

# St. Paul: On The Same page

08.04.13 Week #258

**Day One:** Genesis 15:1-6

*“Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward.”  
But Abram said, “O Sovereign Lord, what can you give me since I remain childless...”*

Do you remember when you were a child and someone at school refused to be your friend? You came home and told your mother, “Nobody likes me!” And your mom responded, “I like you!”

That didn’t seem to help much, did it? And yet, for all the years since then it never stopped being true. Your mother loved you far more than any of those other people could.

God tells Abram that he will be Abram’s reward. But Abram cannot see how God can bless him since he does not have the one thing that he wants most. Think about this for a moment. God himself would be Abram’s reward, but that’s not enough for him.

*“Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.”*

Hebrews 11:1

What about you? Are there certain blessings that you want to receive from God that, if you don’t receive them in just the way you want them, you won’t be satisfied? Does it seem like if God doesn’t come through with what you need then he could not possibly have a better gift in mind?

Think of it this way: Abram only wanted a son to inherit his flocks and herds. What did God give him? The Savior of the world was Abram’s descendant. Do you think God can choose a good gift for you?

Prayer: *Heavenly Father, more than anything else in life you know that I want \_\_\_\_\_.  
Lord, I trust that you know better.  
Give me what pleases you. Amen.*

**Day Two:** Hebrews 11:1-16  
*Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for. By faith we understand that the world was formed at God's command...*

What is faith? We tend to think of it as an abstract concept – a feeling – an orientation – maybe even an attitude. We think of faith as something insubstantial, something invisible.

But the author of the letter to the Hebrews keeps saying, “By faith...” He says that faith is being sure of what we hope for, but then that faith is able to DO something.

It’s “by faith” that we understand, “by faith” that Abel offers a sacrifice, “by faith” that Noah builds an ark, Abraham goes on a journey, Moses’ parents hide their baby, and many other things.

Faith does things!  
Faith is not just having good feelings or a positive mental attitude. Faith in the Son of God actually changes us, and it changes our world.

How does being sure of what you hope for help to achieve anything? Perhaps it is because without faith we

would have only fear. Without faith we would have no hope that our actions could make any difference. But by faith we know that God can and IS working in our lives toward his wonderful purpose!

By faith we know that Jesus’ sinless life and his sacrificial suffering and death and his victorious rising from the grave changes the meaning of everything in **our** life!

By faith we are no longer held in chains by the power of the past. We are set free from guilt to move forward again in our lives. By faith we are no longer afraid of the future. We know that we not only have a purpose, but God has a purpose for us, and he cannot fail. By faith we can rejoice in the present, even if we are not exactly where we wanted to be at this time in our life, because we know that we live with Jesus. His Spirit dwells in us.

What will you do “by faith” today?

*Prayer: Lord Jesus, I have not seen you, but I know your love for me that overcomes my fears. Now lead me to act in faith to give, to serve, to speak, and to live. Amen.*

**Day Three:** Luke 12:22-34

*Then Jesus said to his disciples,  
“Therefore I tell you, do not worry  
about your life, what you will eat; or  
about your body, what you will  
wear. Life is more than food...”*

Alfred E. Neuman is a cartoon character from the covers of Mad Magazine. The caption that usually goes with his picture says, “What, me worry?” The implication is that only a simpleton would be unworried at all the crazy news these days.

How could anyone not be worried in a world with terrorists planting bombs in public places, criminals stealing your very identity, nations with weapons that can destroy whole cities, scientists with the ability to design new diseases? And those are just some of the intentional evils around us. The world is filled with more evil stuff that just happens!

Why do we worry? We could worry about those big life and death things. But strangely we tend to worry more about the kind of things that Jesus lists – trivial things like what we will eat or what we will wear. Or even sillier, we worry about whether the

food we eat will make us fat, or if the clothes we wear will flatter us.

It doesn’t matter what is on your worry list. Large or small, they all have this in common. These are all things that are in God’s hands. The flowers in the field, which no one is planting, or watering or fertilizing, grow so abundantly that we cannot keep up with them. And our lives are the same. The growing and blossoming things in our lives are gifts from God. And when it is time for us to fade, God has a greater plan for us even then.

How can you keep this in mind today? Perhaps if you pick a flower, or put a few blades of grass on your plate today, you can remember that God made them grow, and he will provide for you too.

*Prayer: Lord Jesus, I have built bigger storage barns for myself. I have more things in my collection than my parents ever dreamed of having, and all they have brought me is more worry and work. Please help me to keep only your Word in my hands, and your promises in my heart. Amen.*

**Day Four:** 1 Timothy 6:17

*Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy.*

Rich people are evil.

Everyone knows that, right?

Rich people are self-indulgent, self-centered. They live off the backs of the poor. The Bible even says that it will be harder for a rich man to get into heaven than for a camel to squeeze through the eye of a needle, doesn't it?

Naturally, we make exceptions for the few rich people we know and like, but in general we're suspicious of the wealthy. Sadly, the Bible has a slightly different idea of what wealth means.

Do you have more than you need? Two winter coats? Two suits? Two nice dresses? A car? Two cars? Then you have enough to share, and you're better off than most of this world. You're not alone.

Abraham was rich.

Isaac was rich. Jacob and Esau and Joseph and Boaz and David and Solomon were all very rich. They sinned, of course, but they also served

their Lord. God gave them earthly wealth, and along with it he gave them the chance to use it for the good of others.

For some, wealth corrupted them, just as Jesus warned. But by the grace of God others broke the power of money by using it, instead of loving it.

How do you keep your wealth from turning your eyes away from your Savior? How do you keep blessings from cursing you? The best way is this – take hold of them and use them, spend them, work with them in service to God and others. If you have the gift of money, how can you use it to bless others? If you have the gift of many friends, how can you bless those who are friendless? If you have the gift of a peaceful heart, how can you share peace with those who are troubled?

God gave you gifts for a reason.

*Prayer: Dear Savior, I confess that you have blessed me beyond what I deserve. Teach me to bless others with the gifts I have received. Amen.*