

Bedford Presbyterian Church

105 West Main Street, Bedford, Virginia
From 1844 to 2020 (176 Years)



Week of May 3rd

For the next several weeks we will be sending out a combination of the newsletter and the bulletin to keep you up to date on announcements, prayers, needs and scheduled activities.

Included will be the usual newsletter information along with prayers, scripture and a sermon.

We hope that you can utilize this format to keep up to date while being away from actual services, meetings, activities and watching the online sermon.

Please be in prayer for the end of the coronavirus and healing for those affected by it.



Bedford Presbyterian Church
serving Christ since 1844

A Biblically Guided Christian Community,

Loving God, Loving Others,

Serving the World & Growing Disciples

**If you are watching the online service this Sunday morning,
please have this bulletin ready to follow the service.**

Prelude

“Crown Him with Many Crowns”

May the Peace of Christ be with you

Welcome and Announcements

- Mother’s Day is next Sunday, May 10th, please send cards or make a phone call of encouragement and love to all the ladies during this time of social distancing.
- Additional announcements are on the last two pages.

Let Us Join Together in the Prayer of Invocation:

O God, You who gave us birth and who will walk with us through our older years, we come to You today to worship and praise You. We call Your name and You answer us. In every age of life You give us what we need. Help us today to have ears to hear the message of Your faithfulness, and to celebrate the ways in which You help us to cope with the challenges we face at every age. Surround Your people today with Your presence, Your love, Your grace. We pray this in Jesus’ name. Amen

Hymn:

“Great is Thy Faithfulness”

Let Us Pray together the Prayer of Confession:

Holy and merciful God, in these days of fear and uncertainty, forgive our little faith; forgive our selfishness; forgive our carelessness. As we stay indoors, forgive us if we also turn inward, forgetting those in need and neglecting our time with You and Your Word. Have mercy we pray, in the name of Jesus, our Savior. As we come to another time of communion – which we are again forced to celebrate alone – help us to feel Your Holy Spirit who unites us together as one people, and who strengthens us to do Your will both in our homes now and someday once again out in the world. Amen.

Hear now our Assurance of Pardon: (Isaiah 40: 28-31)

Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; His understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint and strengthens the powerless. Even youths will faint and be weary and the young will fall exhausted; but those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

One: Friends believe the good news.

All: Through Jesus Christ we have been born again to a life full of hope. Amen.

Children's Sermon

Scripture: Genesis 17: 1-10, 15-22

Solo

"My Redeemer is Faithful and True"

Sermon: What's in a name?

What's In A Name? Genesis 17:1-10, 15-22

Introduction adapted from "What's in a name, by Gordon Curly @ SermonCentral.com

Remember the story of how Romeo and Juliet fell in love before learning that they bore the names of rival families? He was a Montague, she a Capulet. Thinking that this might forever separate them, both lovers ponder the sacrifice they are willing to make – of leaving their names behind – in order to be together. Juliet asks, what's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would still smell as sweet...

What is in a name? When we name a child today, we often choose a name we like, one that's unique, or one that connects them back to family. We don't often think of what the actual name might signify about the person wearing it.

My father was named after his father, thus becoming Jerome George Salley Jr. When my older brother was born he became the "3rd" when our son was born he got both grandfathers' names, "Joseph Jerome" and I then added another, "Forrester," which messed up all the application forms he's filled out thereafter (most don't have room for a third given name ☐).

But in the Bible, names were carefully given as having some prophetic or deep significance for the name bearer. Last week we learned that Ishmael was named "God hears" to remind both him and his mother through their very difficult lives that God would be with them. God will next tell Abraham to name his future son Isaac which means "laughter" in response to both Abe and Sarah's initial chuckles of disbelief which will be transformed into joyful laughter with his miraculous birth.

Since all Biblical names had such significance, a changed name then was a very clear signal that something about the person had also dramatically changed, they have essentially become a new person and we need to know them in a new and different way.

That is why we need to pay attention to the three name changes recorded in our morning's text. And by the end of this message, you will also learn how coming to faith in Jesus has changed your name and what this signifies both about you and your new relationship with God.

With the opening of chapter 17, thirteen long years have passed since the events of chapter 16 when God last repeated His promise to Abraham concerning a multitude of future descendants. After which, Abe and Sarah had tried to hurry God's promise along by siring a son through Hagar, the slave girl, which only resulted in the next 13 long years of family discord. Ishmael is now a teenager and Abraham is ninety-nine years old when the LORD next speaks to him.

Why the 13 years of silence?

Was it 13 years of living with fruit of their mutual sin to see if Abraham and Sarah had learned their lesson? God does that sometimes. You make a mistake, God says, "OK, we will use this to better teach you."

Was it 13 more years of testing, seeing if Abraham would continue believing during a lengthy period of silence? God also does this sometimes. Many great people of faith have recorded their own walk through a lengthy spiritual desert wondering, "has God forgotten me?"

Was it 13 more years of needed growth? God had made a formal covenant with Abram. Saying that He would bring about the descendants, all Abraham had to do was continue living in faith. When God reveals truth, sometimes He gives us time to learn it and start living it. Slowly, daily beginning to do what God has already taught us. Sometimes it takes a while.

I think it was a bit of all three of these needs which now caused God to wait another 13 years. You see, as indicated by God's need to repeat His promises in all their conversations, apparently with his increasing age Abraham kept returning to this obsession that he was now too old for what God had in mind. God needed to work this particular faithless flaw out, before going forward with him.

When God first spoke to him, Abraham was 75; by his own cultural standards already "an old person" and yet childless. So desperately accepting God's promise of an heir, he went as directed to live as a stranger in a foreign land.

When God next speaks, Abraham was now 85, financially prospering and having just returned from a successful campaign; leading his own private army to rout four invading nations from his adopted land. But again thinking he was soon to die without an heir and in the process of settling his estate; Abe repeats his complaint so God must repeat His promise.

In response, this time God foretold not only the next 400 years Israel's future history also that Abraham himself could expect to die peacefully after having lived to a exceptional old age (obviously much older than he is now). God then unilaterally binds Himself alone to fulfill these promises by a covenant which he makes with Abraham. It is recorded that at the time, Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness (15:6).

Now at the start of chapter 17, Abraham is 99 years old and once again believing that he and Sarah are past the time when God could do anything with their effectively old and dead yet still moving bodies. But at least he has Ishmael as his future heir. So God must speak again. First informing him that Ishmael will not be his future heir but that another is still to be birthed from Abraham and Sarah together; a declaration which at first causes both of them to laugh in disbelief. And this time, God also has name changes for all three of them along with new requirements for Abe to follow.

So here in chapter 17, God first gives Himself a new name – **EI Shaddai** – which has new assurances for Abraham to carry into the second half of what God has already promised will be his own unexpectedly exceptionally long 175 years of life.

*“I am [EI Shadai] **God Almighty**,” walk before me, and be blameless. And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will make you exceedingly numerous.”*

Up until now Abe had only been given two names for the God he was following. One was **EI Elyon**, “**God most High**,” which both he and King Melchizedek agreed was the title for the supreme God of the universe. The other was God’s personal name meaning “**I AM**,” which we usually transliterate as either **Yaweh** or **Jehovah**.

God says, “**I am**” and I am also “**God Almighty**,” thus capable of enabling you to do whatever I ask of you in your lifetime, so “**walk before me, and be blameless**.” In other words, “now Abraham do what you have learned to do.” To me this confirms that Abraham may have always been a man of some faith, but he still needed another 25 years of training before he was really willing to trust God with EVERYTHING.

Up until this point God has only asked Abraham to respond in faith while God bound Himself alone to making Abe the father of a great multitude of descendants who would return to this land 400 years from now. But now God asks Abraham to sign what becomes a national contract which will need to be continually ratified in order for his descendants to forever keep the land. Circumcision would be the signature to be given both by Abraham and all of his male descendants thereafter that they had covenanted to forever walk with God and be blameless. **From this point forward, as proven by the future history of Israel, breaking this covenant of obedience to God would also free Him from his obligation to keep them in the land.**

Here, it is very important for us to clearly understand the distinction between **God’s first individual covenant** – which Abraham only had to accept **by faith** to be declared righteous – and now this **second national covenant** which will require continued obedience by all Abraham’s future heirs in order for them to stay in the land.

So when Jesus comes along, it will be a brand new version of that first covenant – which he will offer and we once again can only accept by our faith – by which we can be declared righteous. But first let us deal with the other two name changes of chapter 17.

Throughout this series I have always called them “Abraham and Sarah” not to be dishonest, but rather to spare your confusion until you could now learn that previously their names had been Abram and Sarai.

Abram means “exalted father,” which certainly gave him 86 years of grief up until the birth of Ishmael and only less grief thereafter as he dealt with the family turmoil that this single son brought into their tents. The change to now being called **Abraham**, “**Father of a multitude**” was therefore quite a dramatic name change both for helping Abe keep his own faith in God’s promises, but also in proving a joke upon all his acquaintances who had perhaps privately

laughed all the way up until this “exalted father” who had so far only sired one son, then sired another at the age of 100. While two is still not quite a multitude, if God could do this for him at such an advanced age, then perhaps God could actually make Abraham the father of a multitude. Of course only Abe knew that this promise of a multitude of heirs was based on generations to follow and not necessarily his own procreative abilities.

What is also important for us to learn is that by adding the Hebrew “breath sound” of “ha” into Abram’s original name, the Lord God Almighty has now given Abe a portion of His own name signifying that it would only be by God’s Spirit, God’s breath, by God’s empowerment, that this promised son which 99 year-old Abraham will soon conceive would one day not only grow into a great nation but would also -- in the fullness of time – bring to pass that one special long-promised heir who would bless the whole world by undoing Adam & Eve’s curse.

Sarai’s name change was a lot more subtle, shifting its meaning from simply “princess” to “My Princess;” perhaps signaling that now at the age of 90 she is also ready to assume her exalted queenly stature among the future Promised People.

Chapter 17 thus closes with a newly reassured, 99 year old Abraham signing this covenant with God by having both himself, Ishmael, and every other male in his camp circumcised. He still has one more year and three more Bible chapters to wait, while dealing with a lot of strange looks, until Isaac will be born. But first God must deal with the sins of Sodom, which is also of grave importance to Abraham because his nephew Lot still lives there. That is a story for next week.

So now let us consider what lesson we can learn from the distinction between the two covenants which Abraham entered into with God: one based simply on faith and another on works.

The night before he would die, sitting with his disciples at the supper table, Jesus took bread, broke it and shared it, then he took a cup of wine and also shared it, saying “***this is my body broken for you ... [and] this is my blood of the NEW COVENANT which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins ... do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me***” (Mt. 26:28, Mark 14:24, Luke 22:20, 1 Corinthians 11:25).

Which of the old covenants was this **NEW COVENANT** now replacing?

Since the first covenant was made by God alone which Abraham need only to accept by faith, it was this second national covenant - based on works - requiring a continual ratification by all Abraham’s descendants that Jesus had come to replace.

Why did it need replacing? Because the second covenant had nothing to do with being declared individually righteous before God but was intended as a national contract for being allowed to stay in the land. Unfortunately, through the next 2000 years of blessing, discipline, exile and restoration the Jews of Jesus’ day would come to confuse this second covenant with the first; now believing that their obedience to circumcision and the Mosaic law was necessary for being declared righteous. They had forgotten that Abraham had already been declared righteous by his

simple faith some 13 years before being given circumcision and some 400 years before being given the Law.

So in the fullness of time, Jesus came to remind both His own people and us that those who would be righteous have always and only could live by faith that God would do for what He has promised to do: for Abraham it was heirs and now for us it is salvation.

Jesus' "new" covenant like God's first covenant with Abraham was again only signed by himself; by him giving his own life **for many for the forgiveness of sins**. This NEW covenant was thus both a reaffirmation of God's first covenant with Abraham and by Jesus' fulfillment of it, an annulment of the second. That is why the New Testament's Jewish authors would tell Jew and Gentile alike that we are no longer under the law but under grace (Romans 4:13-16)

And it is this symbolic meal, first instituted by Jesus, to which we return today as our constant reminder of how we have been saved.

Jesus said that when we come to Him in faith, we spiritually die with the death that He died to be reborn with His resurrection to a brand new life. The life we now live, we live through and for Him. The Apostle Paul explained our changed life this way...

We are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them.... So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, (2nd Corinthians 5:14-18, extracts).

But what about our changed name and what symbols have we been given for our changed life?

As I said at the start, a changed name is a clear signal that something about the person has also dramatically changed, they have essentially become a new person and we need to know them in a new and different way.

As **Abram** was then given the new name **Abraham** thus signifying God's empowerment for him to live this life he had been called to live, so we have been given the new name "CHRISTIAN" signifying God's indwelling Spirit now empowering us to live the new life we have been given to live.

At birth I was named John Turner Salley. "John" because my five-year-old sister declared that she liked that name. "Turner" to honor an uncle who had no sons to carry on his name. "Salley" to signify that my ancestors probably had come from a salt-mining region of Switzerland. But now I can proudly also name myself "Christian."

As Abraham and his followers were also given circumcision as their symbolic entrance into a new life to be lived under the law, so we were given baptism as our symbolic rebirth to a new life now to be lived by faith.

As Jesus instructed us, let us remember all this as we return to His table today.

Invitation to Communion:

Dear friends, this is the banquet that our Lord prepared for those who love Him. Luke, the Evangelist, wrote of our risen Lord, that when He was at the table with them, He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognized Him. People will come from east and west, from north and south, and sit at the table in the kingdom of God. So, let us also come to the table and open our hearts to one another as Christ has opened His heart to us, and God will be glorified.

Communion Hymn

“Come to the Table”

One: The peace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

All: And also with you.

Let us pray: All glory is Yours, Eternal God, who made the universe. We praise You for this earth, for life and breath, for beauty we have seen and wonders still to come. From the beginning, Your living Word has guided and corrected us. Your prophets have called us from disobedience and prepared us for the coming of Your Son.

We praise You for the Christ, who chose to come as one of us and lived among us full of grace and truth. For us, He became poor and knew the sadness of our days and for us He died on the cross and was buried. In Him we know forgiveness and the lifting of burdens. He brings light into our darkness and opens our eyes to Your great glory.

For You raised Him from the dead and set Him over all creation. Through Your Holy Spirit we are members of His body, the church and heirs of the promise of eternal life. Therefore, with grateful hearts we join the faithful who, in all times and places, praise Your name.

Holy God, we thank You that the Lord Jesus, on the night when He was arrested, took bread and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, “This is my body which is for you. Do this remembering me.” In the same way, He took the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, remembering me.”

We remember You, Lord Jesus, as You commanded, confident we shall know You in the breaking of bread. We remember You, O Christ, confident You have sealed Your new covenant in our hearts as we drink this cup. O Holy Spirit, who brought us here to proclaim the risen Lord, unite us in one body with Him who loved us and gave Himself for us. And so help us to live the way Christ taught us to pray:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

Communion: as you pass the elements, share these words one with another:

The body of Christ broken for you....

The blood of Christ shed for you....

Unison Prayer:

Gracious and loving God, You have made us one in the body of Christ and nourished us at Your table with holy food and drink. Thank You for feeding our hunger and relieving our thirst. Now send us into the world to do the work You have given us to do: to find the lost and lonely, to heal broken souls, to free prisoners and to make the powerful care. Grant us strength to persevere in resisting evil and to proclaim in all we say and do, Your good news and new life in Christ Jesus our Savior. Amen.

One: And so we declare the great mystery of our faith.

All: Christ was Dead.

Christ has Risen.

Christ will come Again!

Hymn

“Alas, and Did My Savior Bleed”

Birthdays and Anniversaries: We wish a happy birthday to Ellen Foster on the 3rd Paul Van Dyke and John Smith on the 4th, Becky Noell and Russell Stevens on the 9th.

Benediction:

The love of God be with you;
The peace of Christ be with you;
The fellowship of the Spirit be with you;
And with your children;
From the day that we have here today,
Until the day of the end of our lives.

Postlude:

“O, For a Thousand Tongues to Sing”

Concerns- May 3rd

Barefoot: Jim- home

Barnes: Troy- (friend) stage 4 lung cancer

Blair: James Thorne- (scout) rare skin infection, doing better

Katy Neal- (LHS student) scleroderma

Glen Murgacz- (friend) biopsy for bladder cancer

Boone: Jim Hedrick - (friend) recovering from gall bladder surgery, waiting for more surgery

Michael -(son) out of work during pandemic

Chryssikos: Linda Arendt- (neighbor) disabled

Clarke: Ben Daniel - (Pat's grandson) deployed to Syria late summer

Cram: Winslow's-(friends of Sally) family & medical problems

Janice Campbell-(friend) under hospice care

Military away from home

Diddams: Lois- problems with medications

Paul (brother)- loss of wife, not doing well

Dills: Kathy & her father

Dwyer: Karen Huddle- (friend) health problems

Fleming: family dealing with addiction and self- esteem

Steve Trombecky- (friend) home recovering

Foster: Thomasine Davis- (aunt) hospice care

Joyce Abbott- (former member) cancer

Andre Nemenek- (Shepherds table cook) prostate cancer

Gaston: Joseph (former pastor) prostate cancer surgery May 6th

Goodman: Barry Owen-(friend) cancer

Randall Sales-(SRHS coach) cancer

Katherine Saunders- (Hugh's daughter) hospice

Heinrich: Steven - (grandson) autoimmune disorder

Barbara Lore- (Helen's sister) heart problems

Koch: Doris- fell, broken hip, at home

Kuhn- Kibbey: Nancy Milton- (friend) cancer, Alzheimer's

Rachel Rutledge-(granddaughter) experimental treatment

Dot- health issues, macular degeneration

Grandson- alcoholism

Eric Bryant- diagnosed with MS

Ledden: John- heart problems

Mauser: Joyce Reese- (friend) health problems

Steven-(son's boss) going blind

Tom & Betty Clark- downsizing, and Betty has new pacemaker

Norma Jean- (Gayle's sister) broken collar bone

Pat- (Al's sister) diabetes

Morris: all law enforcement, firefighters and all other first responders

Forensic scientists who deal with crime

Rev. Pam Ledbetter-(friend) autoimmune disease

Doris Jean Coble- (cousin) in nursing home

Palmer: Lynne- broken hip from fall, at home

Salley: David Etheridge- (fellow pastor) terminal cancer

Emily Salley- (sister-in-law) invasive breast cancer

Saunders: (Ronnie) Colin Bridges- (grandson)

Scott- (son-in-law) chemo and radiation

Scheurer: Jim Hedrick-(friend) cancer

Bob Lindell-(friend) prostate cancer

Smith: Sonya's parents, moving to Liberty Ridge

Stetson: James & family-(son) in Colorado, has virus

Stevens: Jackie Landis- heart problems

Zeph Cunningham- travel mercies

Toney: Judy- may start radiation soon

Karen Hyde-(friend) bladder cancer

Mike Gillespie- (friend) hospice care

Cal Rice- (former pastor) bone cancer, refused treatment

Nancy Jordan-(neighbor) recovering from surgery

Van Dyke: Thomas Blythe- (friend) in hospital, fever, internal bleeding

Weeks: Mary Lohmeyer- (friend) doing well

Wilkerson: Ricky Wilkerson-(Dan's cousin) cancer

Yodis: Linda Goshorn- (former member) fractured ribs and punctured lung from fall, recovering at home

Prayers for those dealing with loneliness

Prayers that anti-Semitism be erased

Prayers for healing the divisive spirit among our leaders/nation

Prayers for an end of the coronavirus and healing for those infected

You can shop for a good cause—Bedford Presbyterian Church! Shopping on Amazon Smile and in Kroger stores can now return a percentage of your purchases as a contribution to Bedford Presbyterian. But you have to designate us as a charity on Amazon and register Bedford Presbyterian on your Kroger card. More information is included in this bulletin.

Dear Bedford Presbyterian Church,

Congratulations on your enrollment into the Kroger Community Rewards Program. Your participants may begin enrolling upon receipt of this letter.

You have been assigned a new NPO (Non-Profit Organization) number HV363.

Please refer to this number in all future correspondence.

To Use the Kroger Community Rewards Program:

Simply encourage your participants to visit <http://www.kroger.com>, once logged into their Kroger account they can search for Bedford Presbyterian Church either by name or HV363 and then click Enroll. New users will need to create an account which requires some basic information, a valid email address and a rewards card.

***Customers must have a registered Kroger rewards card account to link to your organization.**

***If a member does not yet have a Kroger rewards card, please let them know they are available at the customer service desk at any Kroger**

REMEMBER, purchases will not count for your organization until after your participants register their rewards card. Participants must swipe their registered Kroger rewards card or use the phone number that is related to their registered Kroger rewards card when shopping for each purchase to count.

Thank you!

Kroger Community Rewards Department

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Thank you for continuing to send in your contributions and pledges.
You can mail your pledge or contribution or you can drop by the office,
Mon-Thurs between 8 am -12 pm.

Do you enjoy yardwork? If you do, we are looking for volunteers to work in the church yard mowing grass, weed eating and doing general yard work. If you are interested, please let the office know.

Happy Birthday!!

Ellen Foster- 3rd

Paul Van Dyke- 4th

John Smith- 4th

Becky Noell -9th

Russell Stevens 9th

