

Genesis—Series Overview

Embarrassing Ancestors and Our Glorious Hope

The book of Genesis is all about God making an extravagantly gorgeous Creation to declare His glory and the horrifying result of our ancestors' rebellion against His kingly rule. It was written to remind us of our good God's promise to undo all the terror that our treason has wrought. It shows us our ancestors' faltering walk of faith and His faithful care for them, all the while paving the way for the coming King who would deliver us from ourselves and all who oppose our good God. The New Heavens and Earth will perfectly declare His praise.

APPLYING GOD'S WORD

Please ask the Holy Spirit to guide you:

Rejoice! God has blessed us with liberating laughter. Sing His praises! Celebrate and declare His greatness! We are no longer enslaved as His enemies, but now know Him as Father and Lord.

Laugh! Delight in God's goodness and mercy. Recount to yourself and others the many ways He has delivered you from the bondage of self-absorption and despair.

Pray! Ask the Lord to continue to expand our sense of wonder and praise for all His greatness.

The Life of Faith—Hebrews

Rooted in God's Promises & Running to New Jerusalem

The book of Hebrews was written to encourage and exhort God's people who were tempted to turn back from the gospel. They were reminded that the promise of salvation comes through the Son who reveals His Father's glory and provides Sabbath rest. This is the basis for the Christian hope as we await the New Jerusalem whose architect has secured our resurrection life in the eternal city of peace.

Sermon Notes and Daily Devotional
First Congregational Church of Woodstock

Pastor Doug Warren
April 7th, 2019

Morning Service:

Genesis 21: 1 – 8

The Birth of Liberating Laughter

1. Sarah Sings Her Refrain of Liberating Laughter.
2. Laughter Is God's Gift.
3. This Joy Comes Through Christ.

Isaac is the gift of God to Abraham and Sarah, delivering them from their self-mocking laughter. But Isaac is also a gift to all God's people as God will bring the Redeemer through him to rescue us all. The liberating laughter of God's grace in Christ frees us from our sorrows and shows us God's delight in us.

Evening Service:

Hebrews 2: 5 – 9

Ruling and Being Ruled

1. There Is a Natural Order of Creation
2. There Is an Unnatural Way Things Appear Now.
3. Christ Is Restoring the Way Life Should Be.

The whole of Creation has a pecking order and it is all out of whack! How often have we seen authority abused and misused? The things that we see every day can make it particularly hard to believe and live by some of the things that we read in the Bible. But if we look more closely, we will see that God explains it perfectly well. Christ is putting everything back to the way it is supposed to be and has shown Himself victorious in the end.

Taking Gathered Worship Home

God gave Sarah *laughter* just as He promised. He continued to show how His promise of the seed of the woman would bring redemption from our rebellion and sin. He would bring *through Isaac* the liberty of laughter for all His people. It is through this child's seed that freedom will come and we will be delivered from bitter tears.

Please use the devotional material below each day this week to meet with Jesus. Ask Christ to teach us His ways that we may walk in them to accomplish His purposes.

Sunday AM

READ **Genesis 21:1-8**. DISCUSS, What is God doing in providing Isaac as the child of promise? How does the supernatural provision of Isaac demonstrate God's trustworthiness with all His other promises? How are you currently struggling to trust God? PRAY for God to embolden us to trust Him even when we are very much afraid. Ask Him to enliven our faith in Christ who alone saves us.

Sunday PM

READ today's passage: **Hebrews 2:5-9**. DISCUSS, What is the order of the universe? Why? How does what we experience contradict that order? Why? PRAISE God for His sovereign rule over all things.

Monday

READ **Genesis 18:9-15; 21:1-8**. DISCUSS, What kind of laugh did Sarah have in the beginning? How did it change? Why? PRAY for God to transform us. EXTEND His grace to someone today. Show them the grace Christ has lavished upon you.

Tuesday

READ **Genesis 21:1-8; Romans 9:6-18**. DISCUSS, God didn't just give Isaac to Sarah and Abraham for themselves. He was working in fulfilling His promises to bring a Savior through his progeny. Why does He work through Isaac? PRAY, "Father God, we praise You for Your mercy on us. Jesus, thank You for coming to save us. Holy Spirit, empower us to show others this amazing grace."

Wednesday

READ **Genesis 21:1-8; Galatians 4:21-31**. DISCUSS, What does it mean to be *children of the free woman*? How has Christ set us free from slavery? Consider FASTING for a meal or longer and pray for our neighbors. PRAY, "Lord, have mercy on my neighbors, especially _____ (name them). Make Yourself known to them. Open their eyes to see You as You truly are. Enable them to repent of their sin and to trust You, Jesus."

Thursday

READ **Genesis 21:1-8; Matthew 22:23-33**. CONSIDER the amazing thing that God would identify Himself with us. How does naming Himself for those He has saved show us His affection? Make a list of ways He has blessed you. PRAY, "Jesus, You have blessed us in spite of all our disobedience. You are faithful and we are not. You know our weakness better than we know ourselves. Forgive us. Change us by Your grace to make us more like You, Jesus."

Friday

READ **Genesis 21:1-8**. How have you been learning from this passage this week? Delight in God's affection for us, His people. Thank Him for His grace. REJOICE for Christ has delighted in us to love us. PRAY for your neighbors to know this same delight that God has blessed you to know. Ask the Lord to open their eyes to His goodness and wonder.

Saturday

PREPARE today for the gathered worship service tomorrow. Do what you can today so that you will be less rushed tomorrow. READ **Genesis 21:9-34**. Come to worship tomorrow expecting to hear from God through His Word and to learn more about our God together. Pray for God's glory to be more and more manifested in the Woodstock area. Pray that He will use us to extend His grace as we celebrate it together.