



An Old Woman's Laughter
Genesis 18:1-15; 21:1-7

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What will we learn?

- ❖ God is remarkably patient with our doubts and unfaithfulness.
- ❖ The grace of God is surprising and unwarranted.
- ❖ The grace of God turns our bitterness and disappointment into joy.
- ❖ Nothing is impossible for God.

Abraham's Journey

From Ur, to Haran, to Canaan, to Egypt



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From Ur, to Haran, to Canaan, to Egypt



Paddan Aram

HARAN

NINEVEH

EUPHRATES RIVER

DAMASCUS

TIGRUS RIVER

BABYLON

Sumer

UR

GREAT SEA (The Mediterranean)

Canaan

Arabian Desert

SALT SEA

Egypt

Sinai

NILE RIVER

MELBOURNE
COMMUNITY
CHURCH
REFLECTING CHRIST'S LOVE

God to Abraham: “I will ...”

- ❖ “I will make you into a great nation.”
- ❖ “I will bless you.”
- ❖ “I will make your name great.”
- ❖ “I will bless those who bless you.”
- ❖ I will give you all the land that you see
- ❖ “I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth”

How old was Abraham?

- ❖ 75 when he left Haran (Genesis 12)
- ❖ 86 when Ishmael was born (Genesis 16)
- ❖ 100 when Isaac was born (Genesis 21)

Hebrews 13:1-2

Keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters. Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.

Genesis 18:1-2

The LORD appeared to Abraham near the great trees of Mamre while he was sitting at the entrance to his tent in the heat of the day. Abraham looked up and saw three men standing nearby. When he saw them, he hurried from the entrance of his tent to meet them and bowed low to the ground.

Genesis 18:3-5

He said, "If I have found favor in your eyes, my lord, do not pass your servant by. Let a little water be brought, and then you may all wash your feet and rest under this tree. Let me get you something to eat, so you can be refreshed and then go on your way — now that you have come to your servant."

Genesis 18:5-6

**“Very well,” they answered, “do as you say.”
So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah.
“Quick,” he said, “get three seahs of the
finest flour and knead it and
bake some bread.”**

Genesis 18:7-8

Then he ran to the herd and selected a choice, tender calf and gave it to a servant, who hurried to prepare it. He then brought some curds and milk and the calf that had been prepared, and set these before them. While they ate, he stood near them under a tree.

Genesis 18:9-10

“Where is your wife Sarah?” they asked him.

“There, in the tent,” he said. Then one of them said, “I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife will have a son.”

Genesis 18:10-12

Now Sarah was listening at the entrance to the tent, which was behind him. Abraham and Sarah were already very old, and Sarah was past the age of childbearing. So Sarah laughed to herself as she thought, "After I am worn out and my lord is old, will I now have this pleasure?"

Genesis 18:13-14

Then the Lord said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh and say, ‘Will I really have a child, now that I am old?’ Is anything too hard for the LORD? I will return to you at the appointed time next year, and Sarah will have a son.”

Genesis 18:15

Sarah was afraid, so she lied and said,
“I did not laugh.” But he said,
“Yes, you did laugh.”

Walter Brueggemann:

“Abraham, and especially Sarah, are not offered here as models of faith but as models of disbelief. For them, the powerful promise of God outdistances their ability to receive it.”

Timeline:

- ❖ God promised.
- ❖ Sarah laughed.
- ❖ God delivered.

Genesis 20:1-2

Now Abraham moved on from there into the region of the Negev and lived between Kadesh and Shur. For a while he stayed in Gerar, and there Abraham said of his wife Sarah, "She is my sister." Then Abimelek king of Gerar sent for Sarah and took her.

Genesis 20:3

But God came to Abimelek in a dream one night and said to him, “You are as good as dead because of the woman you have taken; she is a married woman.”

Genesis 20:4-5

Now Abimelek had not gone near her, so he said, “Lord, will you destroy an innocent nation? Did he not say to me, ‘She is my sister,’ and didn’t she also say, ‘He is my brother’? I have done this with a clear conscience and clean hands.”

Genesis 20:6

Then God said to him in the dream, “Yes, I know you did this with a clear conscience, and so I have kept you from sinning against me. That is why I did not let you touch her.”

Genesis 20:7

“Now return the man’s wife, for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you and you will live. But if you do not return her, you may be sure that you and all who belong to you will die.”

Genesis 20:8-9

Early the next morning Abimelek summoned all his officials, and when he told them all that had happened, they were very much afraid. Then Abimelek called Abraham in and said, “What have you done to us?”

Genesis 20:9-10

“How have I wronged you that you have brought such great guilt upon me and my kingdom? You have done things to me that should never be done.” And Abimelek asked Abraham, “What was your reason for doing this?”

Genesis 20:11-12

Abraham replied, "I said to myself, 'There is surely no fear of God in this place, and they will kill me because of my wife.' Besides, she really is my sister, the daughter of my father though not of my mother; and she became my wife."

Genesis 20:13

“And when God had me wander from my father’s household, I said to her, ‘This is how you can show your love to me: Everywhere we go, say of me, “He is my brother.”””

Genesis 20:14-15

Then Abimelek brought sheep and cattle and male and female slaves and gave them to Abraham, and he returned Sarah his wife to him. And Abimelek said, "My land is before you; live wherever you like."

Genesis 20:16

To Sarah he said, “I am giving your brother a thousand shekels of silver. This is to cover the offense against you before all who are with you; you are completely vindicated.”

Genesis 20:17-18

Then Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelek, his wife and his female slaves so they could have children again, for the Lord had kept all the women in Abimelek's household from conceiving because of Abraham's wife Sarah.

Frederick Buechner:

“Martin Luther said once, ‘If I were God, I’d kick the world to pieces.’ But Martin Luther wasn’t God. God is God, and God has never kicked the world to pieces.”

Frederick Buechner:

“He keeps re-entering the world. He keeps offering himself to the world by grace, keeps somehow blessing the world, making possible a kind of life which we all, in our deepest being, hunger for.”

Hebrews 11:11-12

And by faith even Sarah, who was past child-bearing age, was enabled to bear children because she considered him faithful who had made the promise. And so from this one man, and he as good as dead, came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore.

Walter Brueggemann:

“Abraham and Sarah have by this time become accustomed to their barrenness. They are resigned to their closed future. They have accepted that hopelessness as ‘normal.’ The gospel promise does not meet them in receptive hopefulness but in resistant hopelessness.”

Genesis 21:1-2

Now the LORD was gracious to Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did for Sarah what he had promised. Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the very time God had promised him.

The grace of God:

- ❖ It is undeserved.
- ❖ It is unexpected.



Genesis 21:3-5

Abraham gave the name Isaac to the son Sarah bore him. When his son Isaac was eight days old, Abraham circumcised him, as God commanded him. Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him.

Genesis 21:6-7

Sarah said, "God has brought me laughter, and everyone who hears about this will laugh with me." And she added, "Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age."

Psalm 126:1-2

When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion,
we were like those who dreamed.
Our mouths were filled with laughter,
our tongues with songs of joy.
Then it was said among the nations,
“The LORD has done great things for them.”

Luke 6:21

[Jesus]:

“Blessed are you who hunger now,
for you will be satisfied.

Blessed are you who weep now,
for you will laugh.”

John 16:20

[Jesus]: “Very truly I tell you, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy.”

Romans 4:18-19

Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, “So shall your offspring be.” Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead — since he was about a hundred years old — and that Sarah’s womb was also dead.

Romans 4:20-21

Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised.

Joshua 21:43-44

So the Lord gave Israel all the land he had sworn to give their ancestors, and they took possession of it and settled there. The LORD gave them rest on every side, just as he had sworn to their ancestors

Joshua 21:44-45

Not one of their enemies withstood them;
the LORD gave all their enemies into
their hands. Not one of all the LORD's
good promises to Israel failed;
every one was fulfilled.

Luke 1:36-37

[The angel Gabriel]: “Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. For no word from God will ever fail.”

Mark 10:27

Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God.”

What have we learned?

- ❖ God is remarkably patient with our doubts and unfaithfulness.
- ❖ The grace of God is surprising and unwarranted.
- ❖ The grace of God turns our bitterness and disappointment into joy.
- ❖ Nothing is impossible for God.



Are you being called?

- ❖ To receive Christ
- ❖ To become a member of Melbourne Community Church
- ❖ To pray / to receive prayer
- ❖ To affirm or reaffirm a commitment
- ❖ To receive the LORD's Supper