

that we have access to Father in Jesus, that in Jesus we are forgiven.

We are forgiven in Jesus. Our past mistakes, not even our future mistakes, determine who we are, Jesus did on the cross. Jesus does today; and he remains faithful.

Jesus defines who we are, just as God defined Abraham. God called him Abraham; father of multitudes, father of many nations. And that's what happened for Jesus is always faithful.

And Jesus will always be faithful to you. In him you are adopted as Father's loved child, so that's who you are. Jesus has sent Spirit to walk with us through life, so he is with us. Jesus does promise to hear our voice; so when we talk to him he hears

and acts for he is always faithful.

Jesus' love doesn't go up and down depending on us. Then things would depend on me being the faithful one; but I make mistakes, intentionally and unintentionally. Thank God, Jesus is always faithful, his love can always be depended on. He is always in the middle of the mess with us, seeking to walk us through it all, growing us to ever greater trust and maturity. Growing our relationship with him deeper, richer, as we experience his amazing love for us.

Thank God, that because of Jesus we too can walk through life, in all its ups and downs, living in his faithfulness. God, in Jesus never deserts us, never leaves us the result of our mistakes, but through Spirit we are being shaped into a living reflection of Jesus, the one we share life with.

25 June 2017

GOD LIVING IN FAITH

Genesis 21:8-21



Last week we looked at part of the Abraham's story, looking at how he walked through life, and literally walked through Canaan, as he listened to God. As he took God at his word, and believed him, getting personally involved. Involved enough to move, to trust the promise of a son, because he knew who was speaking to him; they had a relationship that they lived in.

I love the part of the Abraham story that we have this week, because it highlights God's faithfulness to Abraham. Abraham has tried to give God a helping hand in fulfilling the promise.

Anyone here ever tried to give God a helping hand to get things done?

For Abraham, the child wasn't coming, so he

thought he'd give God a hand. Actually Sarah came up with the idea, but Abraham certainly embraced it. Sarah's servant Hagar became pregnant. And I'm sure it wasn't an immaculate conception; just the traditional way of getting pregnant. Abraham certainly embraced Sarah's suggestion!

Hagar gave birth to her son Ishmael; which means 'God hears'. What a wonderful name. What a wonderful reflection on God; he hears.

Hagar had run away, only for God to call her back. And that's what she did. She went back to Abraham and Sarah. Even though Sarah was envious, and had treated her harshly.

In short, things hadn't worked out all that well. Abraham had done what he felt was

wise, only to have it blow up in his face. Sarah was envious of Hagar. It was worse than before; now she isn't only without child, but her husband has a child with her slave. Sarah was left feeling second-rate, all the more a failure, envious, angry. Hagar was everything she wanted to be but couldn't be; by her own effort.

We jump forward about fourteen years. That means Abraham has seen Ishmael grow up, ready to become a man. And now Sarah has a son; Isaac.

Again Sarah seeks to get rid of Hagar, and her son Ishmael. I reckon Abraham might have been stressed out by all this tension. This is not a happy family. Maybe God didn't need a helping hand. Abraham certainly does.

Christ Church Lutheran

Worship Times - 9.00am & 10.45am
Pastor: Tim 0427326553



Jesus' disciples multiplying disciples

Which highlights that this is really a story about God's faithfulness. God is faithful to his promise. Abraham makes a mess of things.

I find this good news, because I've been quite able to make a mess of things. I've done what I thought was right; without bothering to ask God, I thought I knew enough. And it ended up a mess. And I've done things just because I wanted to; again without bothering to talk with Jesus about it. And it ended up a mess.

Abraham and me are the same. And the God who walked with Abraham through all this mess is the same one who walks with me, who walks with you through the mess of life.

God didn't leave Abraham. God didn't spit the dummy; 'Oh Abraham, so you thought you knew better, well you made your own bed now you have to lie in it. It's

your mess, you fix it.' God could have spat the dummy and left Abraham to work things out as best he could.

Unfortunately it was due to Abraham doing things as best he could that had got him into this mess.

Good News, God didn't

God remains faithful

leave Abraham, but God remains faithful. Good News, we've got the same God; Jesus always remains faithful. That's the basis of our faith, that's why this is a faith story, because God remains faithful. He keeps his promise. He grows Abraham to greater and greater trust, growing him to greater maturity, as together they navigate their way through this mess that Abraham had created.

If Abraham had said; 'No Sarah, we'll trust

God', we wouldn't have this story. But the simply reality is that we stuff up, we make mistakes, even when trying to do what we feel is the best thing.

If Adam had said; "No Eve, Dad did say don't eat this fruit, it'll kill you. And we know Dad loves us to death."

Have you even had a time when you wish you could have gone back and changed what you did? 'No, I won't have another drink, I have to drive.'

'No, I won't have another pie, ten's enough'. 'No, I won't just do what I want, when I feel like, I'll take time to ask Jesus and see what he thinks.'

When I look back on life, unfortunately I can think of too many time I wish I'd done things differently; but I didn't. Unfortunately I can think of plenty of times where I just did something because it seemed good to me; not even giving God a second thought. And

things haven't gone well.

So I daily thank God that he didn't step back and leave me in the mess I created. God stays true to himself; so he jumps into the very middle and seeks to walk with me, growing my trust in him, letting me experience his love for me in the mess.

That's Jesus isn't it? Jesus jumped into the mess of life; born our brother. He didn't stay aloof, but gets down and dirty.

Jesus, goes to the cross, goes right into the mess that I might be forgiven, that I might know Father's love, that I might take Spirit's hand and walk through this mess we call life, experiencing the amazing faithfulness of God in the midst of it all.

Where we find Abraham in the story today we see that he has grown in his relationship with God. Abraham loves his son Ishmael. He's loved him, fathered him, for

fourteen years. He's ready to see him grow into a man. His loved son, whom he would have be proud off.

And God says; "Do not be upset over the boy and your servant. Do whatever Sarah tells you, for Isaac is the son through whom your descendants will be counted. But I will also

God is faithful and walks with through the mess of life

make a nation of the descendants of Hagar's son because he is your son, too." (Gen. 21:12,13)

This time Abraham takes God at his word and sends Hagar and her son away. Do you reckon this tugged at Abraham's heart strings? Do you reckon this went against his fatherly emotions?

I reckon the devil might have even put a few thoughts in Abraham's mind, like; 'Don't send the boy away, you're

not that sort of person, provide another camp for him. He's your boy. How crewel of you to send them to their death; you're a horrible person if you do it.'

What do you reckon the devil might have been whispering in Abraham's ear?

This time Abraham listens, trusts God, and sends them on their way. And God is faithful. Remember what Ishmael means? 'God listens'. God remains faithful, he

listens, he hears Ishmael's crying and rescues them. God is faithful and a great nation does come from Ishmael.

God is faithful and walks with these people through the mess of life. He navigates them through to the birth of Jesus. To the crucifixion of Jesus, where he remains faithful and doesn't jump off the cross but out of love for us dies, that we might know without a shadow of doubt that we are loved,