

6/25/18

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

“But you promised!” We expect promises to be kept. Too often, our promises are not. What about God’s promises?

Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said of him, “So shall your offspring be.” Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead—since he was about a hundred years old—and that Sarah’s womb was also dead. Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. Romans 4:18-21

God had promised Abraham that a nation would rise from his descendants, and that “all peoples on earth will be blessed through you” (Genesis 12:3). That was the promise of the Messiah, the coming Savior! Yet, Abraham and Sarah remained childless! Clinging to the promise, Abraham was persuaded by Sarah that a surrogate mother was required (Genesis 16). A son was born to Hagar, but he would not carry the promise. Would God keep his promise? Again, “Abraham in hope believed.”

Finally, Abraham and Sarah conceived in their old age and a son was born. His name was Isaac. The most difficult test, however, lay ahead just a few years later. God instructed Abraham: “Take your son (likely now a teenager), your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering...” (Genesis 22:2). That was extreme, but Abraham trusted God’s promise. The

writer to the Hebrews explains that Abraham “reasoned that God could raise the dead” (Hebrews 11:19). So, Abraham passed the test that day, ready to sacrifice his son, when God intervened (Genesis 22:12-13). Isaac lived.

How did Abraham do it? The Word of God says, “He was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised.” How was Abraham strengthened? How was he persuaded? The apostle Paul writes later in this letter, “Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ” (Romans 10:17).

That’s how the Holy Spirit strengthens and persuades you too.

Whatever your problems may be, search out God’s promises in the Scriptures. Read and reread them. God keeps his promises! Abraham and Sarah had a son. In God’s time Jesus came to this earth. Jesus lived, died and rose again to pay for all your sins. The ascended Lord promises to be with you. He has a place for you in heaven. How do you know that? God keeps his promises.

Prayer: *In the words of a man whose son was about to be healed by Jesus: Lord, “I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!” (Mark 9:24) Amen.*

(WELS E-Devotion, Adapted)...See you in worship.

Keep looking up because the Lord is always looking down – Psalm 121

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