

# YOUTH SUNDAY WITNESS

by

Matthew Tindall

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*(Second Sunday of Lent)*



## ST. PAUL'S

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## Lectionary Texts:

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

## Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18

After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, “Do not be afraid, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.”

<sup>2</sup>But Abram said, “O Lord God, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?”

<sup>3</sup>And Abram said, “You have given me no offspring, and so a slave born in my house is to be my heir.”

<sup>4</sup>But the word of the Lord came to him, “This man shall not be your heir; no one but your very own issue shall be your heir.”

<sup>5</sup>He brought him outside and said, “Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them.”

Then he said to him, “So shall your descendants be.”

<sup>6</sup>And he believed the Lord; and the Lord reckoned it to him as righteousness.

<sup>7</sup>Then he said to him, “I am the Lord who brought you from Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess.”

<sup>8</sup>But he said, “O Lord God, how am I to know that I shall possess it?”

<sup>9</sup>He said to him, “Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon.”

<sup>10</sup>He brought him all these and cut them in two, laying each half over against the other; but he did not cut the birds in two. <sup>11</sup>And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

<sup>12</sup>As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram, and a deep and terrifying darkness descended upon him.

<sup>17</sup>When the sun had gone down and it was dark, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. <sup>18</sup>On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, “To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates,

## Psalm 27

<sup>1</sup>The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

<sup>2</sup>When evildoers assail me to devour my flesh— my adversaries and foes— they shall stumble and fall.

<sup>3</sup>Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war rise up against me, yet I will be confident.

<sup>4</sup>One thing I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: to live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.

<sup>5</sup>For he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble; he will conceal me under the cover of his tent; he will set me high on a rock.

<sup>6</sup>Now my head is lifted up above my enemies all around me, and I will offer in his tent sacrifices with shouts of joy; I will sing and make melody to the Lord.

<sup>7</sup>Hear, O Lord, when I cry aloud, be gracious to me and answer me!

<sup>8</sup>“Come,” my heart says, “seek his face!” Your face, Lord, do I seek.

<sup>9</sup>Do not hide your face from me. Do not turn your servant away in anger, you who have been my help. Do not cast me off, do not forsake me, O God of my salvation!

<sup>10</sup>If my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will take me up.

<sup>11</sup>Teach me your way, O Lord, and lead me on a level path because of my enemies.

<sup>12</sup>Do not give me up to the will of my adversaries, for false witnesses have risen against me, and they are breathing out violence.

<sup>13</sup>I believe that I shall see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

<sup>14</sup>Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!

When I was, I guess, chosen to do this sermon (thanks Tiffin) let's just say I wasn't really looking forward to it. I mean I had to write this sermon along with all the homework that a second semester senior has to do, as I'm sure most of you know, but most of all writing this would take away from me getting to play *Call of Duty* on my Xbox. I know all of y'all are thinking, "Poor guy, he actually had to do

something halfway productive for once.” But honestly, when you are 17 years old any kind of work sounds bad.

But out of all of this tedious work, I discovered my new favorite Psalm. Psalm 27:1 “The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?”

What a great verse. Take a moment to think about it. “The Lord is my light and my salvation... The Lord is the stronghold of my life.”

Now I am a pitcher on the baseball team at Lamar High School and throughout any given season there are many times when I face tense and fearful situations. When you are a pitcher, the whole team is counting on you to throw strikes and get outs. That’s a lot of pressure and can strike fear into anyone, especially when we play our two rivals, Bellaire and Westside. Now when I say fear, I don’t mean afraid of my teammates, I mean fear of failure. When you get into big games you don’t want to give up any hits or runs, and you are afraid to do anything that could hurt your team in any way. I have found that the best way to deal with this fear is to trust in the Lord. I know that if I trust in my God given talents that everything will turn out the way that it should.

Now baseball hasn’t always been good to me. On December 22, 2008, I tore a ligament in my elbow while throwing a bullpen. Then on January 19, 2009, I had reconstructive surgery on my elbow to replace the torn ligament, also known as Tommy John Surgery.

I found myself asking many of the same types of questions that Abraham asks the Lord in Genesis 15:1-2, which says, “After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, ‘Do not be afraid, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.’ But Abram said, ‘O Lord God, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is EL-i-e’zer of Damascus?’”

Before my injury I was really starting to progress as a pitcher. Then I hurt my elbow and had to sit out for a year while I rehabbed. But as you read further on in Genesis, God tells Abraham he will be the ancestor of many nations and gives him the land of Canaan. I am not far enough along to know what God has in store for

me but so far I have thrown well in all three of my appearances so far this year, and I do know that I will have the opportunity to play College baseball.

Now I have talked a lot about how my life and baseball relate to the scripture, but in everyday life people face fearful situations and situations of doubt. I know that for anyone who has ever lost a job, I am sure that there can be a lot of doubt about what God has in store for you. Or anyone who has an injury or illness, there can be a lot of fear in what will happen in you life. Or even if you are fearful of what the future may hold, if you have faith in God things will turn out the way that they should.

