

Midweek Advent 2
December 9, 2020

“Rejoice that you also see Jesus’ day!” (John 8:56)
By Rev. Ed Weber

“Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the Light of the world! Amen.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Today’s text for this second midweek Advent service, is from tonight’s third reading from John 8:56.

“Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.”

Here ends our text.

There are special days that we look forward to seeing. The day of the birth of a child or grandchild. We look forward to seeing that day and holding the new life that God so graciously has made. There is one person’s day that all people need to see. We need to see what Abraham saw! All our children and grandchildren need to see the day that Abraham saw. Jesus the Savior!

Yes! Abraham saw Jesus day! By faith he believed in and saw the coming Messiah, Jesus. So, Paul begins chapter 4 of Romans with these words.

“What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh? 2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. 3 For what does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.”

Abraham wasn’t better than anyone else according to his flesh. He was a sinner like the rest of us. He lived to a good old age as God promised him in Genesis 15:15. He lived to the age of 175, but he died...because he was a sinner.

But, what was Abraham rejoicing to see? That there was life after death through the resurrected Messiah. For God already had told Abraham in Genesis 15:15, **“you shall go to your fathers in peace.”**

So, we hear in our second reading the cause of Abraham's rejoicing in Hebrews 11.

“These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. 14 For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. 15 And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.”

And Paul continues in Romans 4 to reveal to us that Abraham knew he would enter the heavenly promised land. Listen to these words carefully.

“13 For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. 14 For if those who are of the law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise made of no effect, 15 because the law brings about wrath; for where there is no law there is no transgression.”

“And to his seed”. Who is Paul talking about? Who is the seed of Abraham? Who is in the genealogy of Abraham? Who are the nations that are blessed? Well, Paul tells us sinners the good news. You and I, who are also believers in Jesus are part of Abraham's family! Listen again to Paul in Romans 4 as he continues to broaden the family to include us!!

16 Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all 17 (as it is written, “I have made you a father of many nations”) in the presence of Him whom he believed—God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did;

“**father of us all**” through faith that it might be according to grace. The same promise that was given to Abraham has been given to us, that we are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 2:8)

The moment that faith was given to you, your soul rejoiced! You rejoiced because you saw Jesus' day! When you believed and were baptized the Holy Spirit sealed in you the righteousness of Christ. Jesus righteousness was accounted to you by faith just like it was to Abraham.

Faith is such a glorious gift that Paul cannot help but proclaim how absolutely incomprehensible it is. For Abraham was 100 years old when his son Isaac was born. His wife Sarah was 90. Yet, God promised him that one of his descendants would be THE Seed, Jesus Christ. How could this be? With God all things are possible! Abraham believed that God would give life to the dead. He would be a father. And all those descendants, as many as the stars, would come to exist, even though Abraham had not one heir! So Paul continues in Romans 4.

18 who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, "So shall your descendants be." 19 And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb. 20 He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, 21 and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. 22 And therefore "it was accounted to him for righteousness." (Romans 4:16-22)

Over and over, Scripture repeats what was first written in Genesis 15:6.

"6 And he believed in the Lord, and He accounted it to him for righteousness."

That's what God does for each of us who believe in Jesus. He doesn't count our sins against us but only Jesus righteousness.

Chapter 8 of St. John, our third reading, begins with Jesus teaching in the temple and an real time occasion to show how His righteousness is accounted to sinners. While He was teaching, a group of Scribes and Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery to be judged and stoned. They tested Jesus asking for His response on the matter. As we know, Jesus responded as He always does, with compassion. For Jesus did not come to destroy the law that condemned her, and each of us, but remove it's condemnation by fulfilling it. So, Jesus said in Matthew 5:17

"Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill."

And Jesus did not come to destroy souls but to save them as He said in Luke 9:56.

“For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men’s lives but to save them.”

So, Jesus said to the woman,

**““Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?”
11 She said, “No one, Lord.”And Jesus said to her, “Neither do I condemn
you; go and sin no more.”**

And in this moment, Jesus righteousness was accounted to her by faith. She became a daughter of Abraham. And most importantly, she rejoiced to see Jesus’ day!

Oh, God’s love and mercy continue to make people in our generation rejoice to see Jesus’ day when their sins are forgiven.

Paul tells us in Romans 8:1. **“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.”** Now or eternally in the promised land.

Unfortunately, in John 8, the Pharisees still walked according to their flesh. It’s very frustrating to read how Jesus’ words go right by them. He tells them over and over in many different ways what He, the Messiah, gives.

“I am the Light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.” (John 8:12)

“If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (John 8:31-32)

“Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death.” (John 8:51)

They didn’t know Jesus or His Father. They were not of God, but of their father, the devil, Jesus tells them. There was no rejoicing in their hearts to see Jesus, though He stood in their midst. There was no rejoicing because there was no faith. What stirred in their heart was hatred as they lifted stones to kill Jesus.

If a sinful man rejects Jesus, then there is no righteousness accounted to him. His sinful breaking of the law will be judged and accounted. And the unbeliever will be condemned to where the father of lies is reserved to be condemned – hell itself.

The great eternal I AM speaks to each of our hearts this night with His eternal word and great promises to anyone who would keep it. Anyone who would believe His word will have the light of life, be set free and never see death!

This is what Abraham rejoiced to see, by faith. This is what our Lord invites you and I to daily see by faith and daily rejoice that these great gifts are ours! Your spiritual account has been filled with Jesus' righteousness, and the promised land, the heavenly country is ours by faith. Yes indeed, we see it, rejoice in it and are glad all the days of our life! Amen.

“The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Amen. (Philippians 4:7)