

The Lord's Message: Hall of Faith, Faith of Abraham and Sarah

Date: February 23, 2025

Where: Tilghman Methodist Church

Scripture Reference: Hebrews 11:1, 11-12

We are continuing our sermon series, Hall of Faith. Faith is defined in the Bible in **Hebrews 11:1**. We started with the Faith of Abel. Abel gave his whole heart, mind, and soul to worship God. He did not simply go through the motions as his brother Cain had done. Next, we look at the faith of Enoch, who started walking with God after the birth of his son, Methusaleh. He walked with God for 300 years and then took him to heaven, because of his deep faith in God. Next, we studied the faith of Noah. The Bible tells us that Noah walked with God while the rest of humanity were doing all kinds of evil acts. Noah did not let peer pressure prevent his faith in God. Because of his faith, God told Noah to build an ark to save humanity and creation. Noah followed God's instruction and built the ark. Sadly, only Noah and his family were saved. The rest of humanity lost their lives in the flood. Last Sunday, we looked at the faith of Abraham. God first called his father, Terah to leave the Ur of the Chaldeans and go to the land that God would show him. Terah left the Ur of the Chaldeans, but only went to Haran. He died in Haran, but Abram, his son, took his wife and his nephew, Lot, and their servants and animals and went to the land of Canaan. This is the land that God had first promised to his father, Terah. Abram did not stop but went all the way in his faith in God. This Sunday, we are going to look at the faith of Abraham and Sarah.

Let us pray.

I want to start with the faith of Sarah. Sarah is the first woman mentioned in the Hall of Faith. Just as a reminder of the definition of Faith let us reread **Hebrews 11:1**.

Last Sunday, we learned that Abram went all the way to Canaan, the promised land. In **Genesis 12:2-3**, God told Abram if he went to the promised land that God would make him into a great nation and all people would be blessed through him. We also learned in **Genesis 11:30** that Abram's wife Sarai is barren. She can have no children.

I want to take a moment and speak to those wives and husbands that want to have children, but for some reason are not able to have children. God loves you. My very good friend from high school and his wife got married two months earlier than JoAnn and me. God blessed us with two children. We did not realize the stress and discouragement that they were under because they kept trying, but for some reason were not able to have children. Finally, they were able to have children by IVF. They had twin girls. Then God blessed them with a boy. I do not know what you are going through, but God does. God loves you. God is still going to bless your marriage. It may not be with children, but it will be in other ways.

In order for God's promise to be fulfilled, the pressure is on Sarai, who is barren. Sarai started to have doubts about God's promise. I have a question to ask all of you. Can a faithful person, a believer of Jesus, still have doubts? Yes. Do doubts hinder a person's faith? No. This pressure forced Sarai to do something that was not beyond her culture but looks very bad for our day. In **Genesis 16:1-4**, Abram sleeps with Hagar, Sarai's maidservant. In **Genesis 16:11-12**, Hagar gives birth to a boy, Ishmael. Ishmael's descendants become the nation of Muslims. This occurred when Abram was 86 years old.

When Abram is 99 years old, God came to him and confirmed the promise, **Genesis 17:1-8**. God also tells Abram that Sarai will give birth to a son, **Genesis 17:15-16**. After hearing what God has said, Abraham has doubts. In **Genesis 17:17-18**, Abraham laughingly under his breath doubts God's promise. The Psalmist says in **Psalms 94:11** that God knows our thoughts.

God again tells Abraham in **Genesis 17:19-21** that Sarah will give birth to a son, and they are to name him, Isaac. God confirms that He will establish his covenant with Isaac and not Ishmael. Even though the Bible does not tell us, I am sure that Abraham told Sarah what God has said. We know that God returned later and repeated this promise to Abraham. This time Sarah was in the tent and heard what God said, **Genesis 18:9-15**. Of course, Sarah's reaction is one of unbelief.

Sometimes God tells us His plan for us, and we cannot believe it. God tried to get me to accept His plan of being a minister for Him. I kept putting it off. God then told my wife that I was going to be a minister. She told me. I scoffed at her. Then God called me from a purple bathroom. Now, I am serving God as a minister for Him. In **Matthew 19:26**, Jesus tells us what is impossible for us to complete is possible for God.

God still requires faith from us for His plan to come to completion. In **Matthew 13:58**, Jesus was in His hometown of Nazareth and He could not perform miracles, because of the people's lack of faith.

For God's plan to be fulfilled, we have to have some faith. That faith does not need to be large, just the size of a mustard seed, **Matthew 17:20**.

Abraham and Sarah had doubts about God's promise, but because they still had faith, those doubts did not hinder God from fulfilling His promise. In the end, God performed a miracle in their lives, **Hebrews 11:11-12**.

All faithful people will have doubts, but that does not stop God from fulfilling His promise for us. So, continue to read the Bible, put the Bible in practice in your life and be the Bible for others. Amen.