

Saturday, February 16

Romans 4:1-5, 13-17

Through faithful righteousness

I love Eugene Peterson's translation of Paul's letters because he takes the metaphors lurking in the background of Paul's sentences and spells out the implications as we read. I invite you to go to the website and read all of Roman's 4 - this will just be a taste. The question for today is: What is the gospel? What is the good news?

Promise - It all starts with **God's promise**. That famous promise God gave Abraham—that he and his children would possess the earth—was not given because of something Abraham did or would do. It was based on God's decision to put everything together for him... **Behind the promise is God's choice, God's decision, God's love**. A contract drawn up by a hard-nosed lawyer and with plenty of fine print only makes sure that you will never be able to collect. But if there is no contract in the first place, simply a promise—and God's promise at that—you can't break it. God's promise arrives as pure gift.... Sheer gift. *"Scripture taken from The Message. Copyright ? 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2001, 2002. Used by permission of NavPress Publishing Group." biblegateway.com/versions/?action=getVersionInfo&vid=6*

Trust - Our response is to trust, to trust **God's promise**. ...the fulfillment of God's promise depends entirely on trusting God and his way, and then simply embracing him and what he does. **We often talk about faith, or believing, or taking Jesus as our Savior, or calling Jesus Lord. Peterson and Martin Luther zero in on the word, 'trust,' as the more accurate way to get us to hear the good news - trust God's promise.** When everything was hopeless, Abraham believed anyway, deciding to live not on the basis of what he saw he couldn't do but on what God said he would do.

Right - When we trust God's promise, we end up right. Abraham entered into what God was doing for him, and that was the turning point. He trusted God to set him right instead of trying to be right on his own. I don't know how many arguments I had with my sister over who was right. I was downright incensed when my sister-in-law blew my elementary-aged children's 'belief' that their father was always right. And here's Paul telling us the good news - when God promises, when we trust - we're right! ... well, that trusting-him-to-do-it is what gets you set right with God, by God.... We call Abraham "father" not because he got God's attention by living like a saint, but because God made something out of Abraham when he was a nobody.

Hmmm - looks as if there's good news for each of us, for all of us, for any of us who've had the feeling now and then that we're just a nobody. God, thank you for promising far more than I can ever do - and making it happen when I trust you.

A Way to Pray – Listening in Silence

- Sit quietly; hear all the sounds around you
- Breathe slowly and deeply – let go of all concerns
- Hear God speaking with each breath:
 - (intake, holding) *Be still...*
 - (exhale, releasing) *...and know that I am God.*
- Psalm 46:10