mess trying to figure this out myself and I need you to come save me and remind me that I am following you and your understanding, not my own. In and through the messiness that is real people living real lives, Abraham was guided by God’s promise. We are guided by God’s promise. And so was Nicodemus.

It’s that same promise implied by Jesus when he asks Nicodemus, ***“Are you the teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?”*** Every single one of us are teachers of Israel. Every single one of us are heirs of God’s promise to Abraham. When people see us, they see heirs of Abraham and teachers of Israel being guided by God’s promise of salvation.

We are the many nations God promised Abraham and Jesus is the promised salvation for all. Hear the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ according to John's gospel: ***"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. "Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world but in order that the world might be saved through him.*** We are guided by our faith, faith in a promise given us through our lives in Christ.

Response to the Word: *We've come this far by faith. Leaning on the Lord. Trusting in his holy word. He's never failed me yet. Oh....can't turn around, we've come this far by faith. May we ever be seen being guided by God's promise. Amen.*