# Congregational-Presbyterian Church

 **“Heirs of Abraham”**

**Galatians 3:26-29**

 **August 28, 2022**

This morning we come to the final Sunday of our summer-long “Walk with Abraham.” Whereas the past twelve Sundays have seen us in the Old Testament book of Genesis, today we are in Paul’s letter to the Galatians where Paul uses God’s relationship with Abraham to show the Galatians, and us, that anyone’s relationship with God is based on faith alone. I invite you to turn with me to Galatians 3:26-29

For you are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. And all who have been united with Christ in baptism have put on Christ, like putting on new clothes. There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus. And now that you belong to Christ, you are the true children of Abraham. You are his heirs, and God’s promise to Abraham belongs to you.

Abraham was right with God because of his faith in God. He trusted God when God asked him to go to a new country. He believed in God when God told him he would have a son. He had faith in God when God promised that he would be the father of many descendants, one of whom would be a blessing to all people. We know that one to be Jesus Christ, through whom we, by faith, have been made right with God.

When God came to Abraham, he didn’t say, “Abraham, let’s make a deal. If you do this, then I will do that.” When God came to Abraham, he came with unconditional promises, and all Abraham had to do was believe that God would fulfill those promises. One day all of us, Abraham included, will stand before the judgment seat of the Son of God. Perhaps we will be close enough to hear Jesus speak with Abraham. “Abraham,” Jesus will say, “By faith, you are a child of God and you have inherited eternal life. Welcome home!” And to each one of us, when it is our turn, Jesus will say, “By faith, you are a child of God and you have inherited eternal life. Welcome home!” He won’t ask us what we have done to earn eternal life. He won’t ask if we have kept our end of the bargain by being good, for there was no bargain. God has not made a deal with you or me: “You be good and I’ll be good to you.” He has made us a promise, and he always keeps his promises.

Think of the difference between making a promise and making a deal in the context of parenting. When your child is young you say, “One day, when you’re a little older, your mom and I will take you to Disneyland.” You have made a promise to your daughter, and she will remember it. What happens, then, when she is a little older, and you say to her: “If you get good grades in school, then we will take you to Disneyland.” You made her a promise when she was younger, but now you’re making her a deal. She will not be happy that you have changed the promise into a deal.

God could have made us a deal and been perfectly justified in doing so. Parents make deals with their children all the time, and there is nothing wrong with that. But, when a promise is made, whether by God or a parent, their child should be able to count on it.

“God’s promise to Abraham belongs to you,” says Paul. The reason we walked with Abraham this summer was not merely to learn about an amazing man of faith. It was to learn about his relationship with God, a relationship based on believing God’s promises. This helps us to understand how our relationship with God is based on the promises he has made to us through his Son, Jesus Christ.

In a few minutes we will have the opportunity to share together in the Lord’s Supper, a sacrament that Jesus instituted as a reminder of the promises that his heavenly Father has fulfilled through his Son. They include the promise to forgive our sin, the promise to love us, and the promise to never leave us or forsake us. In our eating the bread and drinking the cup this morning, we proclaim that we believe the promise that by Christ’s death and resurrection we have eternal life, and that nothing will ever be able to separate us from the love of God.