

Home Group notes for the week following Sunday 21st February 2016

## **LENT TWO – GOD’S COVENANT**

### **As we Gather**

God’s covenant with Abraham was a precursor of the covenant ushered in by Jesus through the cross. In both, God humbled Himself. In both, God’s promises were unilateral and unconditional. Both were covenants of grace.

**Reading Scripture    Genesis 15:1-12 + 17-18    Philippians 3:17 – 4:1    Luke 13: 31 – 35**

### **Thinking Together**

God’s blessings are beyond our imagination. All Abraham’s actions demonstrated his faith, but it was his belief in God that made him right with God (Genesis 15:6    Romans 4:1-5) so receiving God’s blessings.

In the same way, a right relationship with Christ is based on the heartfelt inner confidence that He is who He says He is, and so taking Him at His word.

Asking for assurance / guidance is not demonstrating doubt (Genesis 15:8)

**How can we know we are doing God’s will?    Discuss**

Freedom in Christ means freedom from the fear that imprisons us within ourselves, for living in the joy and the light of the Lord (Psalm 27:1-10). This gives us every opportunity to serve God, putting other’s needs before satisfying our own desires (Philippians 3:17-21)

**Do you live in the presence of the Lord each day?    Discuss    (Psalm 27:4 + 8)**

**What types of fears can become dark shadows over our lives?    Discuss**

Those Christians with a spiritual mind mourn the way some professing Christians live – prioritising earthly things and opposing /ignoring the heavenly blessings given through Christ (Colossians 3:1-3) It is easy to be influenced by the “Judiazers” of today (Philippians 3:17-20    Colossians 4:2 + 5-6    1 John 4:1-6).

**How can we stand firm in the Lord?    Discuss    (Philippians 4:1)**

In Jesus’ time Jerusalem – City of God – symbolised the entire Jewish nation, being both the spiritual and the national capital; but it had a history of rejecting God’s prophets (1Kings 19:10    2 Chronicles 24:19    Jeremiah 26:20-23    Matthew 14:1-12), and would also reject Israel’s Messiah.

Jesus was in Perea, on His way to Jerusalem, when some Pharisees came to warn Him that He was in danger (Luke 13:31-33)

**Why was Jesus focussed on going to Jerusalem at this time?    Discuss**

Jesus was not afraid of danger, as His answer showed when He implied that Herod - “that fox” – was a cunning, destructive and worthless /insignificant man. Jesus took His orders from God as He was doing the will of God according to the Father’s schedule (John 2:4    7:30    8:21    13:1    17:1    and    1 Peter 1:17-20).

It grieved Jesus to see the unbelief and rebellion against God that was prevalent in the Jewish nation (Luke 13:34-35). He knew there would be no peace for Israel until He (Messiah) returns.

### **In Closing**

The cross of Jesus is the heart of the gospel. It is proof of God's love for sinners and hatred for sin (Romans 5:8).

Throughout the journey to Jerusalem Jesus dealt with matters He wanted His disciples (including us today) to know before He left them - justice (Luke 13:1-9); the Sabbath ( Luke 13:10-13); Salvation (Luke 13:22-30), and personal danger (Luke 13:31-35).

**Does your life show that you are a follower of Jesus?**

### **PRAYER**

God of the covenant you promised mercy and hope for all. Gather us to yourself in tenderness, and open our ears to listen for your word, so that, assured of your faithfulness, we may live to your praise and glory through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen