

¹⁰ Then the LORD said, "I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife will have a son."

Now Sarah was listening at the entrance to the tent, which was behind him. ¹¹ Abraham and Sarah were already old and well advanced in years, and Sarah was past the age of childbearing.

¹² So Sarah laughed to herself as she thought, "After I am worn out and my master is old, will I now have this pleasure?"

Remember: Nothing is too hard for God

¹³ Then the Lord said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Will I really have a child now that I am old?'" ¹⁴ Is anything too hard for the Lord? I will return to you at the appointed time next year and Sarah will have a son."

¹⁵ Sarah was afraid, so she lied and said, "I did not laugh." But he said, "Yes, you did laugh." GENESIS 18:13-15 (NIV84)

Applications

Abandonment

Obedience

Trust

How to Become a Christian

Many people believe they are Christians because they were born in a Christian culture, go to church regularly, try to do their best, or live a good life. However, the Bible teaches that these things cannot make you a Christian. You become a Christian by simply taking these two steps:

- Acknowledge that you (along with all people) have sinned and fallen short of God's standards. ROMANS 3:23
- Personally believe that Jesus Christ, who was God in human flesh, died for your sins on the cross and rose again. 1 CORINTHIANS 15:3, 4

You may express your belief through prayer, asking Jesus to come into your life, and receiving Him as God's gift to you.

JOHN 1:12, ROMANS 6:23, REVELATION 3:20

"For it is by grace you have been saved through faith...it is the gift of God; not by works, so that no one can boast." EPHESIANS 2:8, 9 (NIV)

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Sermon Notes

March 18, 2012
The Chapel in the Oaks

Genesis: Lessons from the Faith
and Failure of Our Spiritual Leaders

Faith in the Face of the Impossible

GENESIS 17:15-18:15

As we walk with God and enjoy his blessings we must abandon our fleshly responses to life, be consistently and completely obedient and believe that there is nothing too hard or impossible for Him!

Abraham's walk with God: Seven tests

1. Called away from home GENESIS 12:1-3
2. Not being distracted in Egypt GENESIS 12:10-20
3. Where to settle with family (Lot) GENESIS 13:1-8
(*didn't forget but was generous to Lot*)
4. Power associated with defeating Kings of the East
GENESIS 14:1-16
5. Delayed the giving of son GENESIS 16-18:21
(*Ishmael born 16*)
6. Destruction of Sodom GENESIS 18:22-19:29
7. The offering of Isaac GENESIS 22

God calls us to _____ our identity and desires, so that we can embrace His promises.

Abandonment of identity and expectation

¹⁵ God also said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you are no longer to call her Sarai; her name will be Sarah. ¹⁶ I will bless her and will surely give you a son by her. I will bless her so that she will be the mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her." GENESIS 17:15-16 (NIV84)

- Changing Identity

- Changing Perspectives

Astonishment

Abraham fell facedown; he laughed and said to himself, “Will a son be born to a man a hundred years old? Will Sarah bear a child at the age of ninety?”
GENESIS 17:17

Abandonment of Desire

¹⁸ And Abraham said to God, “If only Ishmael might live under your blessing!”

¹⁹ Then God said, “Yes, but your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him.

²⁰ And as for Ishmael, I have heard you: I will surely bless him; I will make him fruitful and will greatly increase his numbers. He will be the father of twelve rulers, and I will make him into a great nation. ²¹ But my covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you by this time next year.” ²² When he had finished speaking with Abraham, God went up from him.
GENESIS 17:18-22 (NIV84)

∴ For it is we who are the circumcision, we who worship by ∴
 ∴ the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus, and who put no ∴
 ∴ confidence in the flesh. PHILIPPIANS 3:3 (NIV84) ∴

Embracing God’s promises requires radical _____.

²³ On that very day Abraham took his son Ishmael and all those born in his household or bought with his money, every male in his household, and circumcised them, as God told him. ²⁴ Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised, ²⁵ and his son Ishmael was thirteen; ²⁶ Abraham and his son Ishmael were both circumcised on that same day. ²⁷ And every male in Abraham’s household, including those born in his household or bought from a foreigner, was circumcised with him. GENESIS 17:23-27 (NIV84)

Clarification: Circumcision and Faith

∴ ⁹ Is this blessing then only for the circumcised, or also for ∴
 ∴ the uncircumcised? For we say that faith was counted to ∴
 ∴ Abraham as righteousness. ¹⁰ How then was it counted to ∴

∴ him? Was it before or after he had been circumcised? It was ∴
 ∴ not after, but before he was circumcised. ¹¹ He received ∴
 ∴ the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that ∴
 ∴ he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. The pur- ∴
 ∴ pose was to make him the father of all who believe without ∴
 ∴ being circumcised, so that righteousness would be counted ∴
 ∴ to them as well, and to make him the father of the circum- ∴
 ∴ cised who are not merely circumcised but who also walk ∴
 ∴ in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had ∴
 ∴ before he was circumcised. ROMANS 4:9-12 (ESV) ∴

We must _____ God to accomplish His promises
 when they appear _____.

Intimate fellowship with God inspires confidence in His promise

¹ 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. ² 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.

³ He said, “If I have found favor in your eyes, my lord, do not pass your servant by. ⁴ Let a little water be brought, and then you may all wash your feet and rest under this tree. ⁵ 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.”

“Very well,” they answered, “do as you say.”

⁶ So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah. “Quick,” he said, “get three seahs of fine flour and knead it and bake some bread.”

⁷ Then he ran to the herd and selected a choice, tender calf and gave it to a servant, who hurried to prepare it.
GENESIS 18:1-7 (NIV84)

Distant fellowship brings doubt

⁸ 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.

⁹ “Where is your wife Sarah?” they asked him.

“There, in the tent,” he said.