

God's big family

Why is Abraham such an important figure in Biblical history? To the Jewish people he is considered their nation's Father. As Christians, who follow Jesus, himself a Jew, Abraham is therefore father of our faith too. In the Bible, we first meet Abraham in the book of Genesis. There, God promised to make him the father of a great people who would live obeying God. In return God would guide them and protect them and give them the land of Israel. But it wasn't simply a matter of obeying rules - God didn't just want the Jews to follow a particular set of laws, but to live their lives in such a way as to show the world that God actually was the one and only all-powerful God, whom people should follow and worship. A light to the nations. God asked an elderly Abraham, to give up his way of life, leave his home country and journey to a land that God would show him. And, taking Sarah his wife, Abraham did.

Throughout the Bible we read of Abraham, his faith, his friendship with God and his righteousness BUT I have struggled with this....because if you read his story in Genesis (end of chapter 11 until beginning of chapter 25) you might ask, as I have, "why?"

My struggles as a 21st Century middle class Christian living comfortably in Surrey are around his weaknesses, his poor choices and his sexual fidelity. Give these chapters in Genesis a read and see what you think. So, I have been reading and thinking and listening and this is what I conclude. They were quite an odd, maybe dysfunctional couple and family at times BUT ...who isn't? Until only a few years ago I really believed that I had a near perfect marriage and a solid family life. Well that has all blown up in my face - the last laugh is on me!!!! (but let it be an ironic one.) You see these struggles I have had are what make this story so great in the end. It wasn't about who Abraham was but about who God is. God kept his promise, he was faithful. And the bit of faith that Abraham had was enough because "God reckoned it to him as righteousness." Biblical righteousness is 'the state of living rightly before God' and Abraham believed what God said and for God that was enough.

So what can we learn from this? That, like Abraham, we are going to get it wrong, we are going to make bad choices either deliberately or unintentionally and we are going to be weak when we should be strong. But handing our lives over and into the love of God means that he sees us as great workable material to be light to our nation, light to our community, light to our friends and our family because he is our light.

We are part of Abraham's great big family that bring God's light, and therefore his hope, to our world.

DATES FOR DIARY

Tattenhams Market is back!!! **Saturday, March 2nd** from 10 until 1pm.

There are a variety of stalls selling crafts and gifts. This month we encourage charities to have stalls as well. If you would like a stall speak to David Willock or email him: stmarksmarket@virginmedia.com

Or just come and enjoy the community atmosphere whilst eating and drinking in great coffee shop!

Community cinema is held fortnightly on **Sunday evenings**. Next film February 10th at 7.30 pm. We are not allowed to advertise the actual films so email David who can tell you: cinema@stmarkschurch.me.uk

Sundays at St. Marks: We can now offer a crèche for small children and a very short teaching class for school age children whilst the service is on. We encourage parents to be in the service whilst we care for the children. Please speak to me or email me if you are interested but want to know more. Liz

Messy Munchkins continues to be great fun each Tuesday morning from 9 until 10:30. It is for pre-schoolers and their carers and involves some mess! It is £2 a session. Speak or email me if you want to know more. Liz

Next Messy Church - March 5th, Shrove Tuesday

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