

2<sup>ND</sup> SUNDAY IN LENT 02/25/18

*Mt. Calvary, West View*

GENESIS 17: 1-16, ROMANS 5: 1-11, MARK 8: 27-38

A Shameful Life

**+ Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. AMEN +**

Our Text is taken from the Gospel of St. Matthew, the 6<sup>th</sup> chapter:

***For what does it profit a man, to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? For what can a man give in return for his life? For whoever is ashamed of Me and of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of man also be ashamed, when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.***

There is a song, perhaps you have heard it; the line goes, "Shame, Shame, Shame! You should have known better." Do not look in your hymnals, it is not in there. It is in fact a quite secular song, but the line is very apt for this Lenten season. For it is a shameful state we are in; mired in sin. Shameful, in that we are quite capable of knowing God's Word, knowing the consequences of going against said Word, and still, the shame of it all is we go against the Holy Commands of Almighty God, rekindle His righteous anger on a daily, nay hourly basis, all because we cannot help ourselves, and the greatest sin of all, we would rather *not* talk about our faith in this adulterous and sinful generation.

Shame, shame, shame! Indeed, it is shameful that this adulterous and sinful generation refuses to heed God's wonderful words of salvation. God simply desires that His creation just believe and trust in His Words, His promises, His forgiveness. Take Abram for instance. Here is a man who 25 years prior to our text was asked to uproot himself from his homeland of Ur and become a nomad in a strange land. This is the same man who 14 years prior was given the great promise that He would have a son of his own to carry on his name and people. The shame of this story is this is the same man who 13 years prior tried to make the promise come to fruition on his own by having Ishmael with a concubine, yes, with his wife's consent. Yet, despite this shame,

God told him to be patient and his true son of his wife Sarai would be accomplished. So, for all this time, he was being faithful to the covenant, and now once again was simply asked, by no less than God Almighty, to walk blamelessly before Him, so that he could be blessed by God Almighty with a covenant between just the two of them, and above all, as a 99-year-old man, would have descendants that multiply into a great number. What a bargain! His reaction to all this? He falls down on his face in great shame because he knows he cannot fulfill his end of the bargain. He knows that he is a sinful human being in the presence of Almighty God, truly unworthy of any good gifts to come his way. Yet, still, in his unworthiness, worships the God speaking to him because he does have faith in the promise. He simply trusts in God to fulfill His promise however HE sees fit.

To signify that his sin is forgiven, and that the covenant is true and about to be fulfilled, God changes his name to Abraham ó more letters, yes, but also a meaning change. Abram means, "High Father"; Abraham means, "Father of The Multitude." To top it off, (poor choice of words perhaps,) God institutes the rite of circumcision to identify the chosen people in this covenant, and for these males, 8 days old and beyond, to have a constant reminder of their God and their faith. As for his wife, Sarai. (Not to be confused with that Apple Help voice, Siri.) Sarai means "princess" as in any princess, but now her name is Sarah, THE Princess, or sometimes loosely translated as "Head Princess, or Queen." What these name changes indicate is the promise is about to be fulfilled, and take note, behold, the fulfillment is very soon.

We also have Peter in our Gospel. You know this man has a name change as well. Surprisingly, it is the record of Matthew that has the changing of the name from Simon to Peter, because it was Peter's confession that is the rock of all confessions, Jesus is the Son of God. The writer to the Romans ó he has a name change too. Saul, the Hebrew man who wanted to eradicate Christianity, to Paul, the stalwart confessor of the faith. Changing names is not just for identity purposes, but to signify a change made by God, whether it be a promise made, a confession of

faith made, or a service to preach the One and Only Salvation in Christ Jesus ó all of which were made by God through His appointed vessels to bring about His Word to all. Indeed, as personal as a name is, being changed by the Word of God makes us see the Word of God in our world through our name.

It is similar to Baptism. That middle name of yours is historically your baptismal name. We kind of jump the gun a bit and place middle names on the birth certificate before the baptism, but no matter. It is the baptismal name, the name that signifies that you are a baptized and forgiven child of the new covenant, that you are washed clean from the sins of your past with the crimson flood of Christ's blood from the cross. And with the name change, you remember that the fulfillment of the promise of eternal life is coming soon ó Jesus is coming with His holy angels and the Glory of the Father!

Indeed, just when you thought the world had no idea that you were a saved child of God, they could have deciphered it from your middle name! Ah, but this adulterous and sinful generation no longer uses the middle name designation as an indicator of being saved by Jesus Christ and His blood. Truly, I know of many parents that have granted middle names to their children yet refuse to baptize them. After all, they can make that decision later. I guess they can also make a decision later to change their name. After all, who are we to impose their name upon them? If we cannot give them salvation and faith in Christ Jesus, who suffered many and various things, and died on the cross so that they may have life eternal because they may not want to be a saved Child of God, how can we possibly give them a name they may not want?

Indeed, to be ashamed to save even these little ones from original sin just so that they may gain some pseudo-comfort in this world, these parents forfeit their whole life being ashamed to follow God in faith and trust. We have seen this before as well. Peter saw the world, and not the Word of God when Jesus revealed that He would suffer many things, be rejected by Chief priests and elders and scribes and be killed but on the third day, rise again. Plain Words He spoke, but

Peter could only see that a world without Jesus is horrible! If it is just the chief priests, the elders and the scribes, why we can take them on! It is not like the whole world is going to put Jesus to death! Peter surely had the greatest of intentions of wanting to keep Jesus here for we all know that we need Jesus to win more souls for the Kingdom, but the Word is never void never wrong. Jesus has to remind Peter, that he still is in the flesh, and that the flesh is against the Word of God, guided by no less than Satan himself. The road to hell is paved with all these kinds of good intentions but follow the sure narrow Word and you will never go wrong.

This world cannot have peace because it allows the prince of this world to influence it so much, that it cannot even see the Word of God. But you who are baptized, you who are given grace and peace through your forgiveness and absolution, who come in humble repentant humility to receive the very body and blood of our Lord, you have unending peace. You rejoice in the sufferings for the faith, because you know that, *“suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit Who has been given to us, that while we were yet sinning, Christ died for us.”* He saves you now and gives you the Holy Spirit that makes your faith strong in the face of this adulterous and sinful generation. Indeed, this world has come to a conclusion that many things outside of God’s commands are acceptable to society, hence its designation as adulterous. Yet, stand firm on the promise of God that you are saved, justified by His blood, and you will have a peace that gets you through this sinful generation. Rejoice in God, through our Lord, Jesus Christ, through Whom we have now received reconciliation. And do not be ashamed to share your faith with the world. In His most Holy Name.  
**AMEN.**

+ AND NOW MAY THE PEACE OF GOD WHICH SURPASSES ALL UNDERSTANDING  
KEEP YOUR HEARTS AND MINDS IN UNION WITH CHRIST JESUS. AMEN+

Offering / Prayers

**There are only two days on my calendar...today and the day of judgment**