

Fourth Sunday after Pentecost 2 July 2017

Main Readings: Gen 22. 1-14, Ps 13, Rom 6.12-23, Matthew 10.40-42

[Genesis 22: 1-14; Psalm 13; Romans 6: 12-23; Matthew 10: 40-42](#) Vanderbilt

[Proper 8A/Ordinary 13A/Pentecost +4 July 2, 2017](#) Textweek

Today, I am going to talk about the goodness of God and the faithfulness of Abraham. Before I go further, I would like to teach you something. Please, say this after me, When I say, **God is good**. I want you to response, **All the time**, and when I say, **All the time**, you say, **God is good**. Let us try

Me: God is good

Members: All the time

Me: All the time

Members: God is good (#3)

Well done, intelligent people. What this phrase means is how can we serve God faithfully, wisely and obediently in the context of suffering, sickness, rejection and possible death? How can God be good when everything seems to be upside down? That is what this phrase is all about. In fact, God has been so good since the creation of the earth and He has been so good to each of us. He has been so merciful, and for that reason, that is why we are here today. Emmanuel, God is with us and He is always with us in all our circumstances. We are here thankful and grateful for every moment of God's attention. The divine word of God is prevailing over the law of human nature. The community of faith, there is a good reason for us to love and to be joyful because we are in presence of the risen Lord where there is the fullness of love and fullness of life. We hope and we are conscious that Jesus is always interceding on our behalf so that God may bless us beyond our imagination. Again, every Sunday

you come to this church and pray to God in order to meet you at a point of your essential needs because God is the ultimate solution for all the fundamental issues in human life.

In Genesis narrative, this is a traumatic temptation ever in the life of Abraham that God has tested him after the son of the promised was born at the old age. Indeed, Abraham is one of the great people of faith in the history of Christianity. Our Lord Jesus speaks about the importance of faith of Abraham, as well apostle Paul speaks of such faith. We know and we often hear the incredible story of Abraham of how the good God called him and how the good God led him to the promised land. In fact, God blessed Abraham with one child only, the promised son Isaac. Presumably, the test was very real. God who provided Isaac to Abraham demanded the child to be given back to him. It seems that the purpose of the test was designed to justify the faith of Abraham. Before that, God had told the patriarch to send Ismael away with his mother and now he told Abraham to sacrifice Isaac. As a result, Abraham had willingly kicked out Ismael with his mother, but he would not want to kill his last one, Isaac. God made a covenant with Abraham but did Abraham really believe that God would still keep his word and raise the seed of promise? The imperative to sacrifice his only beloved son as a burnt offering seems totally and utterly unreasonable. Above all, it seems as a cancellation of the promise God has made with Abraham. What bothers me about this story is how God could put Abraham through such an extreme test? If you were Abraham, how would feel? Absolutely, it is a broken heart and I think Abraham was in the terrible fighting mood.

In short, while Abraham was almost murdered his son, however, God intervened immediately in a very dramatic and instructive way. Actually, this divine intervention indicated that the good God never had the intention to let Abraham kill the heir of the promise but indeed it was

purely a test. The angel of the Lord stopped Abraham as the venerable patriarch preparing to take his knife out to slay Isaac. Now God knew that his servant Abraham is faithful and he would hold nothing back because he feared God. What do we learn from this narrative? First, we learnt that Abraham was obedient to God and he deserves the blessings that he received from God. Second, a true worshiper of God holds nothing back from God but obediently gives what God asks, trusting that he will provide. What is the great reward for the good and faithful workers of God? This is what many Christians hope and aspire for. We are so blessed to live in this beautiful country Australia where good, hard work is recognised, encouraged and rewarded.

By contrast, we are optimistic that our good work will not go in vain. It will be certainly rewarded by the good God and that is the key word in Matthew's gospel. Those who are faithfully served the Lord and who faithfully receive God's messengers were promised the great rewards from God. For example, to receive a prophet or a local priest and their message was equivalent to receiving Jesus Christ. The Bible says, even a cup of cold water given to the worker of Jesus would be much appreciated and rewarded by God. The reward is in keeping with the act of faithfulness. But there are consequences should anyone rejecting God's messengers because the rejection of the disciples of Jesus is also a rejection of Jesus Christ, and the reception of Jesus 'disciples is also a reception of Jesus Christ as well. As you are now looking for the new priest, my advice to you is to pray hard so that the good God will provide the good shepherd.

To conclude my sermon, let me share with you this interesting Story. "A one father can feed seven children, but seven children cannot feed one father". (African Proverb)

'There was an African old man was sitting on the sofa in his house along with the 30-year-old highly educated son. Suddenly, a crow

perched on their window. The father asked his son, what is this? The Son replied, "It is a crow". After a few minutes, the Father asked his Son the 2nd time, to which The Son said "Father, I have just told you "It's a crow". After a little while, the Father again asked again, "What is this?" This time the son was so irritated, he said to his Father with a rebuff, "It's a crow, a crow, a crow". A little after, the Father again asked his Son the 4th time, "What is this?" This time the Son shouted at his Father, "Why do you keep asking me the same question again and again, although I have told you so many times 'IT IS A CROW'. Are you not able to understand this?" A little later the Father went to his room and came back with an old diary, which he had maintained since his Son was born. On opening a page, he asked his Son to read that page. It had the words "Today my little son aged three was sitting with me on the sofa when a crow was sitting on the window. My Son asked me 23 times what it was, and I replied to him all 23 times that it was a Crow. I hugged him lovingly each time he asked me the same question again and again for 23 times. I did not at all feel irritated I rather felt affection for my innocent child". The son asked the question 23 times but when the Father asked him just 4 times, he was irritated'.

How best does this story describes many of us and our relationship with our relatives, children, partners, and above all with our Father God? God is faithful and we ought to be faithful as well as He is faithful to us.

God is good, all the time.

All the time, God is good.

The Lord be with you

Fr Matthew Madul