

**Emmanuel Episcopal Church
Covenant Group Discussion**

Look - Book - Took
July 3, 2008

Based on Lessons for the 7th Sunday After Pentecost

Old Testament: Genesis 22:1-14

Epistle: Romans 6: 12-23

Gospel: Matthew 10: 40-42

Look

Kate pointed out that the Old Testament story about the almost sacrifice of Abraham of Isaac is a difficult one to get our mind around; it's not simple theology. She suggests that this story addresses the issue that we don't have control over our lives as we think we do. Abraham's action was not sensible – we would've done anything to take control vs. lose it. This is a vulnerable position for us in relation to God.

1. Share a time when you thought you had control, but you really didn't.
2. Kate says that as we hang on, we destroy our fundamental blessing. This has to do with the saying "The Lord will provide." Can you remember a situation when you hung on to "something" and refused to make yourself vulnerable? What were the consequences?
3. What did you feel when you received the gift of a child? What would you do when your most cherished in life (this child) is in mortal danger?

Book

In our Old Testament reading Abraham was about to have his life's love snatched from him by his own hand because of a command from God. But the angel of the Lord called to Abraham and stopped his actions.

1. Why do you think God felt a need to test Abraham like this?
2. Mary the mother of Jesus experienced the lose of her life's love. How was she like Abraham and what were the consequences to her?

In the Epistle lesson, Paul talks to the Romans about being sinners in the past and turning around to become obedient slaves. He says "But now that you have been freed from sin and enslaved to God, the advantage you get is sanctification. The end is eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

3. The definition of the word "sanctification" is "the act of making holy or sacred." What do you think Paul meant when he said that the advantage is sanctification?

Took

Kate talked about "bumper sticker theology" and stated that "The Lord will provide" would make a great bumper sticker. This is a reminder that God will never forsake us. Many times we are willing to give God our problems, but we take the credit for things going right. We recognize God's gifts, say "thank you" and then try to take control, telling God that we can take care of it.

1. How can we build our own trust in God and know that he will take care of us?
2. How can you help someone else believe in this "rainbow promise"?