

Genesis 18:6-15; 21:1-7

Abraham makes place for the Lord in his home. Two angels and the Lord.

Genesis 18:6 And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes upon the hearth. **7** And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetcht a calf tender and good, and gave it unto a young man; and he hasted to dress it. **8** And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat. **9** And they said unto him, Where is Sarah thy wife? And he said, Behold, in the tent. **10** And he said, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. **And Sarah heard it in the tent door, which was behind him.** **11** Now Abraham and Sarah were old and well stricken in age; and it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. **12 Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?** **13** And the Lord said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old? **14** Is any thing too hard for the Lord? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son. **15 Then Sarah denied, saying, I laughed not; for she was afraid. And he said, Nay; but thou didst laugh.**

Genesis 21 **And the Lord visited Sarah as he had said, and the Lord did unto Sarah as he had spoken.** **2** For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him. **3** And Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bare to him, Isaac. **4** And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac being eight days old, **as God had commanded him.** **5** And Abraham was an hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born unto him. **6** And Sarah said, **God hath made me to laugh, so that all that hear will laugh with me.** **7** And she said, Who would have said unto Abraham, that Sarah should have given children suck? for I have born him a son in his old age. **8 And the child grew, and was weaned: and Abraham made a great feast the same day that Isaac was weaned.**

Introduction

- *An uncontrollable laughter is one of the most enjoyable things to listen to.*
- *The lack of ability to laugh is one of the saddest things to watch.* Unable to laugh. Abernathy family.
- Disbelief caused a cynical type of laughter.

1. God fulfills His promise (21:1)

We have been waiting for this moment for the last 3 chapters they have been waiting 25 years. It is finally here!

a. God is the fulfiller of His promises.

- i. And the Lord (2) - emphasizing this was not something accomplished based upon the performance of Abraham.
- ii. This was not prophecy of what Abraham would do - but a promise of what God would do. (remember the story of God putting Abraham to sleep)
 1. After 25 years Abraham was all but asleep.
 2. In Hebrews 11:12 it says "he was as good dead"
 3. God fulfills the promise at His "set time" v.2

b. His promises never fail.

- i. His promises are no different than His creation.
- ii. Ill. If you have \$5 and I told you I would give you \$5 how much money do you have? If you have \$5 and God was to tell you that he would give you \$5 more how much do you have?

2. Abraham responds with obedience. v.4

a. A heart ready to obey.

- i. It was God's perfecting timing and He had prepared Abraham's heart for this day.
- ii. They had gone from belief, to disbelief, from acts of courage, to shameful acts of disbelief.
- iii. Abraham had already been tested in his family by his father (11:27-32), by his nephew Lot (chaps. 12-13), and by his wife (chap. 16).

b. Acts of obedience

- i. He names the child Isaac - laughter.
- ii. He circumcised the child on the eighth day.
- iii. He goes through the heart break of send out Ishmael (v.9-21)

3. Sarah responds with laughter.

a. A laughter brought from God.

- i. She had laughed before. (8:12)
 1. It was a cynical laugh of unbelief.
 2. It was a laugh she was ashamed of in 18:15 (compare to 21:6)
 3. Without grace there is still laughter -
 - a. Cynical laughter - that says I am in a impossible situation and there is no way out.
 - b. Nervous - laughter says I am not sure I can do this I am scared and burns off expendable energy. (Burkina Bay men)

ii. God was transforming her laugh.

1. What a loving God. Instead of pouring down fire from heaven on her for laughing at Him he fulfills a promise on her behalf.
2. He restores the laughter to its original purpose.

b. A laughter filled with wonder

- i. It is believe that changes the sound of this laughter.
 1. Isaac was as real in chapter 18 as he is in chapter 21.
 2. She needed to see with her eyes what she should have been able to see by faith.
 3. Her belief causes a sense of wonder/amazement that causes laughter.

ii. We live in a world that wants to control laughter.

1. They want to tell us nothing in creation is true. They want to deny the miracles found in God's word.
2. Children are still able to sense wonder but we become desensitized.
 - a. Take a 4 year old to a zoo and take a 14 year old to the zoo.
 - b. Tell our children a Bible story and I tell you a Bible story.
3. They want to sale us on their form of wonder packaged in art, movies, and books. It is fleeting.
4. There is 3 elements that "they" say are needed in a good story to create wonder (learned in research for documentary)
 - a. There is a force, hero, idea that has power that is greater then the problems in the story.
 - b. There is an impossible situation where the people in the story are hopeless
 - c. There is a heroic key that unlocks the first element of "the great force" and bring it into the "impossible circumstances".

iii. There is no wonder in why Sarah would be filled with wonder.

1. There was a God that was greater then all the circumstances of barrenness going on in her life.
2. She had tried all that she could to solve her problem. She was without resources to do it. In her on might she was hopeless.
3. The son of Promise born into her life from the grace of God!

4. This is where God "brings us laughter"!

- a. **Weak but easy application:** If we believe strong enough for great impossible things in our lives then God will give them to us. We should laugh knowing we will get these things.
 - i. Illogical because of Servant who had a better prayer life, did not require faith (being He was God), was more obedient (even unto death) lived a painful life, had no place to lay His head, and died the death of a criminal.
 - ii. Bad hermeneutics: We do not see this happening a result of Sarah's great faith - but as a result of a great God and His unwavering purpose in the world.
 - iii. It is also not as good of a "punch line" as the truth.

b. Jesus is the true, eternal, Son of Promise! He has come into our lives! We have this story!!

- i. An angel came to a virgin young Jewish girl and told her she would be with child. Luke 1
- ii. She asks "how can this be possible?".
 1. If it seems impossible for Sarah to have a child with a really old man, how much more impossible for Mary to have a son with a husband at all.
 2. Sarah would have a son - Mary the Son of God!
- iii. The angel tells her "all things are possible with God".
- iv. Jesus is the true Isaac - the ultimate son of Promise. We should laugh in wonder that He overcomes all of the impossibilities.
- v. Because of His perfect birth, life, and death we know can be BORN AGAIN and receive NEW LIFE!!

c. This should created UNSPEAKABLE & SPEAKABLE WONDER

- i. We were people without hope, we all have fallen short of the glory of God, the good works we were doing were as filthy rags, we were the enemies of God.
- ii. There is a loving God whose hand was not short, who loved us and desired for us to be restored to our original state of fellowship with Him.
- iii. There is a Hero - who bridges these 2 elements upon the cross of Christ. BE FILLED WITH WONDER - Between laughters tell people about it.
- iv. **What is impossible?** We should live forever, that you and are are part of the family of God despite the rebellious way we have lived.

5. Some things to think about and laugh about this week as Sarah did!

a. Our new life in Christ.

- i. Sarah had a new self image - she is a source of wonder to herself. (v.7) Who would have thought that I would... yet I am! Such humility.
- ii. We are new creatures in Christ. It is amazing.
- iii. Who would have thought a poor, dumb, rebellious redneck from KY would be part of the Royal Family.

b. Our acceptance in Christ

- i. Others will laugh at us. (v.6) She laughs about this. When people find us crazy and can't believe this - we don't need peoples approval.
- ii. We have been accepted by God.
- iii. He did not judge our performance but to say they need Me and I will die for them!

c. The sins of our past have been reconciled.

- i. Sarah is reconciled to her past. Greatest failure in her life when she laughs at God - cynical.
- ii. She names her son Laughter. This shows what God has done to our past. We have accepted despite failures.
- iii. The memory of our failures just magnifies how good God is to us it does not cause who to walk around in perpetual guilt.

d. The worlds standards are distorted.

- i. Why did God choose Sarah instead of a younger person. Why is the line through Rachel and not Leah. Why a poor young girl and not a queen.
- ii. We see that God's standard is so much different then God. **Isaiah 54:1 - Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord.**
- iii. **We should be filled with wonder/laughter that He would want to use our lives this week.**