

**SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST  
ST. MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS**

**Psalm 103:19-22; Genesis 28:10-17; Revelation 12:7-12; John 1:47-51**

Dreams can be interpreted in different ways; you may have a bad dream or you may have a good dream. With both bad and good dreams you need to pray so that if it is a good dream then let it happen but if it is bad then ask God to take it away from you. Jacob's was good and God put him into a deep sleep so that he could talk with Jacob even though he was not sleeping at a good place.

Dear sisters and brothers blessing and peace to you. Today I would like to share with you - **God's promise to us and the promise for one another and God's blessing for each of us.**

But the important question is: "How do we keep a promise and receive the blessing and how do we keep God's blessing?" I do not want to define the words "promise" and "blessing" because all of you know what they mean.

God's covenant, promise to Abraham, Isaac, was offered to Jacob. But that is not the case to be confident by what God did to your grandparents. But what is important, is your relationship with God now.

Take my example; my father was not a Christian and he did not know Jesus but he knew God because every year in January he offered a white bull to be offered to God then other offerings could be done for idols.

Therefore when I pray I do not say God of my father Atem because my father was worshiping idols but I am worshiping God. I say God of our father and the father of our Lord Jesus Christ. And my daughters Michele and Grace they will pray to God of my father Joseph because I am a servant of Christ and I am bringing them up in the Christian faith. But Isaac could say God of my father Abraham, Because of God's promise that he offered to Abraham.

According to the reading from Genesis this morning, we came to know the dream of Jacob and how God promised him blessings and protection; God said "I am the LORD, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; .....then all families of earth shall be blessed in you

.....know that I am with you and will keep you wherever you go,  
.....for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.

How grateful to hear God's promise. And how great it is to hear a promise from your father or your friends. My daughters had been asking me to bring them with me to visit America since when they were five years old but I would say no but they kept requesting until I promised them that when they are ten years old I will bring them to you, because many of you are also looking forward to seeing them because of our relationship and partnership in the Gospel and many of you promised me to support my ministry in South Sudan. We keep our promises to our children and friends do you think that God our father will not keep his promise to us? As you know the promise comes through love and if you do not love somebody you will not promise him/her to do something good for him/her.

We give a ring to the one we love when we get married as a promise to be together and take care of one another but some may do it in a different way and forget about the wedding ring. See what these people do, for example in one tribe they cut fingers to engage their spouse.

Showing commitment to the one you love can be done in many harmless ways, like wearing a wedding ring. The Kohekohe tribe of South Africa have an unusual way of doing this. They cut off the fingers of engaged couples as a sign of their eternal commitment. Here, love is not conveyed in words but with knives and blood! So to tell if a person is taken, you check to see if they are missing a finger! If one spouse dies, the other can remarry, but the living spouse must chop off another finger to release the dead spouse's spiritual bonds. Understandably, divorce is rare among them-who would want to have another finger chopped off?

To Abraham our father in faith and friend of God, God promised that he would have many children from his wife Sarah and he did it.

Even though Abraham made many mistakes God did not take away his blessing and promise to Abraham. The same thing happened to Jacob. He too made many mistakes but God was still with him; he cheated his brother and his father but what followed is that his uncle cheated him and Jacob had to work for 14 years for the women he loved.

Dear brothers and sisters we want blessings so that we are happy with our family, our friends and at the place of work and also enjoy life.

But the important part is you need blessings so that everyone will be blessed. You may be a blessing spiritually and materially. God is always ready to pour his blessing to his people when they are ready to receive it.

“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all things will be given to you as well” Mat. 6:33; God did not bless you to keep it for yourself, but to bless others through your blessing.

Remember what Jacob said, “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.”

You could make your house to be the house of God by creating great relationships with your children and your spouse; you could make your house to be the gate of heaven by offering love to your family and your neighbor, to your Church, because you are blessed.

You are blessed to be a Christian because that blessing will not go away from you because it is God’s promise to you and me. “Rejoice then, you heavens and those who dwell in them!”

You are the one who will be in heaven with Jesus because that is Jesus promise to his people so be ready as it is time to receive your blessing with an open heart

Do not forget that the war broke out in heaven between the angel Michael and the dragon; Michael defeated the dragon and the dragon was sent to earth. The same Michael is an Archangel still protecting us from the devil and all his confusion, which is in the world today (Revelation 12:7-12)

The enmity between Satan and human beings began after creation, and the evil one is creating the problems even in heaven when Satan was thrown out from heaven then the war between people and Satan will not finish until Jesus comes back. Satan wants to destroy the mission of God on earth.

See how Satan uses different weapons to destroy people like one King of Darfur in Sudan. There were good teachers in his kingdom and they were famous because of their teaching, the king was not happy and started looking for ways to kill them, but he was afraid that people may get angry with him. So he invited the teachers to his house, then he brought his horse and said to the teachers, “I want you to teach my horse how to read and write and I am giving you three years in which you must accomplish

this.” The three teachers got very angry and they knew that they are going to die. They went to one old man to report to him what happened to them and asked for his advice! The old man asked them, how long the King had given them to teach his horse. They said three years and the old man said that this was very good. He added that during these three years one of these three things may happen:

1. The king may die
2. The horse may die
3. You may die so do not panic.

Eventually, the king died before the three years were over. That is why the Bible says: do not worry about tomorrow because tomorrow can take care of itself.

John 1:47-51

For Jesus to be known by all people or believers it began with John, John passed to Andrew who again passed to Simon Peter his brother and here we are Christians today and especially for us as Africans and especially Sudan and South Sudan the good news about Jesus came to us by apostle Philip who was called by Andrew and Simon Peter. It’s the same way that you came to know bishop Joseph. When the first group visited Sudan and visited Renk Diocese for the first time for an American to visit Renk and one of those was Mom Jackie Kraus from St. Michael and that was the beginning of our relationship and then to the whole diocese of Chicago.

The Sudanese give her the name “Mom” to honor her for the great work she did. Through her all of you are now supporting South Sudan. It was very difficult for Jesus’s disciple to spread the message but through difficulties much work done. Because of your blessing and support to us we were about to celebrate our self-reliance if the fighting or war did not resume in South Sudan. But because of the work and the war, which Archangel fought against the devil, it still going around the world today causing a lot of problems like what Satan did to Job.

Satan tries to give pressure to God to change his vision to wards Job by saying

“Does Job fear God for nothing”-----Job 1:9-12”

Therefore sometimes your vision could be challenged by those who have different agendas out of God’s agenda those did not want you to success and that did not come from person by himself but by evil spirit within the

person that evil thinking lead to jealousy like what happened between God and Job.

As the fighting began between Archangel Michael and the dragon and the Archangel defeated the dragon and was thrown down. It is the same way that we will defeat Satan.

God has power to destroy Satan's forces but God's plan is different from our plan. That is why he allows Satan to do his work in the world because his judgment is already done and it will not stop until Jesus returns to the earth. The Archangel Michael is still protecting us from the hand of the evil one.

May God bless you all.

AMEN