

Washington church of Christ

27 Grand Avenue, Washington, NJ 07882

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washingtonnjchurchofchrist.com

Order of Services

Sunday, March 17, 2013

Song Leader	Derald Sanchez
Prayer	Tom Dolan
Preaching	Bob James
Lord's Supper	
Prayer for the Bread	Bob Wydro
Prayer for the Cup	Bob Celentano
Prayer for the Collection	Lee Redd
Assisting at the Table	Bob DeGrado
Morning Closing Prayer	Ralph Ruggiero
Evening Closing Prayer	Scott Thomas
Announcements	Brian Jeffries

Schedule of Weekly Services

Sunday Morning Bible Classes	9:30 am
Sunday Morning Worship	10:30 am
Sunday Evening Worship	6:00 pm
Wednesday Evening Bible Classes	7:30 pm
Thursday Morning Bible Study	11:00 am

The Washington Messenger

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March 17, 2013

Hoping Against Hope...

It has been said that hope is the expectation of something desirable. In today's reference to Abraham, the object of his hope was the fulfillment of God's promise that Abraham would have a son through whose lineage the precious promise of God would attain fulfillment.

However, a time arrived when, humanly speaking, the realization of this hope seemed impossible. To this Abraham responded...

Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, "So shall your offspring be." (Romans 4:18 NIV)

When it comes to the subject of faith it is the object of our faith that matters more than anything else. One might have a strong faith in thin ice ... the ice breaks and he dies by that faith. Another might have a weak faith in thick ice yet be as safe as if he stood on concrete. It could be said that Abraham's faith is not exemplary because of its strength or lack of it, but because its object was God. Through the years, people of faith in their own abilities have perished; men and women who believed implicitly that God does not exist found out they were wrong. Their faith was sincere, but because its object was wrong it was sincerely wrong.

This is not to suggest that faith should be blind and unintelligent. Abraham's faith was clearly related to his knowledge of its object. In the same way that the man on thick ice knows about its thickness before he exercises his faith in it, so Abraham knew things about the God whom he trusted...

As it is written: "I have made you a father of many nations." He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed—the God who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were. (Romans 4:17 NIV)

People all round Abraham believed in something, probably as fervently as he believed in God. But, of course, their experience was limited, not because of their faith, but because of the limitations of that upon which they believed. Belief sometimes is

I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." (Genesis 12:2-3 NKJV)

nothing more than empty superstition, but intelligent faith knows intimately that which it believes.

Abraham's faith was expressed by a hope which believed "contrary to hope." When we talk about hope we often convey a sense of hopelessness and desperation. We "hope" someone will show up, or that something will happen, but we have no real grounds for such hope. Abraham, humanly speaking, had no basis for believing that he would, in his old age, become the father of many nations. Frankly, it was a hopeless situation. Nevertheless he believed in hope. His "hope" was rooted in God and His word and, therefore, had an aura of confidence rather than of desperation. His faith was confidence in God.

Far from ignoring the practical realities of the situation and closing its eyes to the facts of life which surrounded him, Abraham's faith was one that was aware of the situation...

Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead—since he was about a hundred years old—and that Sarah's womb was also dead. Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God (Romans 4:19-20 NIV)

He carefully considered the factors, refusing to be intimidated by his circumstances but rather demonstrating the faith for which he is known.

Some people, when faced with delay and discouragement, "waver" in their faith, while others are strengthened by the delay. When he considered his circumstances on the one hand, Abraham must have been tempted to sink into despair ... yet when he considered the promise of God as it related to his circumstances he must have been overjoyed. The tendency would have been to vacillate between the two extremes. This he refused to do, preferring instead to patiently trust God to work according to His timeline. In so doing he "gave glory to God." The more opportunities he was given to praise God in faith and be reminded of the promise of God irrespective of circumstances, the more he was led into a stronger trust in God.

People who nervously board airplanes tend to settle down after a while, not because God gives them more faith, but because the longer they sit on the plane and it stays up, the more they learn it is worthy of trust, and, accordingly, they trust it more. They are strengthened in their faith through the ongoing experience of the dependability of faith's object.

As Christians we must always keep God as the object of our faith. The Apostle Paul encourages us by example ...

That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day. (2 Timothy 1:12 NIV)

...Bob

Our Prayer List...

▲ Doug Focht ... Jon Focht ... Everett Guyton ... Donna Banghart ... Glenn Montgomery's father ... Mary Celentano ... Georgia DeLorenzo ... our young people here at Washington ... our young people away at college ... the men and women in military service ... leaders of our nation ... leaders of our congregation ... our congregation.

"This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him." (1 John 5:14-15 NIV)

EVENTS AND NOTES

THERE WILL BE A TEACHERS MEETING TODAY @ 5PM. THE NEW BIBLE SCHOOL TERM STARTS SUNDAY, MARCH 24TH.

WE WILL HAVE OUR THURSDAY MORNING STUDY THIS WEEK @ 11:00. PLEASE SEE BOB IF YOU NEED A LESSON.

UPCOMING EVENTS THAT WE ARE AWARE OF ARE ...

- ▲ BOB AT WEST POINT NEXT SUNDAY MORNING. RALPH WILL DELIVER THE LESSON HERE.
- ▲ MEN'S SPIRITUAL & BUSINESS MEETING, SUNDAY, APRIL 5TH.
- ▲ NORTHEAST FC CAMP, JUNE 30TH – JULY 5TH.
- ▲ BOB AT WEST POINT ON SUNDAY MORNING, APRIL 28TH. STAN WILL DELIVER THE LESSON HERE
- ▲ WASHINGTON LADIES' RETREAT – SEPTEMBER 6TH & 7TH.
- ▲ OUR FALL GOSPEL MEETING WITH JOE WORKS OF THE FAIR LAWN CONGREGATION ON OCTOBER 11TH – 13TH.

ANYONE DESIRING A FAMILY OR AN INDIVIDUAL BIBLE STUDY PLEASE CONTACT ME (BOB JAMES).