

God's Gracious Covenant for You and Your Children

Genesis 17:1-8

Halifax: 28 December 2008

Introduction:

In our service this morning, we have scheduled the baptism of Faith Evangeline Kubik.

- The baptism of infants has become a topic about which many believers in these modern times are puzzled.
- There are many topics about which Christians have been puzzled over the centuries.
- Now of course there are some things in Scripture that are hard to understand,
 - but usually, the difficulty does not lie so much with the Scriptures,
 - but more with our own pre-suppositions and philosophical commitments that we bring with us when we look at the Scripture.
 - Often, we are not even conscious of having these pre-suppositions.

Let me give you an example.

- In the early church, there were many Greeks who came to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ,
 - but these Greek believers had a philosophical commitment that made it very difficult for them to accept the Bible's teaching about the two natures of Christ...
 - that He is fully God and fully man.
 - You see, in Greek philosophy,
 - there was this cleaver idea that everything was on a continuum with God, as pure spirit, at one end and something like a stone as pure matter at the other end.
 - They saw human beings as being in the middle—half spirit and half matter—
 - animals being composed of more matter and less spirit...
 - and plants being even closer toward pure matter.
 - Then, toward the side of pure spirit, you had angels and demigods...
 - Instead of making a sharp distinction between God the Creator and man the creature, you had this continuum with God sort mixed in with everything.
 - Now this philosophical idea was just the way people thought—it was their default position that they automatically went back to.

- So when Christianity began to spread to the Greeks, there was an honest struggle about accepting the two natures of Jesus Christ.
 - Even though the Apostles (and the Scriptures) clearly taught that the Word became flesh...
 - and that the Son is to be honoured and worship even as the Father is honoured and worshipped,
 - many of these Greeks could not accept this in good conscience.
 - It just did not seem right to them.
 - And so, rather than taking the doctrine of the apostles at face value,
 - they began to reinterpret them to fit their understanding of the continuum.
 - They began to look at the Son of God as something less than the Father in essence and being because he was mixed with matter.
 - You see from this example how philosophical commitments have a powerful influence on the way we look at things.
 - These philosophical commitments are just part of us—
 - We are hardly even conscious of having them...
 - We just have a certain way of thinking that we keep going back to.

The more I look at the struggle many have to accept covenant baptism,

- the more I am convinced that the real problem in our day is not so much with the clearness of the Scripture,
 - but rather with the prevailing philosophical commitment that permeates the way we think about the solidarity of children with their parents.
 - Our whole education system over the last hundred years or so has been designed to identify children with their peers rather than with their parents...
 - and it has had a tremendous influence on the way we look at things...
 - And the roots of this mindset go even deeper into the individualistic mindset brought to us by the so-called enlightenment.
 - While the Bible clearly teaches that children are conceived and born in sin,
 - This is something that modern Christians are naturally predisposed to reject.
 - The Bible says that the entire human race fell into sin when Adam rebelled—that we all sinned in him and with him in that first transgression.
 - When Adam was expelled from paradise, so was his posterity...
 - None of them would be born in paradise.

- Rather, all of them would be dead in trespasses and sins from birth and all of them would be under the wrath and curse of God from birth.
- Mommy and Daddy sinners would not beget innocent babies...
 - They would beget sinful babies.
 - That is the way our Creator has made it to be...
- Even though the Bible has some very clear teaching about this...
 - Even though David says,
 - Psalm 51:5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me.
 - And Paul says,
 - Rom 5:12: “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned—”
 - There are a lot of people in these modern times who just can’t accept this teaching about children.
 - Instead of simply accepting what the Bible says about this,
 - there is this desire to find a different way to interpret these things.
 - We find it difficult to accept the fact that our corruption and guilt is so deep that we actually bring forth children who are worthy of eternal punishment from the first day of their conception.
- And because of this foundational problem with accepting the guilt and condemnation of children...
 - There is also confusion about God’s covenant *mercy* to children.
 - If they do not come from the womb as little condemned sinners,
 - then they do not need the mercy of Christ until such time that they become old enough to become corrupt and guilty and like the rest of us.
 - And so, with this mindset, when our gracious Lord calls us to come to Him for salvation and we, by His grace, respond to His call and come,
 - We aren’t really much concerned about what the Lord thinks of our children...
 - We just assume that they are in some kind of neutral zone until they get older.
 - We don’t really care whether or not they are counted as members of the covenant people that we have become a part of

- because we don't really believe that they share with us in our condemnation.
- And, at the same, there is the false teaching of the Roman Catholic Church that baptism automatically regenerates children...
 - and sincere believers rightly want nothing to do with that false doctrine,
 - and being already influenced by the philosophy of our day, are unable to distinguish between Rome's false doctrine and the Bible's teaching.
- And so, because it seems unreasonable for children to be included in God's covenant with the parents,
 - and because Rome includes children in the wrong way,
 - it is very easy and natural for modern Christians to miss the plain teaching of the Bible about this—and to do it with sincerity.
- Even though the Bible plainly states
 - that children with at least one believing parent are holy while children without a believing parent are unclean...
 - and even though Jesus says that the Kingdom of heaven belongs to little children and is pleased to bless them...
 - and even though every baptism mentioned in the New Testament of those who have a household is a household baptism...
 - and even though Peter echoes the promise of Genesis 17 when he says "the promise is to you and to your children,"
 - all of this is thought to surely mean *something* else because it cannot possibly mean that children are to be included in God's covenant with their parents.

And because this is such a problem in our day,

- I want to go back to the chapter in the Bible in which the inclusion of children in the covenant with their parents is most set forth...
 - It is the chapter in which the foundation is laid.
 - And that chapter is Genesis 17.
- Here it is unmistakably clear that when God established His covenant with Abraham,
 - He also established it with his children.
 - He declared in the plainest language as soon as Abram's children were born—on the eighth day—
 - they were to be given the sign of the covenant that God had established with Abraham.

- Now if this covenant with Abraham is about salvation by faith,
 - and if our philosophy forbids us to allow infant children to be included with their parents in such a covenant,
 - then something has to give!
 - Either we have to change the way we think about children and accept the fact that God does indeed include them in this covenant that has to do with receiving righteousness by faith...
 - or we have to reinterpret the covenant to fit our assumptions.
- And sadly as individualistic philosophy has more and more influenced the church,
 - there has been an increasing tendency to reinterpret the covenant God made with Abraham and make something very inferior to what it is!
 - There are those who actually teach that the primary focus is about land...
 - as if Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the other people of the Old Testament's sought nothing more than real estate in this world from their service to God!
 - That is believed despite the fact that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob never even obtained the Land in their life-time!
 - and despite the fact that the scripture tells us plainly that they sought a city whose builder and maker is God...
 - and despite the fact that the emphasis of the covenant is about God being their God, and the whole glory of the Land is that God dwells with them there.
 - This philosophy has done a great deal of damage in the church,
 - making the Old Testament almost useless in certain branches of the church.
- And so for this reason, I want to embark on a three-part sermon series on Gen. 17...
 - I will plan to preach part 1 today, part 2 at our next baptism, and part 3 at the next.
 - And today,
 - I want to show in particular that the covenant that is established here with Abraham and his children is the very same covenant that is established with professing believers and their children today.
- And first of all,
 - I want you to see that...

I. God called Abram to be holy and blameless...

- **He promised to be His God.**

A. Just look at what happened to Abram!

1. God Almighty appeared to Him!

- Gen 17:1: “When Abram was ninety–nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, “I *am* Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless.”
- What an amazing thing it is to think that God should speak to man!
 - a. It is amazing because we are mere creatures, made of the dust of the ground.
 - Oh my friends, God is so high above us that even the nations are said to be less than a drop in a bucket before Him—whole nations!
 - I know we think we are pretty important,
 - but the distance between God and us is monstrous!
 - The Psalmist marvels that the Lord even thinks of us when he says,
 - “What is man that you are mindful of him?”
 - Yet, from the beginning, God was pleased to condescend to His creatures in order that He might speak to them.
 - In the Garden, the blessed Son of God came to Adam and Eve and walked with them in the cool of the day.

TRANS> But there is something even more amazing in God’s speaking to Abram.

b. God speaks to him even though he, like all of us, is a fallen sinner.

- He is part of the corrupted human race that rose up in rebellion against God almost as soon as we were created!
- But here is our holy God who is of purer eyes than to behold evil,
 - coming to speak to a man who deserves to be enveloped forever in the fire of God’s wrath.

TRANS> This is such a marvellous thing—

2. We ought not to think of this lightly! It is very significant for God to speak to man.

- God had spoken to Abram some 25 years before, and now He was doing it again.
- This is recorded for us because it is something we ought to take note of...

- It should greatly concern us to consider what He says to Abram and how it applies to us.
- It is recorded for sake who live after him and we need to share in the awe of it and hang on every word that is spoken!

B. So look carefully at what God says to Abram!

1. First, He tells him that He is Almighty God...

- This is the first time this name is used in the Bible.
 - a. The Hebrew is El Shaddai.
 - By this name,
 - The Lord shows Abram that He is the God who is unlimited in His power to bless.
 - Etymologies are difficult to determine,
 - but some have pointed out the relationship of this name to the word breast,
 - suggesting that God is the multi-breasted one who supplies life and nourishment to all.
 - b. One thing is certain:
 - El Shaddai is the One who ultimately determines our destiny.
 - By Him, we are either blessed or cursed.
 - If El Shaddai is for us, who can be against us?
 - But if He is against us, who can help us?
 - He is the Almighty!

TRANS> But now I want you to look at what God Almighty calls Abram to do!

2. He says, “Walk before Me and be blameless!”

- a. Do you understand what this means?
 - 1) The phrase translated “walk before Me” literally means,
 - “walk before my face.”
 - This is a call to live in reality—in the reality of God who sees all things.
 - To live with reference to Him.
 - Ever since the fall,

- men naturally avoid God...
 - they make idols, they make arguments, they ignore Him...
- To ignore avoid God is the height of folly.
 - God is the most significant presence of all—and to go on as if He is not—
 - That’s worse than the man who sits sipping his coffee and reading the newspaper while his house is engulfed in flames!
 - You would say that such a man was out of touch with reality...
 - But how much more out of touch is this fallen human race to live as if the Lord is not...
- So Abraham is being called here to have true fellowship with God!
 - He is to walk in the light of who God is!
 - He is to conduct his whole life as one living before the face of God.

2) And he is also called to be *blameless*.

- Blameless before the face of God!
- *Blameless* means “perfect.”
 - In Deuteronomy 32:4, this same word is used to describe God’s work. It says,
 - “He is the Rock, His work is *perfect*: for all his ways a judgement, a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He.”
 - This word is often used to describe the quality of the sacrifices that are to be offered to God...
 - They are to be “without blemish,” or “blameless.”
 - In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus likely used the same word when He said,
 - Matt 5:48: You shall be *perfect*, just as your Father in Heaven is *perfect*.
 - And in Col. 1:28,
 - Paul declares that his goal in preaching is that he might “present every man *perfect* in Christ Jesus.”

3. Now the question is,

- How could Abram possibly do such a thing?
- a. How could he walk before God and be blameless when he is a sinful man?
 - Here he is, incurably guilty, incurably sinful,
 - And yet God Almighty says,
 - “Walk before me and be blameless.”
 - It seems absurd!
 - For a sinful human being to even come before God would be folly!
 - And yet, he is being called to *walk* before Him—to live before Him!
 - As a sinner, how could Abram meet God as anything other than a consuming fire?

TRANS> But there is a way to make sense of all this...

- b. You must understand that the call of God here is more than a mere commandment!
 - It’s a blessing!
 - If you go to someone’s house and he says,
 - “Make yourself at home, use my car, eat anything you want in my pantry...”
 - He is not just *commanding* you, to do these things...
 - He is *blessing* you.
 - He is making these things available to you.
 - Likewise, when God says, “Walk before me and be blameless,”
 - He is not merely commanding Abram to do this...
 - He is pronouncing the greatest of all blessings upon him!
 - He is making a right relationship with Himself available to Abram.
 - He is calling a fallen man to live in a right relationship with Him!
 - And believe me, that is something that can only be done by grace through faith!
 - As fallen sinners, not one of us has the ability to live in a right relationship with God unless God enables us to do it.
 - It is just as it was when God *commanded* Adam and Eve to be fruitful and multiply.
 - It was a command, but it was also a blessing...
 - God, in calling them to be fruitful,

- was giving them the ability to be fruitful.
- He was giving them what He was commanding.
- And so you see here that the Lord,
 - in calling Abram to be blameless when he was not blameless...
 - is promising to make him blameless by grace...
 - As it says in Ephesians 1,
 - He has chosen us in Christ that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love!
 - As God Almighty,
 - He is going to give Abram this reconciled relationship that will bring the pardon of sin and eventually, perfect purity.
 - 1 John 3:2: When we see Him, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.
 - As God Almighty,
 - He is able to establish this relationship in spite of Abram's weakness.
 - This is the most marvellous thing that could be imagined!
- c. Abram's response is very appropriate!
 - He falls on his face before God.
 - You can see that in verse 3.
 - He is before the Lord in amazed gratitude!
 - What marvellous kindness!
 - Grace has abounded to Him!
 - He is called to walk before the face of God and yet be blameless!
 - Don't think that this was a mere promise of Land!
 - The glory of the promised Land was that God would dwell in the midst of His people there...
 - That they would walk before Him and be blameless!
 - This is the essence of salvation!
 - This is what Jesus died on the cross to accomplish
 - This is the promise of eternal life.
 - This is God promising to be our God and to make us His people.

TRANS> But look at what else God promises:

II. God also promises that Abram will have *many* companions who will also walk before God and be blameless.

A. In verse 2-6, the Lord emphasises the great number of people that He will cause to walk before Him and be blameless...

1. Look at what He says to Abram in verse 2:

- Gen 17:2: “I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly!”
 - In the original, the word exceedingly is actually used twice for emphasis...
 - so that the Lord says,
 - “I will multiply you exceedingly – exceedingly!”
 - And in verse 6, He says something very similar...
 - Gen 17:6: “I will make you exceedingly fruitful...”
 - And again, it is “exceedingly – exceedingly fruitful.”

TRANS> This is incredible!

1) God is saying, “Abram, you won’t be alone!”

- “You won’t be the only person that has this restored relationship with Me.”
- “I have transformed you and brought you into this relationship,”
 - “You are a new kind of person...a redeemed person—a new creation...”
 - “But now I am telling you that I am going to make many more like you!”
 - “I am going to multiply you!”

2) God changes Abram’s name to emphasise this promise of multiplication!

- You can see that in verse 5 where He changes his name from Abram to Abraham.

1) The name *Abram* means, “exalted father.”

- The new name, *Abraham*, means, “father of many.”
- The ending *ham* is from *hamon* which means, “many.”
 - *Hamon* is used in verse 4 & 5 in the phrase “*many* nations”
 - “I will make you the father of “*many* nations.”

- 2) What irony this must have seemed to Abram...
 - Here he is, a ninety-nine year old man with no children and with a barren wife,
 - and God gives him the name “father of many.”
 - You can imagine that this may have been the occasion for a great deal of amusement to his Canaanite neighbours...
 - “Hello father of many, how are your many children?”
 - 3) The assurance of this promise was not to be found by looking at present circumstances.
 - It would come only by believing that God Almighty is able to do what He has promised.
 - Abraham must believe in God...
 - “Who gives life to the dead and calls those things that do not exist as though they did.”
2. But the most amazing thing about this is not just that Abraham is going to have a lot of children...
- The amazing thing is that out of this fallen ruined sinful human race,
 - God is going to raise up a whole multitude to people who will be holy and without blame before Him!
 - God’s grace would have been unfathomable if He had chosen Abram alone for this blessing.
 - That God should take dust that has risen up in rebellion against Him and restore it to a right relationship with Himself is utterly incomprehensible!
 - We do not marvel at this as we should because we do not see how unworthy we are of God’s blessing.
 - We tend to think that God is under some kind of obligation to at least offer to restore us—
 - but I declare to you that it is nothing but God’s free love and grace that restores sinners!
 - God would have been perfectly just if He had left us **all** to perish in our sin and misery!
 - We can have no quarrel with Him for not choosing to save all.
 - If we thought rightly about this,
 - we would be astounded at the thought of saving one of us...
 - and completely awed that He should save a whole multitude!

B. But where is this great multitude to come from?

- Where is the Lord going to find the people on whom He bestows the blessing of Abraham—this blessing of salvation?
- It seems that there two sources...

1. First, He will take them from among Abraham's descendants.

a. This is certainly implied by the terminology that God uses in verses 2-6.

- Notice two things:
 - He gives him the name *father* of a multitude...
 - and He uses the word *fruitful*.
 - Both of these words are suggestive of natural offspring...
- And all the more so given the fact that when God had appeared to Abram some 25 years before,
 - He had promised to give Abram a child from his barren wife...
 - and to multiply his descendents through that child as the sand of the sea and as the stars of heaven.
 - Now God is telling Him that from that multitude there will be many who walk before Him and are blameless!

TRANS> Furthermore,

b. Verse 7-8 make it absolutely certain that Abraham's own children will make up a large part of the multitude of people that God will save...

- You can see what it says:
 - Gen 17:7-8: "And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you. Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."
- See what God promises to Abraham here!
 - See how He actually establishes His covenant with Abraham **and** His descendents,
 - and how in this covenant He promises to be his God and their God.
 - Now this promise includes the promise of the land of Canaan—
 - Interestingly, as an everlasting possession...

- probably because the meek will inherit the entire earth at last...
 - and God will dwell in the midst of them.
 - The essence of the promise is that God will be their God.
 - To make sure this is clear, this is not only stated as the foundation of the covenant in verse 7,
 - but it is tacked on at the end of verse 8 for emphasis after the land is mentioned.
 - For God to say that He is the God of someone is to say that He has received them to bless them forever...
 - It is to say that He has pardoned all their sins, that He has justified them, and that He has delivered them from bondage to sin.
 - When the Sadducees questioned the Lord Jesus about the resurrection of the dead,
 - the Lord used the fact that God said that He was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
 - He argued that this proves that these men had eternal life...
 - because God is not the God of the dead but of the living.
 - If He claims to be the God of someone, that person is redeemed from sin and death,
 - for God is not the God of those who are dead in trespasses and sins any more than He is God to those who are physically dead
- c. But you must not suppose that this means that God is the God of every one of Abraham's seed.
- 1) He establishes His covenant in which He *promises* to be their God.
 - And so it is that they are marked out with Abraham by circumcision as those who have the promise...
 - They are children of the promise, or as Paul says, they are those who have the promises...
 - But having the promise and obtaining what is promised are not the same thing.
 - The promise is only obtained through faith.
 - Someone can promise to give you supper on Friday night, but if you do not come to his house, you will not have the thing that is promised.

- You had the promise, but you did not obtain what was promised.
 - Abraham's children must, like Abraham, believe God, and it will be credited to them for righteousness.
 - God is their God if they keep His covenant,
 - but it is only the elect who keep it.
 - God must draw you or you will never come to Him.
 - He must give you a new heart to repent and believe...
 - Then you will turn to Him and He will save you.
- 2) This is the way it is for all who are in the covenant.
- If you are in the covenant, you are a recipient of the promise.
 - You profess to be one who is trusting in the promise...
 - But do not be deceived,
 - Unless you really are trusting in the promise of God to save you, you do not have righteousness that is promised.
 - God is not truly your God and you are not truly one of His people.
 - Oh yes, for a time you are among them and counted with them because of your profession...
 - But if you do not have saving faith,
 - you will be cut off at the last day if not before.

TRANS> So you see then that the natural descendents of Abraham are the first source from which the promised multitude comes—

- part of the multitude that has God as their God and who are said to be His people...
 - part of the multitude that walk before the face of God and are blameless.
2. The second source from which the multitude is taken is that of the other nations.
- I say “other” nations because Abraham was himself a nation in seed form.
 - a. The language in verse 2-6 seems to suggest not only that Abraham's natural descendents will be blessed,
 - but also that Abraham will be a father, somehow, to many other nations...

- that other nations or families will be brought under God's covenant to be blessed with Abraham.
- 1) In Genesis 12, when the Lord first called Abram and promised to bless him,
 - He also promised that through his seed all the nations of the earth would be blessed...
 - All the families had just been separated at Babel as a punishment to them for trying to save themselves.
 - But these families would receive the blessing that God was now promising to Abraham in the years to come.
 - 2) This promise to bless the nations becomes a regular and prominent feature in the Old Testament.
 - Here are a few examples:
 - Psalm 22:27
 - "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations shall worship before You."
 - Psalm 66:4
 - "All the earth shall worship You and sing praises to You; they shall sing praises to Your name."
 - Psalm 86:9
 - "All nations whom You have made shall come and worship before You, O Lord, And shall glorify Your name."
 - Isaiah 2:2-3
 - "Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it. Many people shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths." For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.
 - Isaiah 11:9
 - "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea."

TRANS> Now there were certainly foreigners who were brought into God's covenant from the other nations by profession in Old Testament times...

- They were circumcised and added to the covenant people when they professed,
- but the great multitude from the other nations did not come until after Jesus had finished His redemptive work.

TRANS> And now I want you to see that...

b. The Scriptures present the covenant we now have through faith in Jesus Christ as in essence the very same as the covenant God made with Abraham.

- You who believe have life by the same covenant.
 - Abraham is your father and you are his seed in the covenant that was established with him in Genesis 17.

1) God has, in fact, made Abraham a prototype of all other believers.

- What I mean is, Abraham is a model of what a believer is.

a) In this sense, He is the *father* of all who believe.

- He is the original man of faith.
- That is exactly what Galatians 3:7-9 says:
 - “Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, "In you all the nations shall be blessed." So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.”
 - These blessed ones share both the faith and the blessing of father Abraham.

b) Galatians 3:14 refers to the blessing the nations receive as:

- Gal 3:14: the blessing of Abraham that comes upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus.

i) So here again, you see that it is the same blessing...

- the blessing of God becoming their God and of them becoming His people...
- of God causing them to walk before Him and to be blameless.
- To say that we now receive a different blessing to contradict the plain teaching of this verse.

ii) And you see that Gal 3:14 also says that this blessing of Abraham is said to come *in Jesus Christ*.

- Jesus is the One who restores both us and Abraham to God...

- It was on the basis of His sacrifice that Abraham was made blameless before God...
- And it is on the basis of His sacrifice that we are made blameless before God.

TRANS> So you see then that in essence, we have what Abraham had and he had what we have.

2) Clearly, there is an organic connection between Abraham and all other believers throughout the ages.

a) It has always been so.

- When God wanted to identify Himself to the people of Israel in Moses' day, He said,
 - "Tell them that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob has appeared to you."
- He made it clear that He was not starting a new religion under Moses,
 - He was bringing the same blessing that He brought to Abraham to the people under Moses—
 - to be a God to them and to claim them as His very own people.
 - He was showing them their connectedness to Abraham.

b) Nor was He starting a new religion when He sent Christ...

- Christ came to bring to Abraham and all his spiritual children the blessing that God had promised.
 - Jesus came so that Abraham, and all who believe might, "walk before God and be blameless."
 - That is why He died on the cross.
 - That is why He sent His disciples to proclaim His salvation in all the world.
 - That we might obtain the blessing of Abraham.

c) In a very real sense, these promises to Abraham were promises to Christ.

- Christ is organically connected to Abraham also as a head is connected to a body.
 - When God told Abraham that he would multiply him exceedingly,

- He was telling God the Son that He would bring many sons to glory by Him.
- When God told Abraham that he would make him the father of many nations,
 - He was telling God the Son that His work on the cross would not only save Jews, but also Gentiles.
- In Psalm 2:8, He tells Him this expressly:
 - Ps 2:8: “Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth for Your possession.”
- Also, in Isa. 49:6, He declares:
 - Isa 49:6: “It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob, And to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, That You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.”

3) You can see how important this organic union with Abraham is!

- It is our link to Jesus Christ, the only name by which we may be saved!
- If we are not joined together with Abraham in the same faith and are not recipients of the same blessing,
 - then we are estranged from Christ!

TRANS> But what does this say about our children today?

C. What are the implications of the fact that we are in the same covenant that Abraham was in when it comes the way we regard the children of believers?

1. It suggests that we ought to regard our infant children as in God’s covenant with us.
 - If it is the same covenant that was made with Abraham,
 - and if God established this covenant with Abraham and his offspring,
 - Then He establishes it with all who profess and with their offspring.
 - Nowhere are they excluded.
 - Until they are old enough to break the covenant and be cut off,
 - they are included with their parents who bring them up in the promise, looking to the Lord for their salvation.
2. It comes, then, as no surprise that the New Testament assumes the inclusion of children.

- This is why the New Testament has no example of the child of a believing home being baptised...
 - and why every example of baptism is, as with Abraham's circumcision, a household baptism unless it was an individual who had no family.
 - and why we are told that if there is one believing spouse in a marriage, the children are regarded as holy when otherwise they would be unclean...
 - and why Jesus says that the kingdom of God belongs to the children of believers...
 - and why Peter, when baptising Jews who have come to believe, tells them that the promise is to you and to your children.
 - God remains, as always, the God who establishes His covenant with us and with our children.
 - Therefore, in obedience to His word, Andy and Danielle present Faith Kubik, their baby daughter, to be baptised.

Conclusion:

Christian, what a gracious God we have!

- What great things we have seen today!
- God did not leave you to perish in your sin and misery!
 - But He came to you and called you out to be His own!
 - And not just you, but a whole multitude of people!
 - And not just you, but also your children with you!

Let's give thanks to His name!