

Great Faith 4: Abraham and Sarah

Faith must be embodied.

- It can't stay intellectual. It can't reside only in our minds.
- It has to touch our tongues, our hands, our eyes, our wallets, our schedules.

Faithfulness is embodied faith.

- The world doesn't need any more unfaithful faith
- God doesn't want our unfaithful faith.

Noah walked faithfully with God (Genesis 6) and by his faith saved others.

- He built an ark just like we are building an ark.
- We're called to walk faithfully with God.
- But what happens when we are unfaithful to God and people around us are unfaithful to us.

Hebrews 11 8 *By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. 9 By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. 10 For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.*

Abraham left everything in obedience to receive a promise.

- That promise wasn't just for him, it was for all who came after him.
- But more than a land, more than a city, **he wanted the earthly manifestation of God.** He wanted God.

Some of you know exactly what it is like to be like Abraham.

- You've left everything to come to Melbourne, to receive a promise.
- Remember what the promise is (**God!**) Remember who it is for (**Generations**). Don't accept the counterfeit (comfortable upgraded existence).

Hebrews 11 11 *And by faith even Sarah, who was past childbearing age, was enabled to bear children because she considered him faithful who had made the promise. 12 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.*

How did Sarah consider God faithful who made the promise of a child being born? Is she really a hero of faith?

- She told Abraham to have sex with her maid Hagar, and then got angry about it when Hagar became pregnant. **Genesis 16.**

- When God appeared to Abraham in **Genesis 18** he told Abraham Sarah would have a child.
 - Sarah overheard and laughed in disbelief. When confronted she lied.

Sarah didn't believe the promise. It's not what the text says.

- Faith isn't primarily belief.
 - If that's your definition of faith then you're missing the most important part.
 - Faith is primarily relational
 - Sarah didn't believe the promise of a child but she believed in the faithfulness of God.
 - **Don't look to the promise but look to the faithfulness of the promise giver.**

Think about Sarah's experience with faithfulness in relationships.

- Abraham had been unfaithful to her. Repeatedly.
 - **Genesis 12** - after the call, the blessing Abraham gives his wife to Pharaoh.
 - **Genesis 20** - after the sign of the covenant, after deliverance of Lot, Abraham gives his wife to Abimelech.
- But each time that Abraham pimped out his own wife for his personal safety - God was faithful to Sarah.
 - God intervened with both Pharaoh and Abimelech and made sure she was safe.
 - Sarah's experience with relationships showed her that God is faithful - even if no one else is!

Conclusion

Sarah saw a miraculous intervention of God's favour in her life.

- Even when she didn't believe. Even when she made an awful mistake. Even when she laughed and lied.
- She gave birth to a child even when she was past the age of childbirth not because she held onto the promise but because she knew God to be faithful.
- Sarah's faithfulness was trusting God's faithfulness.

We learn from Sarah that we don't have to be perfect to be faithful.

- But we do have to be relational, not transactional.

- Biblical faith needs relationship. Biblical Faith needs covenant.

I know I haven't been perfect.

- I know I've wanted to give up. Give in. Quit.
- I know I've haven't known what to do. Felt powerless. Felt rage. Felt embarrassed. Felt stupid. Felt abandoned. Felt alone.
- I know I've looked at God's hand believing in a promise more than looking at his face and trusting him.
 - I've made idols of my promises.
- I know I've failed and hurt people and laughed at the promises God has given to me.

But It's my trials that have taught me the faithfulness of God

- That he has been there for me over and over again.
- I've wanted to quit but he always encouraged me
 - Story of Julian
- It my mistakes that makes God's faithfulness more beautiful and powerful.

So now when I think of seeing this church impact this city: (the 2020 Vision)

- I know he can use us.
- I know he can provide for us.
- I know he can bring us joy.
- I know he can grow us.
- I know because he loves us.

This is the great faith I bring to the table:

- I trust in the faithfulness of Jesus.
- I know he came for me
- I know he lived for me. He died for me. He lives again for me. He rules for me.
 - I know because I experience his love for me.

Do you?

Christian?

Non Christian.