

Second Sunday in Lent
Year C

Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18
Psalm 27
Philippians 3:17 - 4:1
Luke 13:31-35

Is it OK to question God? Does this show a lack of faith? The reading from Genesis gives us some insights into this question.

Abraham had a unique relationship with God. As a man 75 years old, God told him to leave his ancestral home in Ur of the Chaldeans and travel west. Without question Abraham packed up his belongings, said good bye to his family and obeyed. Later, while living in the land of the Canaanites, God told him to go down into Egypt to avoid the famine and Abraham obeyed without question. Throughout this time, God made many promises to Abraham and he just accepted it all without question. Now, after all these years, God was still making promises to Abraham, but something changed - Abraham had a few questions.

Let's review the promises God made to Abraham. First, when God told Abraham to leave Ur, God promised Abraham that he would become a great nation and that his name would be great. When they came to Shechem in the land of Canaan, God told him that his descendants would inherit this land. While in Egypt, Abraham became very wealthy and his name became great because the Lord blessed him, yet he had no heirs.

After returning to Bethel and sending his nephew Lot to settle in the valley of the Jordan, God again promised Abraham all the land around him as an inheritance for Abraham and his offspring. Further, God would make his offspring as numerous as the dust of the earth. Still, there were no offspring and the land was occupied by Canaanites and Perizzites.

As we look at the reading today, God appears to Abraham in a dream. Finally, after all these years of promises, Abraham has a question - when will God give him children? Why the change? As one might expect, Abraham saw the clock moving. Neither he nor his wife were getting younger and the biological clock was moving. Perhaps the question was not really when would God give them children, but how? In response, God takes him outside to look at the stars and tells him that, if he could count the number of the stars, that is how many descendants Abraham would have. Finally, as we read later in scripture, God does bless Abraham and Sarah with a child.

This brings us back to the opening question - is it OK to question God? In reviewing the relationship Abraham had with God, I would say yes. Not only did Abraham question God, he whined a little. After years of obedience, Abraham had finally reached a point that he could no longer just obey. He had to find out when God was going to fulfill all of the promises. God honored his questions and fulfilled the promise.

As we experience our relationship with God, we might ask similar questions - why must my family suffer, why is the church membership dwindling, why, why, why? As with Abraham, I don't think God will condemn us for asking these questions. We need to ask questions so that we have a better understanding of what is expected of us. God does not what robots, but people willing to intelligently embrace the mysteries of God. By asking questions, we learn how we are to respond to situations as they arise. God will bless our questions, even as Abraham was blessed.