

Abraham and Sarah's Laughter

(Genesis 17:15-18:15)

Yearly Theme: *"Patience is..."*

Series Title: *"Divine Patience (Part 1)"*

January 30th, 2022

Something to think about:

Have you ever had your faith tested? Has your belief in something ever wavered? As we close out Part 1 of our series on *Divine Patience* this morning, we will be exploring Abraham and Sarah's unbelief.

GOD had initially called Abraham from the land of Ur, with the promise that he would become the father of a nation of descendants. Though he was in his 70s at the time, GOD would not fulfill His promise to Abraham and Sarah until they were much older (with both of them near 100-years-old). Throughout those three decades, Abraham and Sarah's patience would wear thin and their trust in GOD would waiver. Today, we take a look at one of those "wavering" times of unbelief...

Genesis 17:15-18:15 (NLT),

¹⁵ Then God said to Abraham, "Regarding Sarai, your wife—her name will no longer be Sarai. From now on her name will be Sarah. ¹⁶ And I will bless her and give you a son from her! Yes, I will bless her richly, and she will become the mother of many nations. Kings of nations will be among her descendants."

¹⁷ Then Abraham bowed down to the ground, but he laughed to himself in disbelief. "How could I become a father at the age of 100?" he thought. "And how can Sarah have a baby when she is ninety years old?" ¹⁸ So Abraham said to God, "May Ishmael live under your special blessing!" ...

... ⁹ "Where is Sarah, your wife?" the visitors asked. "She's inside the tent," Abraham replied.

¹⁰ Then one of them said, "I will return to you about this time next year, and your wife, Sarah, will have a son!"

Sarah was listening to this conversation from the tent. ¹¹ Abraham and Sarah were both very old by this time, and Sarah was long past the age of having children. ¹² So she laughed silently to herself and said, "How could a worn-out woman like me enjoy such pleasure, especially when my master—my husband—is also so old?"

¹³ Then the LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh? Why did she say, 'Can an old woman like me have a baby?' ¹⁴ Is anything too hard for the LORD? I will return about this time next year, and Sarah will have a son."

¹⁵ Sarah was afraid, so she denied it, saying, "I didn't laugh." But the LORD said, "No, you did laugh."

Here's the takeaway this morning:

Key Point: *"GOD's willingness to endure our disbelief proves His patience toward us."*

As we break down this passage today, it's important to understand GOD's patience with us in the midst of doubt. In Abraham and Sarah's case doubt led to a couple different responses...

- **Doubt leads to the laughter of unbelief.**

Genesis 17:17-18, 10b-12 (NLT), ¹⁷ Then Abraham bowed down to the ground, but he laughed to himself in disbelief. "How could I become a father at the age of 100?" he thought. "And how can Sarah have a baby when she is ninety years old?" ¹⁸ So Abraham said to God, "May Ishmael live under your special blessing!" ...

... ^{10b} Sarah was listening to this conversation from the tent. ¹¹ Abraham and Sarah were both very old by this time, and Sarah was long past the age of having children. ¹² So she laughed silently to herself and said, "How could a worn-out woman like me enjoy such pleasure, especially when my master—my husband—is also so old?"

- **Doubt in GOD's promises leads to rash decision making when we should wait.**

Genesis 16:1-5 (NLT), Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had not been able to bear children for him. But she had an Egyptian servant named Hagar. ² So Sarai said to Abram, "The LORD has prevented me from having children. Go and sleep with my servant. Perhaps I can have children through her." And Abram agreed with Sarai's proposal. ³ So Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian servant and gave her to Abram as a wife. (This happened ten years after Abram had settled in the land of Canaan.)

⁴ So Abram had sexual relations with Hagar, and she became pregnant. But when Hagar knew she was pregnant, she began to treat her mistress, Sarai, with contempt. ⁵ Then Sarai said to Abram, "This is all your fault! I put my servant into your arms, but now that she's pregnant she treats me with contempt. The LORD will show who's wrong—you or me!"

Something to take home:

Sarah would laugh one more time, but this time her laughter of doubt would be turned into laughter of joy. GOD would fulfill his promise to Abraham and Sarah. She would become pregnant in her old age, she would give birth to a son, and that son's name would be Isaac (which means "laughter").

Genesis 21:1-7 (NLT), ¹ The LORD kept his word and did for Sarah exactly what he had promised. ² She became pregnant, and she gave birth to a son for Abraham in his old age. This happened at just the time God had said it would. ³ And Abraham named their son Isaac. ⁴ Eight days after Isaac was born, Abraham circumcised him as God had commanded. ⁵ Abraham was 100 years old when Isaac was born.

⁶ And Sarah declared, "God has brought me laughter. All who hear about this will laugh with me. ⁷ Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse a baby? Yet I have given Abraham a son in his old age!"

GOD is forever patient with us, especially in the midst of our strongest doubt. Though our doubt is not pleasing to Him, GOD endures it, and blesses us often in spite of it. If you're in a season of doubt right now, and you struggle to believe GOD is able to rescue you and fulfill His promises in you and through you, lean into Him all the more. Don't let your doubt override your Childlike Faith in Him.

Key Point: *"GOD's willingness to endure our disbelief proves His patience toward us."*