

Sarah

"¹⁵ Sarah was afraid, so she lied and said, "I did not laugh." But he said, "Yes, you did laugh." Genesis 18:15

NUGGET - This week we're staying in the Old Testament book of Genesis to look at another 'mother' in the faith, Sarah. This mother, though, has a sense of humor different from Eve last week. Unfortunately though, like Eve, Sarah also gets into trouble and this comes *from* her sense of humor. In today's verse Sarah is caught laughing at the plans of God announced through the three visitors to Abraham and Sarah's tent. ([Gen 18:1-15](#))

Sarah is caught laughing at what the angel had said to Abraham about her having a baby and then she lies about laughing. There are some facts to keep in mind about what may be behind Sarah's laughter:

- ≥ She knows that God has promised to make Abraham a great nation.
- ≥ She is old and well past child bearing years.
- ≥ She has been barren all her life.
- ≥ She had though *she'd* taken care of giving Abraham an heir through her maid, Hagar and her son Ishmael 13 years before this. ([Gen 16:1-4a; 17:24-25](#))

So when Sarah hears these visitors from God tell Abraham that she will bear a son to him next year, she laughs. The idea of her being barren and old and having done God's work for Him, all conspire in this old woman to bring forth laughter. But! But she is caught laughing at this promise from God and she is afraid.

And there it is, fear. She is afraid of what her laughing will mean and so she lies. And even though she lies about laughing, the angel holds her accountable and corrects her. She can't hide from it and cover it up. She laughs at the suggestion that God promises to give her a child and a male child at that.

Her doubt and fear are put to rest within the year when God does keep His promise and she does bear Isaac (which means '*he laughs*') to Abraham just as God promises. ([Gen 21:1-7](#)) And that is one of the great lessons that Sarah and her laughter teach us. She teaches us that God, despite fear, despite our total inadequacy and inability, and despite our trying to take over from God and make things happen; God keeps His word to us. Sarah teaches us that God loves and delights in keeping His promises to His own.

Sarah laughed at God's suggestion and she was fearful and she lied; and God kept His promise. I love that she and Abraham named their child Isaac. She accepted from God what He wanted to give her, joy. And in Isaac, she received God's promise to her.

APPLICATION - God keeps His promises. And He does so in ways that delight. Like Sarah being too old, we too are beyond being able to help God keep His promises to us. But God in Christ has kept His promise to restore our relationship with Him.

1. In what ways does knowing that give you comfort?
2. How have you tried to 'do His job' and failed?
3. Knowing God's promise keeping ways despite our fears and total inabilities to help ourselves equips us to do what things for others?

PRAY - with gratitude come before God, admit your lack, and enjoy His promises.

Peace in Christ, Pastor Tom Rhodes



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*Going Deeper together. We meet in the **Fellowship Hall** during the Education Hour for discussion and prayer with all those who're able to come. If you're not able to make it Sunday, please feel free to e-mail me with your comments or questions so that we can have the benefit of sharing them together.*

GOING DEEPER

Sarah teaches us to trust in God's plan and His word. We don't want to work around God's word or try to make God's plans happen according to our design. We wait on God and in so doing we learn what He has for us in the waiting. What would have happened if Sarah had waited? We'll never know will we because she choose to not wait.

But her impatience teaches us the lesson to wait on God to keep His word of promise. And in fact God does. He keeps His word to Sarah and Abraham in the form of Isaac. But let's not dump on Sarah altogether. She isn't the only who laughed at God. Look at what Abraham did when God, before the three visitors come, tells Abraham what He's going to do. ([Gen 17:15-17](#))

That's right, he falls down laughing! I think that his reaction and Sarah's reaction give us a good indication that they were a good pair. Their marriage was one that they each took joy in. I think that given all they had put each other through over the years, they had no choice but to laugh.

1. Abraham had Sarah (Sarai) tell lies about herself to two different kings. ([Gen 12:10-13; 20:1-5](#))
2. Sarah convinced Abraham to go along with her idea to get an heir by using her maid Hagar. ([Gen 16:1-4](#))
3. Sarah then blames Abraham for her woes after he went along with her idea. ([Gen 16:4-6](#))

If ever there was a 'soap opera' in the Old Testament their story truly qualifies! But through it all God remained faithful to His promises to them both. And God used her to teach Abraham and those kings about faithfulness in marriage ([Gen 12:14-20; 20:3-13](#)). This also is a great lesson we learn from her. Yes she was complicit but she also was doing what Abraham asked of her.

And of course the shoe is on the other foot as well. Abraham did what she asked him to do with Hagar and then blamed him for it.

It seems that men, a la Abraham and Adam, will willingly get into trouble with God when they follow after whatever their wives tell them to do without checking to see if it squares with God's word. And it likewise seems that wives will get into trouble with God when they listen to the schemes or teachings of just their husbands again without first seeing if it is counter to God's promises.

So far our Old Testament women have shown us the need to consistently be in God's word to see if what we are doing is in keeping with His promises there. But we also learn though Sarah that God uses women to instruct husbands. (See [Gen 21:11-13](#)). It almost seems a contradiction doesn't it? At one point we lead one another astray and at another point we lead one another in following God's ways. How are we to know the difference?

Again it comes down to God's promises. We must learn to trust that God will accomplish His purposes His ways. Look at [Gen 21:8-13](#). In verse 13 God promises Abraham that Ishmael will thrive and that it will happen because God will make it happen. Throughout this whole thing, God has used Sarah to show that He keeps His promised word. It isn't our condition or fear or action that fulfills God's word, it is He alone that does that.

Thank God that we are Sarah's children in the faith through her place in the lineage of Jesus by being the mother of Isaac, ([Luke 3:34](#)) and through God's choice to keep His promise to her ([Rom 9:6-9](#)). As He kept His promise to Sarah so He keeps His promise to us through the work of His only son Jesus Christ in whom we have - God's promise of Peace with Him forever. PR.