

**Sermon Notes – Sunday 11th February
'Abraham's faith and ours'**

Paul reasons that we are put right with God not by 'works' but by faith and trusting in what God has done through Jesus (Romans 4:3).

Read Romans 4:16-25. Paul continues to describe Abraham's faith. Abraham believed God's promise that he and Sarah would have a child, even though it was no longer humanly possible and that no unbelief or distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God. This is why Abraham is such an inspiration. His steadfast belief in God that He would be faithful to his promises (Genesis 15:4, 5) despite being past child bearing age, encourages us on our journey of faith. God's promise to Abraham was very specific.

- What promises does God make to us?

Abraham's walk with God began with a decision to 'believe God' and this simple faith was sufficient to put him into a right relationship with God.

- How do people today seek to put themselves into a right relationship with God? Is faith enough or do we feel we need something more?

Circumcision was not the cause of justification (being put right with God) rather it was the seal. It was the evidence and confirmation of what God had done to bring Abraham into this right standing with Himself (4:10). The New Testament 'seal' on God's people, the evidence of what God has done, is Baptism.

- Why is it important that each individual makes a public decision for Christ in Baptism (or confirmation)?

Read some of Paul's references to Baptism (Colossians 2:12, Romans 6:4, Galatians 3:26-29) and Jesus' final remarks (Matthew 28:19).

- Why do you think Baptism was so important to Jesus, that he went through it himself (Mt 3:13) and made it his final command to his disciples?

Read Mark 8:34-38.

- What is the relationship between Baptism and the challenge of Jesus in this passage?

On Sunday, Stephen told the story of Gladys Aylward.

- Is there a Bible character or person from history who by their response to the call of verse 34 to follow Jesus, has inspired you to live a fully surrendered life?
- As we begin our journey into Lent, what are you going to do to draw near to God more intentionally?

Pray for one another, that we may use the opportunity that Lent provides to grow in faith and love for God.

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