

**Immersed in God’s Word,**

**following Jesus – together**

*His disciples came to him, and Jesus began to teach them.*

*~ Jesus, Matthew 5:2*



**Monday, Week 2: Theme for the week: My Faith Walk**

****Many people know that the Bible is made up of two testaments, often referred to as *old* and *new*. You may wonder where the word *testament* comes from. There are multiple places in the bible where the word for testament is used, but most of us know it by its more familiar translation of *covenant*. It would be accurate to speak of the Bible’s structure in terms of old and new *covenants*. There are, by the

way, more than two covenants in the Bible, but that is more than can be addressed here. It is also fitting to speak of Jesus having a covenant with you personally as a *testament* of sorts to your faith in Him as Lord and Savior.

Apostle Paul testified, “if you confess with your mouth that Jesus Christ is Lord and believe that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved” (Romans 10:9). This is where the path of discipleship in Jesus starts: Confession of faith in Jesus as Lord. Is this your confession? If so, take time to affirmation your testimony here.

*I confess that Jesus Christ is Lord and*

*I believe God raised Him from the dead* Initial \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Prayer for the day:** Lord Jesus, I pray that I live my life in such a way that it is a testament to my faith in You as Lord and that I glorify God my Father through it. Amen.

**Micro-Meditation: Psalm 23:1-3**

***Read*** *verses 1-6, then re-read 1-3*

**23:1 The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.**

**2 He makes me to lie down in green** **pastures: he leads me beside the still waters.**

**3a He restores my soul: (3b) he leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.**

4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil:

for You are with me;

Your rod and thy staff they comfort me.

5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies: you anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over.

6 Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

***Mark*** the words or phrases that draw your attention.

***Meditate****:* Talk (or write) with God about those words. Ask him to impress things upon your heart and mind; expect responses.

**Pondering Point:** What picture do you have in your mind of Jesus the Shepherd? How do you fit into the picture as a sheep? Enjoy that picture and talk with Jesus about it.

*See page 5 of this material for created prayers from this psalm.*

*Ask God to help you learn to pray using the psalms,*

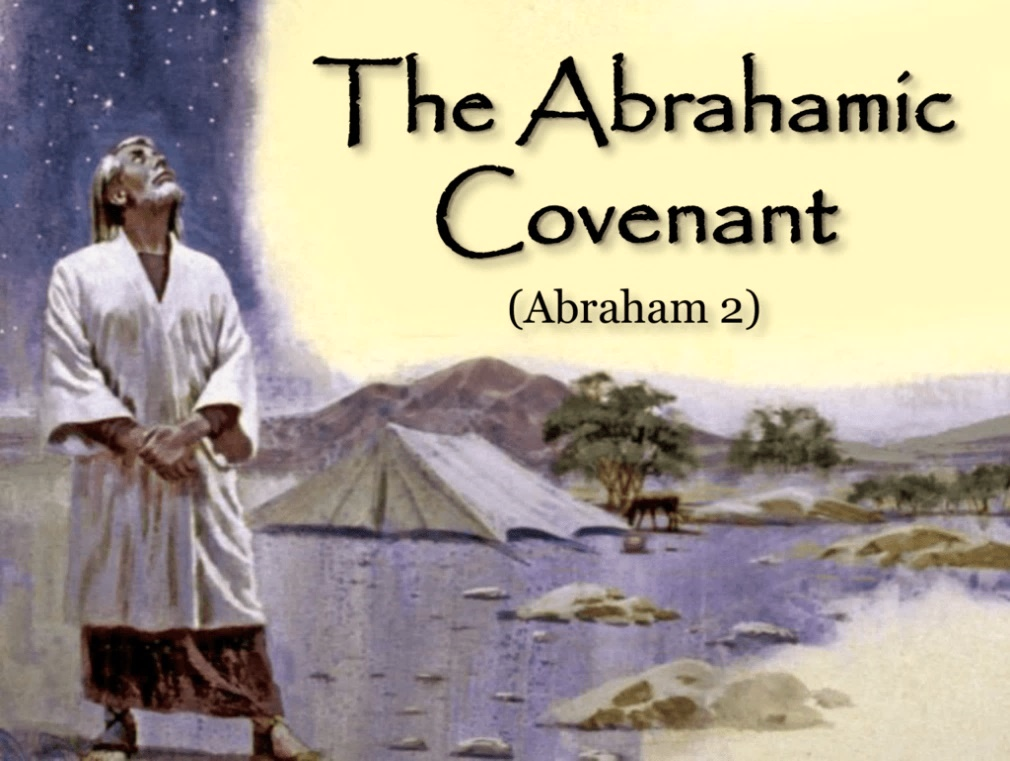
*known as the prayer book of the Old Testament.*



**Tuesday, Week 2: Our Goal is to be in God’s Mission**

****One of the biblical covenants entered into occurs between God and Abraham, known as the *Abrahamic covenant* or *covenant of promise.* After initiating a relationship with Abram in Genesis 12, God ratifies a covenant with him in chapter 15 and seals with the rite of circumcision in chapter 17. The covenant relationship then experiences a serious test recorded in chapter 22. More on that later this week. For today we step into Genesis 12.

*The Lord had said to Abram, “Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you.*

*“I will make you into a great nation,  
    and I will bless you;  
I will make your name great,  
    and you will be a blessing.   
I will bless those who bless you,  
    and whoever curses you I will curse;  
and all peoples on earth  
    will be blessed through you.”* Genesis 12:1-3

“All peoples on earth will be blessed through you,” the Lord told Abraham. There is a definite thread running from the line of Abraham through to Jesus – with God’s promise. Ultimately the covenant promise for all peoples on earth would be blessed through Abraham – fulfilled through Jesus. This is why the Apostle Paul talks about believers in Jesus, both Jew and Gentile, being of the faith and tree of Abraham (see Romans 11). Jesus’ disciples are called to help fulfill that covenant of promise by making disciples of all nations into the name and faith of Jesus.

One of our goals at Hope is for people to define themselves as disciples of Jesus. A second goal that follows is for people to see themselves as part of Jesus’ mission team called to make disciples of all nations. Are you willing to call yourself a disciple of Jesus?

If so, add your initials to this part of the covenant language:

*Jesus’ goal for His original disciples(Matt 28:16)*

*was to make more disciples(Matt 28:19);*

*I believe that I am one of those disciples.*  Initial \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Prayer for the day:** Lord Jesus, I define myself as a disciple of Yours. I agree to be part of *Team Jesus* and Your mission to the ends of the earth. Show me how to participate in ways that help Your mission locally and globally. Amen.

**Micro-Meditation: Psalm 23:1-3**

Ps 23:1The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

**

***Teaching or Command:***

Jesus said, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” He answered, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Take care of my sheep.” *John 21:16*

I myself will tend my sheep and have them lie down, declares the Sovereign Lord. I will

*Ezekiel 34:15-16* search for the lost and bring back the strays. I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak, but the sleek and the strong I will destroy. I will shepherd the flock with justice.

**Pondering Point:** Based on Scripture’s testimony that you lack nothing from your Shepherd, where have you mistakenly bought into *FOMO*, “the fear of missing out?”

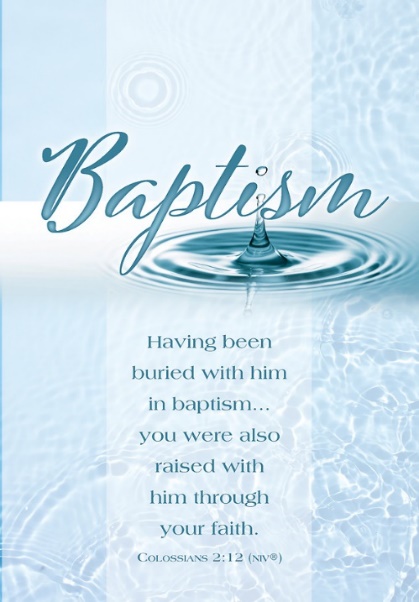


**Wednesday, Week 2: Carry on the Mission**

*So Abram went, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Harran. He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated and the people they had acquired in Harran, and they set out…* Genesis 12:4-5a

Abram (later re-named Abraham as part of the covenant language) steps into the beginning of this covenant relationship with God by taking Him at His word and beginning a journey God describes to him. With family in tow, he starts off to an unknown destination. In Genesis 17, when Abram gets a new name, God adds the sign of circumcision to the covenant for generations to come. That sign remained a key element of life with God – until Jesus instituted a new covenant with a new sign.

The Apostle Paul, a circumcised Jew himself, informed the Jewish and Gentile Christians of his day that the old covenant’s sign of circumcision had been superseded by the new covenant and it’s sign of baptism. Paul went so far as to call baptism the *circumcision done by Christ* (see Colossians 2:11-12).

For anyone who has been baptized in Christ and who is being taught to obey all that Jesus commanded, you are now called to carry on Jesus’ mission to make disciples of others. This is also known in the bible as “fishing for men”or “saving what was lost” (Matt. 28:19, 4:19, Luke 19:10, 15:1-32). It was part of the plan from the beginning, that as God’s workmanship in Jesus (Eph. 2:10), we would share the good news of Jesus wherever we go in life. You are encouraged to initial this part of the covenant today:

*Having been baptized in Christ and being taught to obey all that*

*Jesus commanded, I too am called to carry on Jesus’ mission to*

*make disciples of others.This is God’s plan from the beginning,*

*that as God’s workmanship in Jesus, I would share the good*

*news of Jesus wherever I go in life.*

Initial \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Prayer for the day:** Father God, as I think about Abram’s willingness to step into a covenant journey with You, I want to share that kind of readiness to go to unknown places with You – even if it is just around the corner. I embrace that I am Your workmanship in Jesus. Help me carry out Your plan in Jesus’ name. Amen.

**Micro-Meditation: Psalm 23:1-3**

Ps 23:2 He makes me to lie down in green pastures:

he leads me beside the still waters.

*****Teaching or Command:***

Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. *Isaiah 55:1*

*Ps. 107:9* The Lord satisfies the thirsty

and fills the hungry with good things.

**Pondering Point:** Where is your place of “quiet waters” that Jesus uses to refresh you? Where is it physically? Maybe you have more than one place. PLAN to go there.



**Thursday, Week 2: Personal Goals as I follow Jesus**

*…[Abram and company] set out for the land of Canaan, and they arrived there. Abram traveled through the land as far as the site of the great tree of Moreh at Shechem. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. The Lord appeared to Abram and said, “To your seed I will give this land.” ~* Genesis 12:5b-7a

Today we focus on the “seed” language of the Abrahamic covenant. The Apostle Paul quotes from Genesis 12 about this seed of Abram being a singular form of the word (see Galatians 3:16). He further identifies this singular seed as Jesus Christ. That seems odd since *the seed of Abraham* includes more than one person. But follow Paul’s train of thought: A few verses later he says*, “If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”* The seed is a collective unit – much like the body (of Christ) is a unit made up of many parts and yet is one body. All who believe that Jesus is the Christ become part of Abraham’s collective seed – united in the ONE seed Jesus Christ.

*Disciples*, or followers of Jesus, have put their hope in Jesus as the Christ, believing that Jesus died to forgive them of their sin and restore them to God. As a fellow disciple, the Apostle Peter encourages us to *“always be ready to share the reason to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have in Christ Jesus.”* (1 Peter 3:15)

We address this in our discipleship covenant, agreeing to set goals about being intentional in our life of following Jesus. In short, these goals revolve around being in God’s Word regularly and being in loving relationships with God and people with an eye toward growing in discipleship (particularly discipleship-oriented groups).

Here it is in first-person language

*I am willing to set goals to be intentional*

*regarding my life as a follower of Jesus.* Initial \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Prayer for the day:** Father God, help me become more intentional about following Jesus and Your ways. Help me value connections to You and my brothers and sisters in Jesus and to invest my time and energy accordingly. Amen.



**Micro-Meditation: Psalm 23:1-3**

Ps 23:3a He restores my soul**.**

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***Teaching or Command of God:***

Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your souls. *1 Peter 2:11*

 This is what the Lord says:

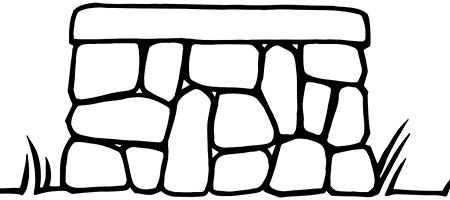
Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for

*Jeremiah 6:16* the ancient paths, mark where the good way is,

and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls.

**Devotional opportunity:** Go do something restorative for your soul, even if it is *literally* to do nothing.

**Friday, Week 2: Growth and Setbacks along the path**



*So [Abram] built an altar there to the Lord,*

*who had appeared to him.* Genesis 12:7b

In the Old Testament, some altars like the one Abraham builds in Genesis 12 serve as a testimony – a type of standing record for all to see, including the ones involved. Genesis 22 shows Abraham building another altar, this one for sacrifice. Verses 1-19 record quite an experience between Abraham, his son Isaac and this God of covenant life. That experience leads to the subsequent title Abraham gives that place: *The Lord will provide.*

You may know the story. Abraham is asked by God to sacrifice his beloved son Isaac on a mountain. Abraham consents and takes steps to do just that. In dramatic fashion God stops him, providing a ram caught in a thicket instead. Abraham sacrifices the ram and, upon leaving, names the place *The Lord will provide.* But did you know that this same mountain is later used by God to sacrifice His own beloved Son? Indeed, the Lord would provide. That’s like our God – a God who covenants with You by sacrificing His beloved Jesus on this same mountain.

This call for sacrifice sets a great tone for the next piece in our discipleship covenant titled, **How Discipleship Changes My Life:**

Knowing Jesus said “if you love Me you will obey what I command,” I understand some of Jesus’ teachings are in a sense “laws” or “rules” that require personal discipline (sacrifice) in my lifestyle in terms of time, energy, relationships, money, even sleep at times. I also recognize and believe that I am expected to follow not merely out of obligation, but more so out of love for God and moved by His Spirit; As I follow Jesus, I seek to live by the Spirit and keep in step with Him,enabling me to love God well and love my neighbor as myself.

Initial \_\_\_\_\_

**Prayer for the day:** Father God, thank You for the sacrifice of Your beloved son provided on that sacred mountain. In response to Your love and moved by Your Spirit, help me live by Your Spirit and keep in step with Him,enabling me to love You well and love my neighbor as myself. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

**Micro-Meditation: Psalm 23:1-3**

Ps 23:3bhe leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

*****Teaching or Command of God:***

Flee the evil desires of youth and pursue

righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with

those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

*2 Timothy 2:22*

I will lead the blind by ways they have not known; along unfamiliar paths I will guide

*Isaiah 42:16* them, I will turn the darkness into light before

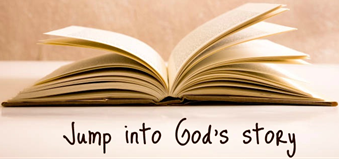
them and make the rough places smooth.

These are the things I will do; I will not

forsake them.

**Pondering Point:** How do you distinguish between the righteous and unrighteous paths? Write below some of the righteous and unrighteous paths before you:

 **Saturday, Week 2: Scripture’s Story for the Week**



God’s covenant with Abraham

**Genesis 15:1-17**

In this story, we find some oft-quoted words about Abraham in verse six, “He believed the LORD, and he [God] counted it to him as righteousness.”As the sun sets in the story, Abram falls into a deep sleep and a “thick and dreadful darkness” comes over him. God then uses a vision to carry out a covenant practice of the day as a way to back up His promise to Abraham, including a commitment to deliver “the promised land” to his descendants in the future.

Our relationship with God also begins by meeting an invitation from Him with a willingness to believe God, taking Him at His word. In one sense, the journey with God that ensues is an unknown path; but in another sense, as we take Jesus at His word, we already know “the Way” (John 14:6). As disciples of Jesus, we can anticipate growth along the path. We can also anticipate disappointments and setbacks, meaning that we will need grace and forgiveness along the way from God, ourselves, and others. Can you agree with this part of the discipleship covenant?

I envision the Holy Spirit helping me grow in my walk with Jesus,

including seeing fruit of the Spirit like love and joy and peace.

Although I can also anticipate setbacks and disappointments, I

will rely on God’s grace and forgiveness daily. Under His

leadership, I commit to grow as a disciple in Christ using self-

discipline and loving (agreed upon) accountability from others.

*See Proverbs 27:17*

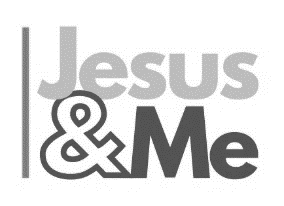
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**Prayer for the day:** Lord Jesus, the Way to God, help me live well under Your Spirit, filled with His fruit and grateful for the grace and forgiveness that come in Your name. Amen.

**Sunday, Week 2: Call to worship God, to gather together**

*Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever! Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he has redeemed from trouble.*  Psalm 107:1

The worship to which we are called in our renewed state is far too important to be left to personal preferences, to whims, or to marketing strategies. It is the pleasing of God that is at the heart of worship. Therefore, our worship must be informed at every point by the Word of God as we seek God's own instructions for worship that is pleasing to him. *~ RC Sproul*



Here is the final piece of the discipleship covenant this week along with a prayer of commitment. I pray that you can step into this covenant language with Jesus our Lord.

**Jesus’ Covenant with Me:** Finally, I acknowledge that this covenant partnership at Hope is not so much with a church or its pastor, but primarily with Jesus and His rightful calling on my life. I fully understand that although this may not be taught or expected at every church (be it Lutheran or otherwise), it is biblical and in accord with the will of Jesus for me as His disciple (Mark 8:34). Having counted the cost of discipleship, I want to follow Jesus and join Him on His mission of making disciples.

Initial \_\_\_\_\_\_\_



**Prayer of Commitment:**  *Lord God, in view of your mercy, I offer my body as a living sacrifice, an act of worship — may it be holy and pleasing. Transform me by renewing my mind so that I will be able to test and approve what Your good, pleasing, and perfect will is. (adapted from Romans 12:1-2)*

Initial \_\_\_\_\_\_\_