

Have Faith in God and in our coming glory!

Back in my College days, I came upon a great big poster that I liked so I hung it on the wall in my Apartment. It was a 6 foot tall image of a glass mug of beer.

Across the top were the words: “Some things never change”.

Across the bottom were the words: “Stroh’s beer”

You see, the poster was an advertisement for a brand of beer called Stroh’s ... and this poster was suggesting that the great taste and satisfaction that the beer provided you with ... would always be there ... it ... would never change.

It was good publicity because I’m sure it was reassuring to all those who drank Stroh’s beer ... that they could count on enjoying this product for years to come.

But things changed! That Midwest beer ... so popular in the 1970’s ... was no longer made by the late 1990’s. Through some bad acquisition decisions and their reluctance to come out with a “Lite” beer version, Stroh’s went out of business!

How long did it take? 20 years!

There are many things that we can hope will never change ... your favorite beer, or your favorite restaurant ... and especially our faith and the faith of our children. But as it was with Stroh’s beer ... there’s no assurance of that ... and indeed ... given enough bad decisions ... it too can go away in a short period of time.

Consider these statistics from the Pew Research Center in Washington.

67% of the Baby Boomer generation (born between 1950 – 1960) say religion is very important in their lives,

while only

38% of the Millennial generation (born between 1990 – 1996) say the same.

That’s a 30% drop in 30 years!

And get this, only 28% of these Millennials say they attend religious services at least weekly!

I think of the saying on my Poster “Some things never change” and I would hope that of all the things that could possibly change in the world ... one of the things that wouldn’t change would be our faith in God.

And yet ... look what’s happening!

How many times I’ve warned you that the faith can be lost in one generation ... which is indeed happening all over our Country and all over the world.

Our Faith is our belief and trust in God.

That's what God has been seeking from us since He first created man.
God wants us to believe in Him and trust Him.
And He blesses us when we do!

We hear a **prime example** of this in our **First Reading** today from **Genesis 15,**
God is telling **Abram** that he will make him **the father of a Great Nation.**

Scripture says, "*God took Abram outside and said,*
“Look up at the sky and count the stars if you can ...
just so shall your descendants be.”

At this point, Abram is very old and childless ...
so he had to be wondering how this would be.

And we experience the tension: is he going to believe and trust God ...or not?

In our mind we just see Abram looking up at a starlit sky ...
and seeing more stars than he could possibly count ...
he decides to place his trust in God.

But that's not what happened at all!

Because, you know what ... when God took Abram outside ...
and told him to look up at the sky it was daytime ...
and so Abram couldn't see any stars at all!

How do we know? Because 7 verses later, in verse 12, we just heard,
“As the sun was about to set, a trance fell upon Abram.”

And **5 verses after that in Verse 17** we heard, “*When the sun had set and it was dark,*
there appeared a smoking firepot and a flaming torch.”

So, you see, when God told Abram to look up in the sky ... and count the stars ...
it was daytime ... and Abram couldn't count them because he couldn't see them!
He couldn't see with his eyes what God asked him to see.

And yet ... Abram believed and trusted in God.
That's what faith is ... believing without seeing.

Just as Abram trusted that the stars were in the sky even though ...
he couldn't see them at the moment ...

Abram decided to trust that God would keep his promise of him being the leader
of a great nation ... even though he couldn't see it at the moment.

Scripture says,

“Abram put his faith in the Lord, who credited it to him as an act of righteousness.”

That’s what faith is ... believing without seeing.

**And that’s exactly what God wants us to do every day ... to believe in Him,
even though we can’t see Him ... and to believe that following Him ...
will be the best plan for our lives ... and will guide us to the Promised Land.**

**And yet throughout the ages, man in his arrogance continues to think he, himself
has a better plan for his own life ... and so he operates as if God isn’t even there.**

This is the very thing Paul is reprimanding the people for in his letter today, saying,

*“For many, as I have often told you and now tell you even in tears,
conduct themselves as enemies of the cross of Christ.*

*Their end is destruction. Their God is their stomach; their glory is their shame.
Their minds are occupied with earthly things ... but our citizenship is in Heaven,”*

Do you believe that? Do you believe in Heaven ... that our citizenship is in Heaven?

I asked a woman that recently and she shrugged her shoulders!

God wants us to believe that. But how do we know Heaven is for real?

Jesus gave us many indications of the reality of Heaven such as His Transfiguration.

Here He takes three of His Apostles, Peter, James and John up a mountain ...

where He allows them to see two great men from the past,

Moses, the giver of the Law and Elijah, the great Prophet.

**Now Moses had died 1300 years before Jesus, and Elijah, had died 800 years before
Jesus ... and yet ... **both** of these men were seen standing & conversing with Jesus.**

How was that possible?

**Could it be that they were still alive and enjoying their reward for being faithful to
God ... which was to be in communion with Him for all time?**

It sure looked that way.

And in that same experience, Jesus became transfigured, and St. Matthew says,

“His face shone like the sun and His clothes became white as light.”

**Here, Jesus was showing them what He would be like on the other side of the
Resurrection ... when He would rise from the dead with a glorified body, a body
that could appear & disappear and walk through locked doors ... a glorified body
that was **outside of space and time**, a body that would **live forever and never die.****

In being **transfigured before their eyes**, **Jesus** was also showing **the Apostles** the **destiny** that **would be theirs if they stayed faithful to Him**. **Jesus** **knew** that the **scandal of Him dying on the Cross** **would shake their faith in Him**, so **He gave them a glimpse of eternity ... that they just couldn't see with their human eyes**.

St. Paul **affirmed this** in our reading from his letter to the **Philippians** **saying**,
*“our citizenship is in Heaven, and from it we await a savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.
He will change our lowly bodies to conform with His glorified body.”*

Just as the Stars are there in the sky **even though we can't see them in daylight ...**
Eternal Life with God in Heaven **is there even though we can't see it now!**

How did God **seal His promise** to **Abram** to bring him to the **promised land**?
He sealed it in a covenant ... made with the blood of animals.

And how did God **seal His promise** to the **Apostles** to bring them to **Heaven**?
Again He sealed it in a covenant ... this time made with the Blood of His Son!

The **Eucharist, the Body and Blood of Jesus** **is the sign of the New and Eternal Covenant** that **God made with all of us**.

Do you believe that? **If you do ... it will be to your eternal benefit.**
 If you don't, it will be to your eternal regret.

God **wants you to have faith** in **His Plan** and in **His Promise**.

Lent is the **time to reflect on the promise of Eternal Life** with God ...
and **to make the adjustments** in our life **that will keep us on the road to Heaven**.

We're now **10 days** into the **40 days of Lent** ... so **1/4 of the season** **is already gone!**
How are you doing? **Are you** maintaining **the penances** that you promised to do?
Are you **fasting, praying** and **doing special works of charity**?

If so, that's **great** ... and I **encourage you** **to continue**.

If not, I **invite you** **to begin**.

Don't despair ... there's **still time to make this Holy Season fruitful** for you.

Realize that **the prize of Eternal Life** **is out there** ... **you just can't see it now!**

You **can't see it with your human eyes** ... you **need the eyes of faith** ... faith in **God!**

So put your faith in God.

Remember the saying on my old beer poster, “**Some things never change**”.

And realize that actually everything you see with your eyes will change.

But the one thing that will never change is God, He is **eternal** as is **His love & mercy**.

So hold onto the faith and **hand on the faith** ...

make it the one thing this side of Heaven ... that never changes.