

In the Easter texts we hear about doubting Thomas. Sarah is someone who really doubted..... She even laughed when she heard the prophecy of her having a child.

Sometimes we need to learn to abandon our own limited image of God to learn to hear his voice and his plan. I think this story of Sarah and Abraham is a good example of that. There were three men that Abraham had lavished with wonderful hospitality. He was sitting under the oak trees and was conversing with them. Sarah was eavesdropping from their tent. she especially listened when they mentioned her name. She laughed when she heard what they said. By the sound of this passage Sarah was into menopause and Abraham was at least 99 years old. She was pretty sure that a child was not something in her future. When the men did not feel that she took them seriously they called her on it, she then said Oh no that wasn't me laughing. The passage said she was afraid to admit she was laughing. God did not give her a choice and Isaac was born. I wonder what Sarah thought God looked like before that happened.... I will bet it was not those three men visiting with her husband.... at least not in the beginning.

In our gospel today the disciples are given some pretty big marching orders. I wonder what that sounded like to them? They had been following and watching Jesus heal people, cast out demons for three years and now they were to be empowered to do the same ministry he has been doing??? I imagine there was some laughter and fear around the campfire that evening. Do you think there might have been some doubt in their minds as well. I can just imagine Peter saying I am going to do what??? But then it is important to remember the great faith that these men had. And their teacher was still with them, to guide and help them grow into their ministry. It would be amazing to hear the conversation that went on

between Jesus and his disciples at this time. It makes me wonder if this passage is anticipating their questions or answering them?

How does this scripture speak to us today as we sit here in this church?

Are we a bit like Sarah? Are we afraid to acknowledge our doubt to God or to others? Is it important to do that? At least it takes faith to do that. we do not hear about any doubt that the disciples may have had at the time they were given this huge mission to do. Their faith took over and they went about the work that Jesus gave them to do. that is what was handed down to us. Sarah and Abraham became parents and the faith they had at that time carries on in us here today.

Do you think you have been given a task to do in God's kingdom. Do you think you have the faith to carryout whatever mission that is? I read this question "Are we afraid to acknowledge our doubt to God or to others? What can we do in our church communities to make it safe to acknowledge our doubt and thereby enable ourselves and our church communities to grow in faith?"

How would that make a difference? In the beginning of this I mentioned Thomas, we heard him famously express his doubt to the rest of the disciples as they met in a locked room. When Jesus appears to them again, he acknowledges the doubt Thomas shared. Jesus then gives Thomas what he needs to solidify his faith.

When do we get together to talk about God? Not just god in our church, but God in our lives? Do you ever stay for coffee hour and hear anything about God? Have you ever heard, "Guess what God did for me this week; or I really question where God is in our world right now??" There is doubt and there is faith sitting right here right now. It is among us and all around us. None of us is alone with it.

Today is father's day. It is a big day for many families. But today it puts me in mind of Abraham. we hear about Sarah and her doubt, but I wonder what misgivings a man of 100 years old would have had about becoming a father. He knew that this was his mission from God but he was a human being after all there had to be some fear and trepidation there somewhere. We know that his faith and fatherhood were challenged by God in a big way as the boy was growing up. God asked Abraham to sacrifice the boy and Abraham did everything that God asked until angels intervened and save the boys life.

In our Gospel I think of Jesus as a father figure sending out his disciples to do what they have been taught to do. His faith in them is huge as well as the faith they carry with them. It is much like a father in any home coaching a son or daughter who is leaving the nest and heading out into the world on their own.

Please open your hymnals and turn to hymn number 558. I would like us to read together the third verse of that hymn. Faith of our fathers living still. Fathers all the way back to Abraham, David, Zachariah, Joseph, I could fill in quite a list. We are reminded of the faith each time we read the stories from the Old and New Testament. But they are the old stories, the ones that nurture our faith on a regular basis. But what of here and now. God still has faith in us and we must constantly remember our faith in God. Do we sometimes allow our doubt to blind us to God's presence in the world? What can we do to awaken ourselves and be more aware of this presence? One thing we can do is share god's love with those around us. We have it with us. Our reading from Romans today says: "God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us" Last week we heard Emily preach about the love of God and God being Love. So we must choose how to personally share that love.

Our collect today says: Keep, O Lord, your household the Church in your steadfast faith and love, that through your grace we may proclaim your truth with boldness, and minister your justice with compassion; for the sake of our Savior Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*