

# CHRISTIAN EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

## **A Devotion During This Time of the Coronavirus Pandemic Second Sunday in Lent, February 28, 2021**

### **We Are Our Ancestors' Wildest Dreams**

#### **Romans 4:13-25**

4:13 For the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith.

4:14 If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void.

4:15 For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation.

4:16 For this reason it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (for he is the father of all of us,

4:17 as it is written, "I have made you the father of many nations") --in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.

4:18 Hoping against hope, he believed that he would become "the father of many nations," according to what was said, "So numerous shall your descendants be."

4:19 He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was already as good as dead (for he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb.

4:20 No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God,

4:21 being fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised.

4:22 Therefore his faith "was reckoned to him as righteousness."

4:23 Now the words, "it was reckoned to him," were written not for his sake alone,

4:24 but for ours also. It will be reckoned to us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead,

4:25 who was handed over to death for our trespasses and was raised for our justification.

Perhaps you have read the meme or seen the t-shirt which read, "I am the ancestors' wildest dream." Who are we really? The all-women acapella singing group, Sweet Honey in the Rock, sings a song entitled *We Are*; the chorus declares,

We are our grandmothers' prayers  
We are our grandfather's dreamings  
We are the breath of the ancestors

During this month, many of us have had opportunity to pause and reflect on who we are and from whence we have come. The trauma and struggles would lead some to doubt that we would ever get here. Our survival and even our thriving are nothing short of miracles.

Many of us watched Henry Louis Gates' two-part documentary on *The Black Church*, his ambitious attempt to tell over four hundred years of history in a mere four hours. It has inspired some to work so that this great faith legacy continues and still others to work to tell the stories that were not included that must be told.

Dr. Yolanda Pierce, Dean of Howard University School of Divinity, in her recent book, *In My Grandmother's House: Black Women, Faith, and the Stories We Inherit*, tells how her grandmother and the mothers of the church passed on the faith in spite of the harsh realities they faced from a racist, sexist, and classist society designed to oppress and stifle.

We are indeed our ancestor's wildest dreams. We are the inheritors of faith. This is Paul's message to the church in Corinth and to us. Our faith ancestor, Abraham believed in the promises of God and acted accordingly. Abraham somehow knew that faith could do what the law could not do on its own. Therefore his faith "was reckoned to him as righteousness." Those enslaved ancestors who fashioned a faith that helped them survive, holding fast to the assurance that whom the Son sets free is free indeed held on, prayed on, sang on, kept on, and built on; and, their faith was reckoned to them as righteousness.

We have passed the half million COVID-19 related death mark in the USA alone. Weather related catastrophes and deaths give us further reasons to grieve and potentially grow weary. Black and brown lives are still not valued by many and remain under threat and attack. Yet, we are heirs of Abraham's faith and the faith of the ancestors. Stand on God's promises. God is able to do what God has promised.

**TALK:** Take a moment to be silent, reflect, and share (write down)—Reflecting on the scripture, who are those who passed the faith on to you? Who prayed you to this point in life?

**PRAY:**

God of our weary years,  
God of our silent tears,  
Thou who has brought us thus far on the way.  
Thou who has by thy might,  
Led us into the light,  
Keep us forever in the path, we pray. AMEN

**ACT:**

1. Based on your reflections from the TALK section, tell someone the story of one of your spiritual or biological ancestors so that the ancestor's memory might live on. In this Lenten Season, do what you can to protect the health of others and yourself by practicing social distancing as much as possible, washing your hands often, and wearing face covering to help prevent the spread of COVID-19—See: <http://www.amehealth.org>.

2. See also the activity that accompanies this devotion.

3. 2021 Liberation and Unity Lenten Devotional: <https://www.amazon.com/LIBERATION-UNITY-Lenten-Devotional-Meditation-ebook/dp/B08TGHQ3TX/ref=sr/1/1?crd=2PZK8J6YGY2LB&dchild=1&keywords=2021+lenten+devotional+liberation+and+unity&qid=1612922064&srefix=2021+liberation+and+unity,aps,159&sr=8-1>

**Song:** Standing on the Promises  
AMEC Hymnal, #424

1. Stand-ing on the prom-is-es of Christ my King,  
Through e-ter-nal a-ges let His prais-es ring;  
Glo-ry in the high-est, I will shout and sing,  
Stand-ing on the prom-is-es of God.

*Refrain*

*Stand-ing, Stand-ing, Stand-ing on the prom-is-es of God my Sav-ior;  
(Stand-ing on the prom-is-es, stand-ing on the prom-is-es)*

*Stand-ing, stand-ing, I'm stand-ing on the prom-is-es of God.  
(Stand-ing on the prom-is-es, stand-ing on the prom-is-es)*

2. Stand-ing on the prom-is-es that can-not fail,  
When the howl-ing storms of doubt and fear as-sail,  
By the liv-ing Word of God I shall pre-vail,  
Stand-ing on the prom-is-es of God.

*Refrain*

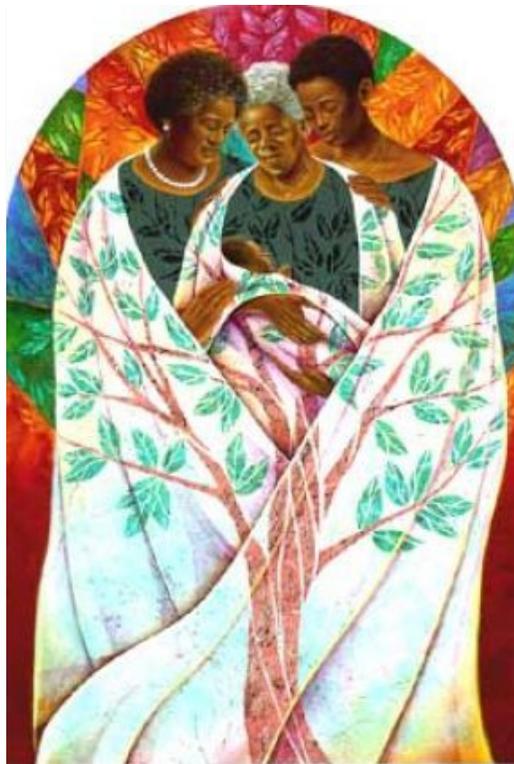
3. Stand-ing on the prom-is-es of Christ the Lord,  
Bound to Him e-ter-nal-ly by love's strong cord,  
O-ver-com-ing dai-ly with the Spir-it's sword,  
Stand-ing on the prom-is-es of God.

*Refrain*

4. Stand-ing on the prom-is-es I can-not fall,  
Lis-tening ev-ery mo-ment to the Spir-it's call,  
Rest-ing in my Sav-ior as my all-in-all,  
Stand-ing on the prom-is-es of God. *Refrain*

Physical space—You may wish to create a dedicated space for your time of devotion. You may choose to place a candle, bible, and special symbols or material/fabric to help you focus and center during this time of reflection and prayer.

If you use this meditation and exercise in a time of family or group devotion, share in the leadership; allow different persons to read or lead different parts of this meditation.



*The Christian Education Department will continue to develop resources that can be used as times of personal and collective devotion and study during this pandemic to help us all sustain and strengthen our faith and resolve.*