

Readings for the week of Feb. 25/24:

Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16

Psalms 22:23-31

Romans 4:14-25

Mark 8:31-38

In the reading from Mark's Gospel, we read, *"He [Jesus] called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.'" (Mark 8:34)*

To "take up our cross, and follow Jesus" means that we need to be willing to live lives that are fully submitted to the will of God. Jesus left us a perfect example of this when he prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, just before He was taken away to be crucified. He prayed, *"Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done."* (Luke 22:4)

In order to be able to live like that, requires that we have a very strong faith. That being the case, I am thankful that we are given such a great example of faith, through the life of Abraham.

In Genesis 17, we are told that when Abram was about 99 years old, God came to him and said that his name would be Abraham, from then on. God made the promise to him that he would be the "father of many nations." According to Blueletterbible.org, the name Abraham means "father of a multitude," so that was appropriate for him.

Romans 4:18-22, says, *"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.' 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. No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, being fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. Therefore his faith 'was reckoned to him as righteousness.'"*

Being fully submitted to the will of God, will likely mean something different for all of us. He has awesome plans for us, so it is important that we ask Him in daily prayer. "Lord, please guide me today, through Your Holy Spirit, so that I will do Your will, not my own.