

By Faith We Wait ... for the Promises of God

Spilman Memorial Baptist Church, Kinston NC

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June 23, 2024

Text: Old Testament: Genesis 15:1-6
Psalm Reading: Psalms 33:12-22
New Testament: Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-16

Purpose: God is calling every one of every generation to put their faith and trust in Him. Abraham had faith in God and it was counted to him as righteousness. Today, God invites us to place our faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ at Calvary. Even now, believers in Jesus Christ are to continue to wait by faith for the promised return of Jesus. There is a crown reserved for those that wait.

I don't know about you, but I am not a very good "waiter." I am getting better at it with time. I do better at waiting when there is a good reason or purpose behind my delay.



I get a little frustrated at the slow person in front of me at the check-out counter that has to count out the exact change. I also get frustrated at someone that needs to write a check to pay the cashier. (Who uses checks today?) They usually wait until the total is given before they dig into their pocketbook to find their checkbook - and then have to dig around some more to find a pen. Usually the pen doesn't work and they need to borrow one from the

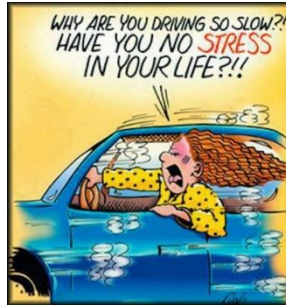
cashier. The cashier hunts for their pen and finds the last customer took it with them and she has to borrow one from the cashier next to them. About that time I am patting my foot, extremely frustrated, ready to scream.

I don't think I am alone in my frustration with waiting.

Do you get frustrated at the slow car driving down the road – in the left lane?

Do you get frustrated at waiting while your car is being serviced?

You may have experienced waiting behind someone in the drive through.



Waiting We all have to do it, some handle it better than others.



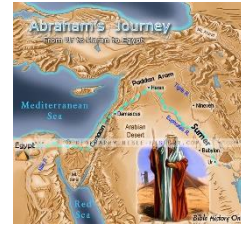
We have an appointment at the doctor and we have to wait an hour. Somehow we don't mind waiting because we need their advice or help. We have to go to the hospital for a procedure and there is

waiting – lots of waiting. We don't mind waiting because they are helping us or our loved one with something important.

Maybe you are or have been pregnant and you know there is a lot of waiting before that baby comes.

When it is important ... we don't mind waiting.

Our Biblical text we read earlier today involves a man by the name of Abram and how the Lord had promised him an heir.



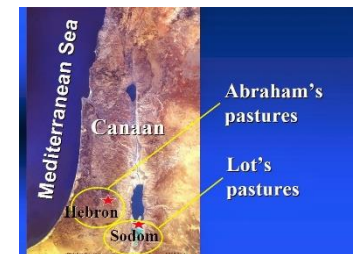
At the age of 75, the Lord told Abram to take his wife Sari, family, and belongings and head out to a place he would show him. Not only was God going to lead Abram and his clan, he promised to make Abram a great nation and God would bless

him. (Genesis 12) Can you imagine receiving a message, a promise like that from God at the age of 75? That is the time most people have settled into retirement and are beginning to experience many aches and pains.

The problem was that Abram was 75 years old and his wife Sari was 65 years old. How was God going to make them a great nation if they did not have any children? God had promised and they took God at His word.

They packed up and headed to Canaan. They headed to the Promised Land. While there in Canaan, the Lord spoke again to Abram and said He would give this land to his descendants. (Genesis 12:7)

Abram traveled through the whole area and the Lord blessed Abram and his nephew Lot. Genesis said Abram was very rich in livestock, silver, and gold. But still there was no sign of a son being born to them.



Our text that we read this morning from Genesis 15 tells us of another encounter the Lord and Abram had. Abram



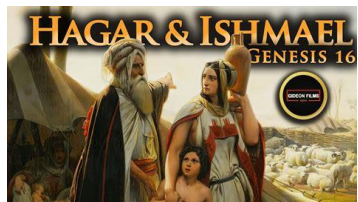
reminded the Lord that the promise of a child had not come to pass yet. Abram thought the Lord intended to fulfill his promise through a servant in his home by the name of Eliezer

of Damascus. The Lord said, *“This one will not be your heir, but one whom will come from your own body shall be your heir.”* God reminded Abram that his descendants will be as numerous as the stars in the sky.

Verse six summarized the faith of Abram. *“And he believed in the Lord, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.”*

Abram believed God – Abram had faith in God – Abram took God at His word.

God looked on the faith of Abram and counted that faith as righteousness. That means it was the faith that justified Abram back to God. Not necessarily the things Abram did. Not the fact that Abram tithed to Melchizedek. It was faith and trust in God that unlocked the righteousness of God to be credited to Abram.



Ten years went by and there still was not a child born to Abram and Sari. Abram was now 85 years old and Sari was 75. Sari decided that the Lord was not moving fast

enough for them. She took the situation under control. Sari had an Egyptian maidservant in the home by the name of

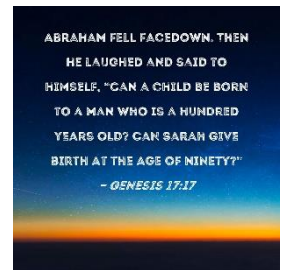
Hagar. Sari told Abram to take Hagar and maybe through her, their family could have a child.

Abram did not consult the Lord about this. Instead, he listened to Sari and shortly Hagar was pregnant. She gave birth to a son and called him Ishmael. Ishmael and Hagar were sent away from their family, but the Lord took care of them. This son born to Abram is claimed to be the ancestor of those that follow after Mohammad, the founder of Islam. That is why both Jews and Muslims claim Abraham as their founding father.

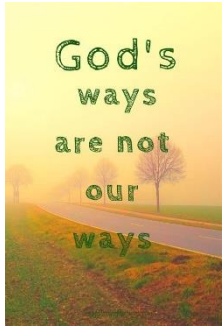
Fourteen more years went by and now Abram is 100 years old and Sari is now 90 years old. The Lord appears to Abram once again, restates His promises to Abram that he will be the father of many nations. (Genesis 17) He

promises Abram’s descendants would be numerous, they would be given the land known as Canaan, and his name would be great upon the earth. Abram thought Ishmael was the one that this promise would be given through. The Lord reiterated that it was Abram and Sari that would have the child of promise. Abram and Sari laughed at the idea of them having a child at their age. How ridiculous for someone that old to give birth to a child! The Lord said His name shall be called Isaac (which means laughter).

But Abram believed God. As outlandish as the promise of God sounded, Abram and every male in the whole household were circumcised as a sign of believing God’s promise. Now Abram would be known as Abraham and Sari would be known as Sarah.



God fulfilled his promise to Abraham and Sarah after waiting 25 years. Some would consider that a long time to wait. Abram and Sari had a difficult time accepting that God would fulfill it as He promised. They thought Eliezer would be the heir. They thought Ishmael would be the heir. Instead, God intended Isaac to be the child of promise.



I am reminded that God's ways are not our ways. His time table is not our time table. We need to wait for God to fulfill His promises to us.

Sometimes we ask, "Why didn't God answer that the way I thought He should?"

2 Peter 3:9 gives us a window into the way God operates:

"The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."

God is working out ... His plan of salvation ... In His own way... In His own time.

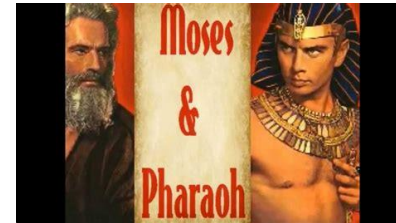


God's plan included Abraham and Sarah giving birth to a Son Isaac.

God's plan included Isaac and Rebecca giving birth to Jacob.

God's plan included Jacob and his two wives and their two handmaids giving birth to twelve sons. The Lord later changed Jacob's name to Israel. Those twelve sons made up what we know as the twelve tribes of Israel.

Those twelve tribes of Israel moved to Egypt and lived for 400 years. They grew in number and the Egyptians feared them and enslaved them.

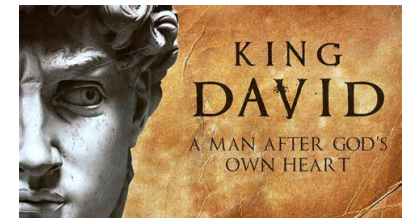


The Lord sent Moses to free them from the oppressive hand of Pharaoh. Over 600,000 marched out of Egypt and into the wilderness. While there they received the *Ten*

Commandments. Because they did not trust God fully to lead them safely into the Promised Land, they wandered in the wilderness for 40 years.

Under the leadership of Joshua they entered the Promised Land and pushed out many, but not all of their enemies.

Years later, David became the king over the twelve tribes of Israel and established his kingdom in Jerusalem.



So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations. From David to the Babylonian captivity are fourteen generations. From captivity unto the birth of Jesus Christ are fourteen generations. (Matt 1:17)

In the fullness of time God sent His one and only Son. – Jesus Christ.

The joy we have at Christmas celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ should also carry us throughout the year.

O Come All Ye Faithful,
 joyful and triumphant,
 O Come ye, O come ye to
 Bethlehem.
 Come and behold Him, born
 the king of angels!
 O Come, let us adore Him,
 O Come, let us adore Him
 O Come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!



Just as God was faithful in keeping His promise to Abraham and Sarah. He was faithful to send the Son of Promise – Jesus the Christ – to Israel. This promised Child, Jesus Christ, was not only given to the people of Israel but is available to all that call upon the name of the Lord.

We are living in a time of history where we can look back and see the hand of God from generation to generation. We can read of how faithful God was to each generation that trusted God by faith.

Psalm 33:12, 18-22

Psalm 33 reminds us how the blessings of God flow.



“Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord. The people He has chosen as His own inheritance.”
 (33:12)

It does seem as if our nation is slowly turning its back to the things of God. As a nation we are embracing moral standards that are contrary to the Word of God. As a nation we are tolerating sin and allowing it to have its rule over our

communities. I have heard it said, “What one generation tolerates, the next generation embraces.” God will not be mocked. He is long suffering and wishes that none perish. God’s word remains true – the nation that turns from God will be judged. Even the United States of America will face judgment from God.

Even if our nation is judged, I want to remind you there is hope for the individual.

Psalm 33:18-22 says,

“Behold, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear Him. On those who hope in His mercy. To deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine.

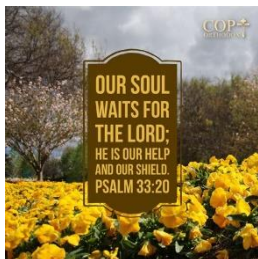
Our soul waits for the Lord; He is our help and our shield. For our heart shall rejoice in Him, because we have trusted in His holy name. Let Your mercy, O Lord be upon us, Just as we hope in You.”



When I was in Greece last year, many shops had a particular piece of jewelry that was unique. It was in the shape of an eye. I asked someone there about it she said it was symbolic of “the evil eye” that is always watching. Another person said by wearing it, it will keep “the evil eye” away. Another person pointed out that it was similar to the saying, “the Lord’s eye” is always watching. It reminded me of the scripture that says, *“the eye of the Lord is upon those who fear Him”* it is not saying He is giving them the “evil eye.” That means the Lord is searching for those that trust in Him. The all seeing eye of the Lord is searching the hearts of men and women to see if they have faith in Him.

The Lord is slow to anger and slow to judge. Why?

Because He wants everyone to have the opportunity to call upon the name of His Son, Jesus Christ. He does not want anyone to perish.



Psalm 33 gives us the words we need:
“Our soul waits for the Lord.”

Does our soul wait for the Lord? Are you waiting for God to fulfill His promises towards you? He has already provided salvation for you through His Son Jesus Christ. Have you received it?

That same salvation given to Abraham and Sarah is available to you!



Hebrews 11 has been called the *Hall of Faith*.

In that chapter it lists so many people that have gone on before us that kept the faith and received the crown of righteousness.

Faith is described as “*the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*” (Hebrews 11:1)

In Hebrews 11 we read of the faith of Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Rahab, and so many others.

For you see it was “by faith” each of these were able to obtain the inheritance from God. Abraham exhibited great faith by leaving his home and traveling through dangerous places. Because of his faith in the Lord, it was counted towards him as righteous. God fulfilled His promise and gave them the child Isaac.

Even Sarah is listed in this “*Faith Hall of Fame.*” Even though she laughed at God’s suggestion she would bear a son at the age of 90, her faith in God gave her strength to bear and deliver a son.

All of those listed in Hebrews 11 died before they could ever see the promised deliverer of Israel. They all died in faith waiting for God to fulfill His promise. God did send His Son, Jesus Christ, in the fullness of time. Those that have gone on before Jesus Christ came; it is as if God has saved them on credit. God credited their faith as righteousness.



Today we have heard and understand more fully God’s plan of salvation. All that call upon the name of the Lord will be saved – not on account of their righteousness, but on account of the righteousness of Jesus Christ. He bore our sins in His body on the cross. When we receive Him, we become joint heirs with Jesus Christ.

On the time line of history, we stand between Calvary and the empty tomb and Christ’s return. This time in history has been called “The Age of Grace.” We



are saved by faith in Jesus Christ. God extends His grace to you and me without cost or without payment. Oh, it was very costly to God – our salvation was purchased by Jesus Christ at Calvary with His blood. We deserve judgment and death for our sins, but instead, receive forgiveness and grace.

If you have never received Jesus Christ as your Savior, what are you waiting for? Today is the day of salvation. Receive Him and Live!

God has promised to come again and receive you and me unto Himself. That is the promise of God we are waiting for.

Hebrews 11:16 says, *“But now they (those that believed God – by faith) desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.”*



Jesus said to His disciples in John 14:1-3, *“Let not your hearts be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In my Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go and prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.”*

2 Thessalonians reminds us that one day the Lord will return and call all those in Christ, whether dead or alive, to be with Him. *“... together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.”* (4:17)

Jesus reminded us in Revelation 22:20, *“Surely I am coming quickly.”*

The church has been waiting almost 2000 years. Believers have risen every morning thinking today would be the day for the Lord’s return. There is nothing else remaining on the prophetic calendar for the Lord to return.



In 2 Timothy 4:8 the Apostle Paul says, *“Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.”*

A little girl had been listening while her mother’s friends were speaking about the imminent return of the Lord. After some time she was missed, so her mother went in search for her. She found her looking out a window at the top of the house. Her mother asked her what she was doing. She said, *“Oh, Mother, I heard you say Jesus might come today, and I wanted to be the first to see Him. See, I washed myself and put on a clean dress.”*

There is a crown reserved for those that are longing for His appearing.

The great preacher Dr. G. Campbell Morgan, once said, "To me the second coming is the perpetual light on the path which makes the present bearable. I never lay my head on my pillow without thinking that maybe before morning breaks, the final morning may have dawned! I never begin my work without thinking that perhaps HE may interrupt my work and begin His own. This is now His word to all believing souls, till He comes."



It is by Faith.... Abraham and Sarah were made righteous with the Lord.

It is by our faith in Jesus Christ, we are made justified before Lord.

May we by faith ... wait.

May we by faith work till He comes.

May we by faith ... witness to His grace to others, before He comes.

May we by faith wait to receive the promises of God.

LET US PRAY