

ALSO SARA

Sunday Morning: February 3, 2002

Text: Hebrews 11:9-11 "By faith he (Abraham) sojourned in the land of promise, as *in* a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same [the] promise [singular promise]: 10. For he looked for a city (a heavenly city) which hath foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God. 11. **Through faith also Sara** herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because **she judged him faithful** who had promised."

I like the word *also*. The word *also* identifies Sara with Abraham. Abraham was a man of faith so was Sara. That is the way it ought to be. The husband should take the leadership in the home in such a way that his wife will follow along in his steps. Sara, also, was a woman of faith.

When we study Abraham and Sara, our thoughts turn to the book of Genesis. What I want to share this morning is that their lifestyle was not perfect. I am sharing this aspect of Abraham and Sarah so that you will be encouraged to continue in the faith. Abraham and Sarah did not always do the right things when it came to pleasing God. Even though they had problems from time to time, God did reckon to them faith and righteousness.

SOJOURNED INTO EGYPT

Genesis 12:8-10 "And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, *having* Bethel on the west, and Hai on the east: and there he builded an altar unto the LORD, and **called** upon the name of the LORD (no answer). 9. And Abram **journeyed, going on** still toward the **south**. 10. And there was a famine in the land: and Abram went down into Egypt to **sojourn (out of the land)** there; for the famine *was* grievous in the land."

Abraham pitched his tent West of Bethel and East of Hai. Bethel means the "house of God" and Hai means "ruin or heap." Abraham builds an altar and there was not word from God. You know that there are times that we are walking with the Lord and there is no communications from God. What are we to do when this happens? We need to continue doing the last thing the Lord told us to do until we hear from him again. One thing that we need to know is that when we read the scriptures God does not always speak to through them. Abraham did not have the scriptures, so God communicated with him and others in dreams, visions, direct communications.

Abraham continued his journey toward the south and a famine encouraged him to sojourn in the land of Egypt. Had God called Abraham to sojourn in the land of Egypt. No. Here we find Abraham not doing what God wanted him to do. Did God forsake or abandon Abraham? Of course not. He promised Abraham some land and that he would be a father of nations and Abraham knew where he was to sojourn, Canaan.

NOT SURE HE WOULD LIVE

Genesis 12:13 "Say, I pray thee, thou *art* my sister: that it may be well with me for thy sake; and my soul shall live because of thee."

Here in Genesis 12 while they were out of the land of promise, Abraham and Sarah were working out a plan to save Abraham from being killed. He told Sarah to tell Pharaoh that you are my sister. Here we find Abraham doubting God's promise and he is not sure that God was going to take care of him. Does that sound like an act of faith to you? Not really. He was scheming you are not living by faith. When you are conniving you are not trusting God and trusting God is what living by faith is.

PROMISE CONFIRMED

Genesis 15:4 "And, behold, the word of the LORD *came* unto him, saying, **This (Abraham's servant)** shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth **out of thine own bowels** shall be thine **heir**."

In Genesis 13:14 "And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward:" we see that Lord began again to communicate with Abraham. God again confirms his promise in Genesis 13:16 "And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, *then* shall thy seed also be numbered." For this to come to pass Abraham had to remain alive. God has not made any mention of Sarah in the promises God was giving Abraham. Here in Genesis 15:4 God tells Abraham that his heir would come from his bowels and not some custom of the land about a servant becoming an heir because he was born in his masters house. Again, Sarah is not mentioned. What this does is leave the door open for them to start conniving again.

WE WILL HELP GOD OUT

Genesis 16:4-5 "And **he (Abraham)** went in unto Hagar, and she conceived: and when she saw that **she had conceived**, her mistress was despised in her eyes. 5. And Sarai said unto Abram, **My wrong be upon thee**: I have given my maid into thy bosom; and when she saw that she had conceived, **I was despised in her eyes**: the LORD judge between me and thee."

The text does not say it, but Abraham must have reasoned that if his heir was to come from his own bowels it would not make any difference who the mother was so he took Sarah's advice and took Hagar to wife. When Hagar conceived she must have started looking down on Sarah because she could do something that her mistress could not do. The scheme worked too well, and Sarah got mad and turned on Abraham. She exclaims, "My wrong be upon thee." It is your fault that this worked.

When you start putting feet to your prayers your troubles begin. The scheme of Sarah produced an Ishmaelite. Have the Ishmaelites been a blessing to the nation of Israel? No. Sarah shifted the blame to Abraham as Adam did to Eve and Eve did to Satan. It is the same old blame game. Abraham was in trouble again and knew it, but God was faithful to confirmed the promise to him.

PROMISE CONFIRMED

Genesis 17:16-17 "And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be *a mother* of nations; kings of people shall be of her. 17. Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall *a child* be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear?"

When God confirmed the promise to Abraham he included Sarah this time. Abraham's heir was going to come through Sarah and not Hagar or one born in his house.

God reconfirms his promise to Abraham that he would have an heir.

I do not know why God did not call Abraham's hand because he laughed. He did call Sarah's hand when she laughed about God promising a child through her. Abraham could not believe that a man of his age could bear children and especially with a woman that was long past child bearing age.

The Lord was firm in his promise of a child to them within a year because the Lord reaffirms the promise again chapter 18. God is gracious in telling Abraham and Sarah that they will have a child and it will be soon.

PROMISE CONFIRMED AGAIN

Genesis 18:12-14 "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."

One thing that we often forget is that nothing is too hard for him. Another thing that we often forget is that his plans and purposes for us will come to pass "At the time appointed." We are living in an age where we want things to happen now. We see current events as they happen. We do not want to wait for news or for food. Why do we have fast food restaurants? So we can have food fast and not have to wait.

When it comes to God's clock, he has set the time and it will not happen until the appointed time. The appointed time for Isaac's arrival was when it was impossible for man and Abraham was a hundred years old.

How long did Abraham have to wait for the birth of Isaac? I was trying to figure out when the Lord appeared to Abraham in the Ur of the Chaldees and the scripture does not tell specifically. One author speculated that Abraham was 50 when he was called. The reason is that specific ages mentioned in Abraham's life are multiples of 25 that he was 50 when he received the first call. Abraham was 75 when he went into the land of Canaan. He was 100 years old when Isaac was born. He was 150 years old when he married Keturah and 175 years old when he died. One thing for sure is that he had to wait over 25 years for the promise to begin to be fulfilled.

How many of us would become a little antsy if we had to wait a whole year for something to come to pass much less 25 years. I think I would. Did Abraham and Sarah? Yes. That is the reason that Ishmael was born.

There are times when we lean toward this one or a certain group to make things happen. I have been guilty of that.

When Sarah laughed at what the Lord said about a child being conceived and born to Abraham and Sarah, she was saying, "You must be joking."

Does this sound like faith to you? No.

STILL NOT SURE

Genesis 20:1-2 "And Abraham **journeyed** from thence toward the **south country**, and dwelled between Kadesh and Shur, and sojourned in Gerar. 2. And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, **She is my sister**: and Abimelech king of Gerar sent, and took Sarah."

Abraham still can not keep from traveling south. Abraham did not learn that south was not a good direction to travel. He went that way once and got himself in trouble. I guess he did know he did not have a good reputation having been embarrassed in Egypt so he did not go that far.

Even though God had confirmed his promise to Abraham, he was still not sure that God would come through for him. This was Abraham's scheme to call Sarah his sister. God did not let that scheme work and protected Sarah from the error of Abraham.

What happened in Gerar was not a good testimony that Abraham was living by faith.

AT THE SET TIME

Genesis 21:1-2 "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."

The event in Genesis 21:1-2 happened to Abraham and Sarah, but these verses was written for us to read and be encouraged to believe that what he had said and what he had spoken came to pass at the set time. We need to know that and live in the light of these verses.

YOU CAN COUNT ON IT

Numbers 23:19 "God *is* not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and **shall he not do *it*?** or hath he **spoken**, and **shall he not make it good?**"

We find the same encouragement in Numbers 23:19. We should have this verse memorized. We need to remind ourselves that what God has said he will do. What he has spoken will come to pass. God is not one who will lie nor will he change his mind when it comes to his plans and purposes. When God has a plan or a thought he doesn't change because he has a better thought. God's first thought and purpose is always the best thought and purpose. There is no need to change. When God was sorry that he made man on the earth in Genesis 6:6, he did not change his mind but still made man and allowed the destruction of all but 8 souls to bring to pass his purpose in eternity.

All of these questions in verse 19 have positive answers. Yes he will do the right thing.

FAITH RECKONED

Romans 4:19-22 "And being **not weak in faith**, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb: **20.** He **staggered not** at **the promise** of God through unbelief; but **was strong in faith**, giving glory to God; **21.** And being **fully persuaded** that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. **22.** And therefore **it (faith)** was **imputed [reckoned]** to him for righteousness."

What we just got through reading in Romans 4 and what we have been reading in Genesis do not match. When I think about our own lives and the life of Abraham, some things do not add up and are not consistent with a life of faith. I stopped reading at verse 21 for a purpose. I want to emphasize verse 22. Paul starts with *And therefore it*. What is *it* in this verse. *It* is faith. Now reading verse 22, "And therefore faith was imputed to him." The word *impute* is also translated reckoned. Abraham was given credit for living by faith by God. Not only was faith reckoned to Abraham but also righteousness. Faith had to be reckoned to Abraham because faith had not been revealed. Galatians 3:23 "But before **faith** came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the **faith** which should afterwards be **revealed**."

Abraham was not always faithful and consistent in his walks with the Lord, but gave him credit for living by faith. Our lives are not always faithful and consistent either, yet God is going to give us credit for living by faith. Notice what it says in Romans 4:23-24 "Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; **24.** But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, **if we believe [present active participle]** on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead;" It was not written for Abraham alone that God reckoned faith and righteousness to him, but for us also who will received the same blessing. Notice also that this reckoning is to those who continue to believe in the present tense. You can stop believing in the present tense and then what happens to the reckoning? It will not be there.

It is interesting and significant that God does not impute or reckon anyone to be just. To be just takes obedience to the moral law and his commandments.

BE PATIENT

Hebrews 10:35-36 "Cast not away therefore your **confidence**, which hath great recompense of **reward**. **36.** For ye have need of **patience [υπομενη, endurance]**, that,

after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive **the promise.**"

We are encouraged in Hebrews 10 to be patient. Notice that the promise will be received after we have done the will of God. Today is not the day to receive the promise because it is not the set time for the reward of our inheritance. The word *promise* from the Greek means to endure. Endurance means you are in the race to the end. Waiting upon God. Don't cast away your confidence because you will be recompensed a great reward. Our confidence is in the fact that what he has said he will do and what he has spoken he will perform. When we endure we are waiting for his set time. The Greek word is a compound word meaning to *abide* plus *under*. To abide under is to endure the inconvenience of waiting upon God. Is it inconvenient to wait upon God. Sometimes it is. There are times as when Peter began to sink in the sea that there is no waiting upon God. God knows the set time.

ABRAHAM ENDURED WITH DILIGENCE

Hebrews 6:11-15 "And we desire that every one of you do show the same **diligence** to the full **assurance** of **hope** unto **the end**: 12. That ye be **not slothful**, but **followers** of **them** [Hebrews 11] who through **faith** and **patience** [μακροθυμια, longsuffering] inherit the promises. 13. For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, 14. Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. 15. And so, after **he** (Abraham) had **patiently endured** [μακροθυμew, aorist, (the aorist tense here means that he endured to the end)], **he obtained the promise.**"

These verses in Hebrews 6 tells us that Abraham patiently endured. Notice that he is encouraging them to show the same diligence as those in the Old Testament. This diligence is to be with the full assurance of the hope until the end of the individual's race.

Be not slothful, but followers of them. To whom does the word *them* refer to? I believe it is the cloud of witnesses found in Hebrews 11. They inherited the promises through faith and diligence with longsuffering. The word patience carries the thought of having a zeal or being passionate for a long time concerning the hope of the promises.

Some of the promises given to the fathers was that through them would come the seed, the Messiah. That they would become a mighty nation, verse 14 and Genesis 12:2-3. That Abraham's seed would have an earthly inheritance.

Verse 15 tells us that the promise was obtained by Abraham by enduring. This promise is a special promise because it is singular in number and with the definite article. This promise was that through Isaac that there would be an heavenly seed with an heavenly inheritance. That promise is defined in the following verse.

THE PROMISE

1 John 2:25 "And **this is the promise** that he hath promised us, *even eternal* [αιωνιος, (kingdom) age] **life** (of honor and glory)."

In this verse the word *promise* has the definite article *the* before it and it is singular in number. This a specific promise and it is defined as age-lasting life. The word αιωνιος has been missed translated eternal, everlasting, world, and ever. To begin with there is no Greek word for eternity. The way the Greeks say eternity is by using αιωνιος in the plural and saying *from the ages unto the ages*. This singular age is the kingdom age and this promise pertains to a life of honor and glory in the kingdom age as kings and lords under the Lord Jesus Christ.

The passage in Hebrews 6 is telling us the Abraham obtained this inheritance and promise.

THE LORD WILL WAIT

Isaiah 30:18 "And therefore will the LORD wait, that he may be **gracious** unto you, and therefore **will he be exalted**, that he may have **mercy** upon you: for the LORD *is* a God of judgment: **blessed** are all they that **wait** for **him**."

This verse will tell us what we can expect from the Lord. He is a God of judgment or choices and we see that the Lord is in the habit of waiting.

First of all, the Lord will wait so that he can be *gracious* unto you. What does it mean for the Lord to be gracious unto us? It means that he will wait so long that it will take the grace of God to endure until His the set time. The grace of God is the power of Christ. When we use his strength and power to sustain ourselves until the set time, then He is exalted.

He want to be exalted. If he did not wait to respond to us would he be exalted. No. We would be rubbing that genie every minute. If the Lord did not wait, we would be in charge and that won't happen. He is in charge of us and he wants to be exalted therefore he is not going to be at our beckon call unless we are sinking fast and need immediate attention like Peter when he was going under after walking on water.

After he has been exalted then he will have mercy upon us. When he has mercy on us he supplies our need according to his will and not ours. There were those who were blind and sick that he had mercy on and healed them. He had compassion on those who were hungry.

When he responds in mercy to us we may not agree with his judgment for us. We need to learn to accept his judgments for us. I am reminded of Job 40:8 "Wilt thou also disannul my judgment? wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous?" When we condemn the Lord we put our selves above him thinking that we have a better plan. Job had no comment, he was speechless. We do not want to alter God's judgments for us. When we do we are saying that his ways are not righteous and his works are not holy. Psalms 145:17 "The LORD *is* righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works."

When are we blessed? When He waits to answer our prayers. We are blessed when we have grace and exalt him. We are blessed when he has mercy upon us according to his judgment.

HE WILL BEAR LONG

Luke 18:1, 7-8 "And he spake a parable unto them *to this end*, that men ought **always to pray**, and **not to faint**:. .

When Jesus teaches in parables he is teaching doctrine. This is sound doctrine about prayer. If you don't get anything out of your prayer life other than not fainting you have been blessed. If all that you get of praying is not quitting, is that a plus? Absolutely.

AT THE SET TIME

7. And **shall not God avenge** his own elect, which **cry day** and **night** unto him, though he **bear long** [μακροθυμew, present active] with them? 8. I tell you that he will avenge them **speedily**. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?"

The question is, will God intervene? Yes. The unjust judge did not want to avenge the widow, but God wants to. God is not unjust, but he will wait.

He will avenge those who cry during the day light hours. When it doesn't hurt bad enough or the stress is not over bearing that we only pray during the day. It may be that the Lord is going to wait so long to respond to our need that we not only pray during the day light hours, we pray into the night. Bearing long is in the present tense means that he waits and then waits some more. One thing that we can rest in is that he will respond speedily at the set time. He will avenge us when he gets the maximum glory and we received the maximum benefit.

The Lord ask if he would find this kind of faith when he returns. If I am alive when he returns, I hope so. I want to have that kind of faith to wait on him to have mercy on me and my need.

IT IS GOOD TO WAIT

Lamentations 3:25-26 "The **LORD** is good unto them that **wait** for him, to the soul *that* seeketh him. 26. *It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD.*"

Do you want the Lord to be good to you? Wait on Him. Seek Him while you are waiting so you can have His grace, peace, and strength. Hope for the deliverance of the Lord and do it quietly. When we are complain we are saying we are sure that the Lord is righteous in all his ways and holy in all his works.

BE OF GOOD COURAGE

Psalms 27:14 "Wait on the **LORD**: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: **wait**, I say, **on** the **LORD**."

When you are waiting on the Lord, be of good courage. To be of good courage does not mean that you throw a pity party. If the Lord is waiting you are know that he is doing something right. If we are of good courage we can count on his strength. We need our hearts strengthen because a weak heart will cause us to faint.

Now, just in case you did not hear the Lord the first time, He says it again, "wait, I say, on the Lord." It does not take long to read this verse, but we may for get to wait on the Lord from the first time he says it to the second time he says it. We need to be reminded.

WAIT AND BE EXALTED

Psalms 37:34 "Wait on the **LORD**, and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land:"

This verse assures us that if we wait on the Lord we will be exalted. When will we be exalted? When we receive our inheritance. Many in Israel who have waited on the Lord will have a place of exaltation in the land, but I want to be exalted in the heavenly kingdom of our Lord.

THE LORD IS COMING

James 5:7-8 "Be patient therefore, brethren, **unto** the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman **waiteth** for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath **long patience** for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. 8. **Be** ye also **patient**; stablish your hearts: **for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh**."

Did you know that waiting on the Lord can cause us to vacillate and become impatient in waiting upon the Lord. If we become impatient and begin to drift we will not be ready when the time comes for the harvest. We need to establish our hearts so that we will be watching an praying.

The Lord uses the farmer to help us to relate to waiting on the Lord. When the farmer complains the seed all he can do is wait. Going out to the field every day and walking up and down the rows will not make the harvest come in any faster. He just has to wait a long time for it even to rain. The farmer has done this time and time again and knows that he must wait. We need to be patient, longsuffering, and the only way that we can do this is to stablish our hearts. The Lord is coming and you know what he has with him? Our reward for living by faith.

HIS REWARD IS WITH HIM

Revelation 22:12 "And, behold, I come quickly; and my **reward** is **with** me, to give every man **according as his work shall be**."

As we have considered Abraham and Sara we have seen that they did not live a perfect life. They failed and then failed again doing the same thing more than once. They were not the only

ones in Hebrews 11 that failed. One thing we know is that the Lord gave them credit for living by faith. I believe he was able to do that because they continued faithful in their walk with the Lord when the Lord brought them back from going astray.

May the Lord help us to be faithful to him even though we may fail. Confession and repentance is need to be cleansed from all unrighteousness and he will be faithful to restore us back into fellowship again.