

## **“The Will of the Father” – Pr Jim Sprengle – Pentecost 9 – August 7, 2022**

- I. **Genesis 15:6** – “And [Abram] believed the Lord, and [the Lord] counted it to him as righteousness.”
- II. **Have you ever been a beneficiary** of someone’s will?
  - a. Some people have no one they know who might put them in their will.
  - b. Some people’s only hope of getting an inheritance comes from those unclaimed money sites.
    - i. Maybe you’ve checked to see if your name is on a list where the government or other corporations have money to refund you.
    - ii. Just to see how it would go for me, I decided to put my name into a database for unclaimed and missing funds... sure enough, it said I had some unclaimed money from my seminary days in St. Louis!
      1. I excitedly clicked on the Missouri State website, and I found that I was owed... \$1.23... yes, \$1.23.
      2. That was not the big jackpot I was looking for.
  - c. Others will play the lotto or try to strike it big some other way, but I wouldn’t put all your eggs in that basket for a big payday.
    - i. It is always best to trust in the Father to take care of our needs rather than a billion dollar power ball ticket.... Or an inheritance from an unknown, rich uncle...
  - d. Abram is probably wondering about what his future held at this point in his story.
    - i. Abram started out in the land of Ur, before his dad took the family around a thousand miles northwest to Haran.
    - ii. When Abram was around 75 and his wife, Sarai was 65, God called him to the land of Canaan, about 500 more miles south.
    - iii. The promise God made to Abram in Genesis 12 was to bless him and his family... and that they would become a great nation
      1. Yet Sarai was barren, and they weren’t getting any younger.
      2. The only heir in Abram’s will was a servant, Eliezer.
    - iv. You might think that doubt would start to set in...
      1. How can these promises of God come true?
      2. Look at us, we’re old... maybe we should have stayed in Haran
    - v. Later in the story, Sarai would be so impatient with God’s handling of this whole thing that she would give a maidservant to Abram to have a baby (which turned out to be a big mess)
    - vi. You see, even with the promise of God, doubts began to sneak in...
      1. The promise from God the Father was that they would have more descendants than they could ever count –
      2. And even more, the Messiah would come from their family line!

3. It's easy to look at them and wonder where their faith is, but given all the years that had gone by with nothing happening, they were wondering about God's plan... they were uncertain.

III. **Can you relate to Abram and Sarai?**

- a. When was the last time you were uncertain about your future?
- b. Have you dealt with suffering and trials – and then made dumb decisions to try to fix everything yourself instead of following God's definite plan?
- c. No doubt, it is challenging to apply God's word and promise to our present circumstances... but also trusting that our future is secure too.
- d. It's kind of strange, as Abram was in the middle of all this uncertainty... but God was backing up the promise of his future.
  - i. As unsure as he is, Abram believes by the power of the Holy Spirit, it says, "he believed the Lord, and [the Lord] counted it to him as righteousness."
  - ii. In other words, Abram's faith in God received the credit, or payment, of God's righteousness.
    1. Paul explains this in detail in Romans 4, as he says that a person who works receives a wage, but we don't work to get paid righteousness... we deserve punishment for our works... but God grants us faith, which is then able to receive the credit
- e. Abram and Sarai sure didn't get it perfect.
  - i. They probably did the best they could, which wasn't too good sometimes.
  - ii. Yet God still loved them, took care of them, and fulfilled His promises through them anyway.
  - iii. We can use them as examples for ourselves – even all these thousands of years after they are gone.
  - iv. Actually, we are their heirs... by faith we are God's children from their family line.
  - v. No, we don't trace our family history by genetics to Abram and Sarai, but we can call them our ancestors as their family by faith.

IV. **We are in the Father's will.**

- a. As a child of faith, we are in line to inherit all the blessings and riches of God the Father.
- b. In fact, you could say that we already have these blessings, but we have yet to experience them all –
  - i. It's not like the power ball or hoping for a rich uncle's inheritance – no, this promise by faith is a sure thing.
- c. Consider Abram, as he still believed even when it all seemed impossible – they didn't even have Isaac for 25 years AFTER God first promised them a son.
  - i. But God's Word keeps Abram from losing hope – and the impossible became not only possible, but a reality by God's hand.

- d. When you think about it, as wonderful and amazing as having Isaac was, the future held an even more amazing birth – the Son of God.
  - i. It's by this Son, Jesus our Lord, that we can be called heirs of God and children of the Heavenly Father.
  - ii. Jesus was the culmination of the faith of Abram and Sarai... the future descendants who also trusted in God's promises.

V. **Jesus is the reason we have a bright future.**

- a. God had a definite plan for all people to be gathered up in a huge family of faith... and His eye was on the perfect timing of a Son to be born.
- b. On star-filled night in Bethlehem, some 2000 years ago, a Child was born – Immanuel, God with us.
- c. The promises of God are tied to the rescue mission of sending His Son to take our sin and brokenness onto Himself...
  - i. Jesus became sin for us... He took the record of debt that was against us, and it was nailed to the cross. (2 Corinthians 5:21; Colossians 2:13-14)
  - ii. "Jesus was delivered up for our trespasses... and raised for our justification" Romans 4:25
    - 1. In other words, Jesus paid for our sins that should have been credited to us... but by the grace of God and through our faith... God acquits us... He calls us NOT GUILTY.
- d. We have nothing but thanks and praise for a God who loves us so much that He would save us by grace... and give us the very faith that allows us to receive it!
  - i. All credit, praise and thanksgiving are His – and rightly so... He is the only reason we have a hope that goes beyond our earthly sight.
  - ii. Paul says we walk by faith and not by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7) and without the promise of God's forgiveness and life eternal – this world would be a dismal end...

VI. **But we have certainty... a bright future...and a heavenly family.**

- a. Just take a trip far from the city, and look up into the sky...
- b. The very God of the universe who created all the stars and galaxies that cannot be counted also loves you.
- c. He promises your family is that big – more than you can count.
- d. You see, the Church shines with God's glory, and we are all in this together – past, present and future.
  - i. The reading in Hebrews calls to mind the many faithful witnesses that have gone before us – and with them, we are all in the Father's will, with an inheritance of eternal life.
- e. By God's grace and love, He provides all who believe a future and a hope.
- f. You are a child in the line of Abraham... and your future is secure no matter how difficult things might seem.

- g. By faith we believe the Lord, and God has promised that He will count it to us as righteousness...
- h. You... are right by God... through faith... Amen.