



House of Faith: Waiting Hurts
Sermon Discussion Questions – June 4, 2023

Scripture Passages:

Hebrews 11:1 (NIV84) Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.

Genesis 15:1-6 (NIV84) After this, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward." 2 But Abram said, "Sovereign Lord, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?" 3 And Abram said, "You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir." 4 Then the word of the Lord came to him: "This man will not be your heir, but a son who is your own flesh and blood will be your heir." 5 He took him outside and said, "Look up at the sky and count the stars—if indeed you can count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." 6 Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness.

Romans 8:1 (NIV)- There is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus

Romans 8:28 (NIV)- God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God

Acts 16:31 (NIV)- Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved

2 Corinthians 5:21 (NLT) 21 For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.

Genesis 16:1-6 (NIV)- Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. But she had an Egyptian slave named Hagar; 2 so she said to Abram, "The Lord has kept me from having children. Go, sleep with my slave; perhaps I can build a family through her." Abram agreed to what Sarai said. 3 So after Abram had been living in Canaan ten years, Sarai his wife took her Egyptian slave Hagar and gave her to her husband to be his wife. 4 He slept with Hagar, and she conceived. When she knew she was pregnant, she began to despise her mistress. 5 Then Sarai said to Abram, "You are responsible for the wrong I am suffering. I put my slave in your arms, and now that she knows she is pregnant, she despises me. May the Lord judge between you and me." 6 "Your slave is in your hands," Abram said. "Do with her whatever you think best." Then Sarai mistreated Hagar; so she fled from her.

Genesis 17:15-19 (NIV)- 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." 17 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?" 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.

Genesis 18:11-15 (NIV)- Abraham and Sarah were already very old, and Sarah was past the age of childbearing. 12 So Sarah laughed to herself as she thought, "After I am worn out and my lord is old, will I now have this pleasure?" 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."

Matthew 19:26 (NLT) 26 Jesus looked at them intently and said, "Humanly speaking, it is impossible. But with God everything is possible."

Warm Up:

June is officially here, and we are now halfway through 2023! There is so much more this year has in store for all of us. What things are you thankful for in the first half of this year? What things are you looking forward to? What things do you still want to accomplish in the remainder of this year?

Discussion:

1. “There are times when my faith is felt but my feelings are not my faith. This is absolutely crucial to your living the with God life. When the church starts basing what their faith looks like by feeling, the door is open for all kinds of wrong interpretations and understandings of God and how, as his followers, we should live the with God life.” -Pastor Tom.

In what ways can basing our faith on feelings lead to wrong interpretations and misunderstandings of God and the Christian life?

2. “Faith cannot be based on what is going on in your current circumstances or what God may or may not do in the future to change your circumstances. This kind of faith, will not last and does not work. If you think you are doing things to keep God on your side, to make sure you win the lottery of life, you will come to one of two, disheartening conclusions:

There is something wrong with me and my faith.

There is something wrong with God.” - Pastor Tom

How does the idea of relying on oneself instead of faith in God affect our spiritual journey?

What does it mean for biblical faith to be based on the trustworthiness and reliability of God?

3. Read Hebrews 11:1. How does the definition of faith in Hebrews 11:1 shape our understanding of faith in Jesus?

4. Read Genesis 15:1-6. How does Abraham's belief in the impossible promises of God challenge our own faith?

5. Read Romans 8:1, 8:28, and Acts 16:31. These are just a few promises that God gives to us. What other promises of God do you know from Scripture? How do these promises help our faith?

6. Pastor Tom introduced to us two theological terms.

Doctrine of imputation—the righteousness of Jesus is credited to the Christian, therefore we can be justified, (just as if we had never sinned).

Doctrine of impartation—the righteousness that God does through Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit, after justification, working in the Christian to enable and empower the process of sanctification.

How do these theological concepts of imputation and impartation relate to our understanding of faith and righteousness?

7. Read Genesis 16:1-6. What can we learn from Sarai's decision to take matters into her own hands and how it reflects a lack of faith in God's character?

8. Read Genesis 17:15-19 and Genesis 18:11-15. How does God's response to Abraham and Sarah's doubts demonstrate His unwavering commitment to keeping His promises?

Next Steps:

Pastor Tom gives some application points from Abraham and Sarah's journey in faith.

1. When God makes a promise, we don't determine the timing or the method through which God will deliver his promise.
 - a. What does it look like to wait on the Lord when we don't know the timing of His promises? What does it look like to discern how might God deliver on his promises?
2. When acting in Biblical faith, we take the next obedient step God gives us, whether we understand it or not.
 - a. What hesitations might keep you from taking the next step that God has given you? What things might you need to surrender to God in order to take the next step?
3. God will never instruct you to commit a sin in order to complete a promise. Along the way, we will all misinterpret God's will and plan. That does not disqualify us from God. If that were the case, Abraham and Sarah would not have made it out of one chapter. We have a gift of repentance. Your disgrace is not bigger than God's grace.
 - a. How might the role of God's grace be freeing for you to take the next step?
4. Whatever God commands you to do, He will also give you the needed resources to do it or He won't command it. I don't know how to do it. I can't pull it off. I don't even know how God can pull this off—none of these are excuses for not following or obeying where and what God is telling you to do, start, stop, or change.
 - a. What might you need to start, stop, or change? How can you ask God to provide for what you need?