

A reading from Genesis chapter 20 verses 1 through 18. You can find the reading on page 14 in your pew Bible.

From there Abraham journeyed toward the territory of the Negeb and lived between Kadesh and Shur; and he sojourned in Gerar. And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, "She is my sister." And Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah. But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night and said to him, "Behold, you are a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is a man's wife." Now Abimelech had not approached her. So he said, "Lord, will you kill an innocent people? Did he not himself say to me, 'She is my sister'? And she herself said, 'He is my brother.' In the integrity of my heart and the innocence of my hands I have done this." Then God said to him in the dream, "Yes, I know that you have done this in the integrity of your heart, and it was I who kept you from sinning against me. Therefore I did not let you touch her. Now then, return the man's wife, for he is a prophet, so that he will pray for you, and you shall live. But if you do not return her, know that you shall surely die, you and all who are yours."

So Abimelech rose early in the morning and called all his servants and told them all these things. And the men were very much afraid. Then Abimelech called Abraham and said to him, "What have you done to us? And how have I sinned against you, that you have brought on me and my kingdom a great sin? You have done to me things that ought not to be done." And Abimelech said to Abraham, "What did you see, that you did this thing?" Abraham said, "I did it because I thought, 'There is no fear of God at all in this place, and they will kill me because of my wife.' Besides, she is indeed my sister, the daughter of my father though not the daughter of my mother, and she became my wife. And when God caused me to wander from my father's house, I said to her, 'This is the kindness you must do me: at every place to which we come, say of me, "He is my brother."'"

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Then Abimelech took sheep and oxen, and male servants and female servants, and gave them to Abraham, and returned Sarah his wife to him. And Abimelech said, "Behold, my land is before you; dwell where it pleases you." To Sarah he said, "Behold, I have given your brother a thousand pieces of silver. It is a sign of your innocence in the eyes of all who are with you, and before everyone you are vindicated." Then Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech, and also healed his wife and female slaves so that they bore children. For the LORD had closed all the wombs of the house of Abimelech because of Sarah, Abraham's wife.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Please join me in praying Psalm 43.

Leader: Vindicate me, O God, and defend my cause
against an ungodly people,

**People: from the deceitful and unjust man
deliver me!**

Leader: For you are the God in whom I take refuge;
why have you rejected me?

**People: Why do I go about mourning
because of the oppression of the enemy?**

Leader: Send out your light and your truth;
let them lead me;

**People: let them bring me to your holy hill
and to your dwelling!**

Leader: Then I will go to the altar of God,
to God my exceeding joy,

**People: and I will praise you with the lyre,
O God, my God.**

Leader: Why are you cast down, O my soul,
and why are you in turmoil within me?

**People: Hope in God; for I shall again praise him,
my salvation and my God.**

**All: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy
Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever.
Amen.**

Leader: Please stand for the reading of the Gospel.

(allow them time to stand)

**The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to Luke.**

People: Glory to you, Lord Christ.

And he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart. He said, "In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man. And there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, 'Give me justice against my adversary.' For a while he refused, but afterward he said to himself, 'Though I neither fear God nor respect man, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.'" And the Lord said, "Hear what the unrighteous judge says. And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"

Leader: The Gospel of the Lord

People: Praise to you, Lord Christ.