

*CRIBB<S>NOTE - March 8, 2009*

Everywhere we turn we are reminded of these special days in which we live. News reports inundate us with facts and statistics about the depth of economic turmoil and the rampant spread of violence. Amid all the bad news, some of us wonder “Where is God?” But, another question should be asked, “What have we done to create a sense of distance between God and us?”

During these forty days of Lent, many questions are raised. Some of us have decided to make sacrifices and limit our consumption. We have vowed to turn our attention to God and not to be negatively affected by the saturation of unfortunate events. Yet, the reality of the world makes it difficult to hold to a discipline of correct order. We are tempted to resume whatever is comfortable and familiar. We sin.

When Abram and Sarai pulled up stakes and left their home in Haran, they acted completely on faith. There is no indication they knew where they were going or what they planned to do once they arrived. The insecurity or uncertainty of life transformed them into total dependence on God. They left family, livelihood, and idol gods behind. They walked out of old ways and entered a new life.

Their journey led them to a new relationship with God. They discovered the endless power of the Creator. Even at an old age of ninety-nine years, their bodies were made new and countless numbers of people were born from them. It is more than an amazing story. It is unbelievable and features the impossible. But not impossible for Almighty God, *El Shaddai*, the name ascribed to God in the Book of Genesis.

It is faith that continues to guide our life’s journey. In these days of precarious conditions when families are losing their homes, workers are losing their jobs, and things are turning upside down, we need more than the flimsy fluctuations of markets to secure our paths. Like Abraham and Sarah, we must turn our attention to something Greater than ourselves and the human-manipulated systems.

Our religious ancestors were sustained by God who talked directly to them and guided their steps through unfamiliar places. Their acts of faith give us models for these days. God was close to them. God is close to us. Their relationship with God was based on a Covenant. They agreed to “walk with God and be blameless.”

Today, we, too, are required to keep our promise. We are called to be faithful and live committed and blameless lives. This means walking together with a depth of care and concern for neighbors and strangers. It means honoring God through reverence, prayer, and worship.

God is always close and sustains us through times of doubt and disappointment. In the words of the old song, “In Times Like These We Need an Anchor.” We need something more solid than stock market reports. We need something more lasting than economic stimulus packages. We need to turn our hearts toward God.

When we remember that the story of Abraham and Sarah probably was written during the period of exile when the people of faith had all but given up, they found strength in remembering how faithful God was toward their ancestors. God is still faithful and God is still speaking a word of comfort for these times.