

**FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD,**  
**IS IT POSSIBLE?**  
**James 2:23**  
**October 27th, 2013**

What a wonderful and—at the same time—important question to ask!  
Since God is real, surely everybody would want to be on friendly terms with Him?

Today we celebrate three historic events in the life of the Church.  
We have welcomed another youngster into her visible number. We pray that she will grow up to embrace the Lord Jesus in a life of personal faith and loving, obedient devoted service.

We again celebrate Reformation Sunday. We gratefully remember those who have worked hard—and do so still—to point the Church to Christ as her only King and Head and to the Word of God as our supreme authority to direct us in matters of the Faith and how we should live.

And of course we are worshipping together with members of the Korean-language congregation which has begun meeting here at St. Andrews: what a privilege to do that!

Our attention is on this one statement of James chapter two, verse twenty-three, which summarises the answer to this question—is friendship with God possible. This is a key Truth of the Christian Faith — this matter of being 'declared right', of being 'reckoned as righteous' 'considered sinless' before God! God is Holy, that is, without sin, thoroughly independent of this world. We are sinful and oh so frail and confined by this world. Can the two meet on friendly terms? Yes, in Christ we can!

**(1) From man's side it's about trust**

*"Abraham believed God"*. That's how verse twenty-three begins. It starts with the human being trusting God's Word, His Promise, responding to His Call—like Abraham did. In Abraham's case, God invited him to gaze up at the stars and trust Him to honour His Promise of giving him and Sarah the supernatural gift of a son when they were beyond the age to conceive.

The belief, faith, trust Abraham showed was as a result of God reaching down to him first and Calling him to Himself.

Yes, such faith is *"not from yourselves, it is the gift of God"* as Paul puts it (Ephesians 2 v8)  
A trust in God's eternally-powerful and reliable Word.

Alex and Sarah, you have expressed your own faith in God today. We have prayed that you will urge Isabella to personally come to trust Jesus Christ as her Lord and Saviour. Don't leave it to Ministers, Sunday-school teachers or others, but pray for that day to come, look for it and live your lives expecting it to happen—that's what Baptising infants is all about.

So from our side it's all about Trusting God.

The central heart of our faith is this matter of coming to trust in and being accepted on friendly terms by the Holy God.

**(2) From God's side it's about a Gift of new status**

*"it was credited to him as righteousness,". "Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness"*.

Abraham was spiritually bankrupt in himself. He had no credit in his account. God Graciously Acts to

Credit him with a righteous standing before Himself. This new standing of "righteousness" that is being considered 'blameless' is a Sovereign act of God and was completely undeserved by Abraham or anyone who has ever received it since. It is an expression of God's sheer Mercy and Grace at work.

When he heard God Promise and invite him to trust and did so, God immediately changed his status from bankrupt sinner to billionaire saint—from pauper to Palmer.

As Christians in this world, we have dual-citizenship: we are citizens of at least one country of this world and citizens of heaven. We also exist on two levels: we still sin and are subject to worldly passions but in our heavenly standing with God we are one hundred percent righteous in Christ—hallelujah!

Because of those heavenly realities, friendship with God results:

*"Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness and he was called God's friend."*

Does that describe you, today, my friend? Can you truthfully say, without pride or exaggeration I am the Lord's and He is mine; therefore I have the honour of naming Him as Friend? What a privilege!