

Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church

Bible Study for 6.7.2026

Opening Question: Paul wrote his letter to the Romans as the only letter to a church he did not found but instead to one he hoped to visit and gain support from as he expanded his missionary work onwards to Spain. If you were Paul what would you find important to tell the church in Rome?

First Reading: Genesis 12:1-9

12 Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. ² I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."^[a]

⁴ So Abram went, as the Lord had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. ⁵ Abram took his wife Sarai and his brother's son Lot and all the possessions that they had gathered and the persons whom they had acquired in Haran, and they set forth to go to the land of Canaan. When they had come to the land of Canaan, ⁶ Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak^[b] of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. ⁷ Then the Lord appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built there an altar to the Lord, who had appeared to him. ⁸ From there he moved on to the hill country on the east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east, and there he built an altar to the Lord and invoked the name of the Lord. ⁹ And Abram journeyed on by stages toward the Negeb.

Discussion Questions:

What stands out to you in this text?

Have you ever had to make a big move or change in your life? How was the decision-making process for you? If you were 75 years old and God told you to drop everything and leave everything you knew to go to an unspecified new place right now how would that go for you?

What if you were Sarai in this situation and it was happening in your life right now, how would that go for you?

Let's take a look at the covenant God begins to create with Abram in verses 2-3. What does it mean to you to be blessed or to be a blessing? What does it mean to curse or be cursed? What do you think it means that through Abram all families on the earth shall be blessed?

Just a note before we look at our Romans text: All of the things in our reading took place before any of our scriptures came to be (before the laws God commanded God's people existed) and before God required Abram to show a sign of the covenant. God didn't say go so I can make you these things or if you go I will make you these things. Abram's leaving was not a prerequisite for him to be a blessing...nothing was.

Second Reading: Romans 4:13-25

¹³ For the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. ¹⁴ For if it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. ¹⁵ For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law, neither is there transgression.

¹⁶ For this reason the promise depends on faith, in order that it may rest on grace, so that it may be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (who is the father of all of us, ¹⁷ as it is written, "I have made you the father of many nations"), in the presence of the God in whom he believed, ^[a] who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. ¹⁸ Hoping against hope, he believed that he would become "the father of many nations," according to what was said, "So shall your descendants be." ¹⁹ He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was already ^[b] as good as dead (for he was about a hundred years old), and the barrenness of Sarah's womb. ²⁰ No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, ²¹ being fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. ²² Therefore "it was reckoned to him as righteousness." ²³ Now the words, "it was reckoned to him," were written not for his sake alone ²⁴ but for ours also. It will be reckoned to us who believe ^[c] in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, ²⁵ who was handed over for our trespasses and was raised for our justification.

Discussion Questions:

What stands out to you in this text?

What questions does this text bring up for you? What doesn't make sense?

What does it mean to keep the law? What does it mean to have faith? Why do you think Paul is telling us that keeping the law is not what is important here?

Abraham and Sarah were beyond the childbearing age when God made the covenant with them about being the father of many nations. This was a life out of death situation that became the foundation for our faith.

- What does that tell us about what God can do with little to nothing?
- Abraham and Sarah had many missteps between our Genesis text and the birth of their son. What does that tell us about when we mess up?
- Abraham and Sarah tried to orchestrate God's promise into being in their own way...does anyone remember how that worked out for them? If God didn't give up on them in their struggles what does that mean for us?
- God brought life out of death with Jesus...how do these connect for you?

Like Pr. Renee said in her sermon this past week Romans has been used to cause great harm, so we want to be careful about not reading this as God's time or that some people's faith is stronger than others and that brings about more favor. Paul is trying to get the reader to see that there is nothing that makes one person more blessed than another. How can we as people of faith help lift up that message Paul is trying to share?

