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Genesis 22:1-14 June 28, 2020
Psalm 13 SANB, 4th Sunday
Matthew 10:40-42

Cornerstones and the hard work of being faithful

 Each day I read the news, I am reminded of what a tall order it is to be a Christian in today’s world. And then we read today’s readings, and we wonder the same thing!

 How can we be faithful in the midst of such difficult asks?

 Today’s collect said that the Holy One built the church upon the foundation of the apostles and that Jesus is the chief *cornerstone.*

 During my entry into the life of this church St. Anne’s, I was graciously taken on a tour of Billerica by Ed & Sandra. I learned so much. And, I saw many *cornerstones*. They tell more than just the date of the foundation. They often tell who was present, and which way the building is pointed.

 Does the - life of our faith - show the orientation of our lives, show the foundation upon which we depend?

 Do the words and actions of your life reveal your orientation toward faith? How can others tell?

 If Jesus is our chief cornerstone, then we claim to have been oriented toward him since our Baptism. Listen to those promises.

 We renounce the spiritual forces of wickedness.

 We renounce what destroys creatures of God.

 We renounce all that draws us away from the love of God.

 Then, the promises continue as we turn toward the baptismal font, and we proclaim accepting Jesus. We proclaim that we **trust** his grace and love. And we promise to follow and obey him.

 It is serious business to take on this path of being faithful.

 In relationship to God, Abraham found challenges. He had had a tough time remembering to trust in God. He had betrayed his wife when she needed him. He had fathered a slave child to ensure his posterity. He had doubted God’s faithfulness to him.

 In today’s story, Abraham’s familial bonds are *used* in Abraham’s demonstration of his faithfulness to God. I did not use the word ‘test’, because I don’t believe that helps individuals take responsibility for our own tasks. Abraham had work to do, and we see his unfolding story.

 We each have work to do, and the stories of our lives demand our attention.

 Will you welcome the Christ, no matter *who* he looks like today.

Will you welcome a prophet’s message, no matter if it’s inconvenient.

Will you seek righteous persons, even if they need a cup of cold water?

 I do mean the work across difference that Billerica Clergy are supporting throughout our town toward the end of July when we are virtually invited to our Mosque for a viewing of the film, “The Sultan and the Saint”.

 But I also mean the work around noticing our own attitudes toward difference as described in the baptismal questions. Hopefully, we will also have the self-awareness that we are each asked to engage in. The tall order it is to be a Christian in today’s world simply asks us to be faithful to God in Jesus: be loyal, constant, and steadfast. Love, no matter what it costs.

 Like Abraham, each of us is asked to follow God’s leading, using our whole selves. We are not asked to obey blindly. Instead, engage with God -to become more of who we can be. That engagement will build the foundation (and whole church) upon the chief cornerstone we know in this parish, Jesus the Christ.

 Be brave and follow God. Amen.