

The Faith of Sarah

Beginning in Hebrews, chapter 11 and verse 11, we read, "Through faith also Sarah herself received strength..." The reason this verse is brought out is because Abraham stepped out in faith before Sarah. Both of them had been given the same promise of God. However, Sarah tried to help God bring the promise to fruition. In Genesis, chapter 16, Sarah sent Hagar, her handmaiden, to Abraham. As a result, Ishmael was born. When God approached Abraham and told him he was going to have a son, in the natural it was impossible; he and Sarah were too old to reproduce children. Abraham and Sarah received the promise at the same time; however, Abraham believed God immediately and his body was changed. Romans 4 says that Abraham "staggered not at the promise of God". He considered his body, now dead, and the deadness of Sarah's womb; but he staggered not in unbelief. Abraham did not get into unbelief, but became strong in faith. The moment he believed God, he was capable of producing a child. Even having Ishmael through Hagar was a miracle, because prior to Abraham believing God's promise, it was physically impossible for him to have children.

Again, the promise was given to Sarah as well as to Abraham, but she did not believe. Sarah's name, before it was changed, was Sarai. Sarai means "contentious." Sarah was contentious against God and she was contentious against Abraham. Because she was contentious in her soul towards God and Abraham (which caused her soul to be closed), her womb was closed.

Ishmael was not God's plan; he was Sarai's plan. God's plan was that the child He promised to Abraham and Sarah would come into this earth supernaturally. But again, Sarai was contentious; she was rebellious towards Abraham's authority, and she was rebellious towards God's authority. My friend, Sarai was barren long before she reached the time of menopause; she was barren back in the time of Ur of the Chaldees (Genesis 12). God gave her the promise after the time of her menopause. In the natural, there was no way for Abraham or for Sarah to have a child, but Abraham believed God and he was restored; Sarai was contentious and she was not restored.

Later, when Sarai became submissive to Abraham, her name was changed to Sarah (Genesis 17:1-9). In chapter 17 of Genesis, God reiterated the promise he had

made to Abraham. This was after the time when Ishmael was born. God came to him and said, "You are going to have a son through Sarah", and Abraham began to laugh. God told Abraham, "I'm going to change Sarai's name to Sarah. We are going to speak faith words over her. Instead of calling her Sarai, which means 'contentious', we are going to call her Sarah, which means 'princess'".

The first area Sarah had to get straight in her life was learning to be submissive to Abraham. Listen to me women, if you want to be a hero of faith, if you want to be in God's hall of fame, if you want to become great in God's sight, first become great in your husband's sight. Submitting to him is actually the channel for you to open up into the spirit world. When Sarah finally called Abraham "lord" and considered him the lord in her life in the natural, her womb supernaturally opened and the son that had been promised was born.

1 Peter, chapter 3, verse 5 says, "For after this manner in the old time the holy (or 'believing') women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands". "This manner" is speaking of being submissive - having a meek and quiet spirit. This verse is saying that submission is actually an adorning. In the previous verses, Peter talked about the adorning of gold and fixing of the hair and the wearing of nice apparel. All these things are nice, but this verse is saying not to live for those things. The outward adorning of a woman should come from the inward adorning of a meek and quiet spirit. Women should let those around them see the submissive attitude they have toward their husband and toward the Lord. Verse 4 says that a woman who has a meek and quiet spirit is of great price in the sight of God. You might pay a lot of money for jewelry. You might buy the finest of everything, and pay the most exorbitant prices; but God said that it was nothing compared to the value and the price of a meek and quiet spirit.

Again, verse 5 says, "...being in subjection unto their own husbands..." An example is brought out for women here; their example becomes Sarah. Throughout Chapter 11 of the book of Hebrews, examples have been given for both men and women; but this verse brings out that Sarah is a tremendous example for the wives. I want you to notice that a submissive attitude will bring supernatural results, even in your physical life. Verse 6 says, "Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well (become a doer of the Word), and are not afraid with any amazement (fear)".

There came a day when Sarah looked at Abraham and said, "All right, I'm going to submit you". Before this time, she tried to dominate him. Every time he tried to make a decision, she corrected him. Every time he wanted to step out with God, she tried to define the direction. She would say, "Do it this way or do it that way"; she was contentious, and Abraham would not stand up to her. He probably tried two or three times, but she just put him down. Abraham probably figured that the price was not worth it. He thought, "I will just let her run the family". One day, Sarah began to realize that the reason she was barren was because of her attitude. A closed soul brought a closed womb; but when Sarah opened her soul to Abraham, realized that she was to honor and respect Abraham just as she did the Lord Jesus, when she began to call him "lord" and began to submit to him, that is when she became pregnant through the operation of the Holy Spirit. Sarah could have received strength to receive a child earlier in life just as Abraham had; but because she fought the Lord and she fought God's true way, she could not; however, when she opened herself up and called Abraham "lord", a supernatural thing happened inside of her. Because of this, she is listed here with the heroes of faith in God's hall of fame.

Look at Hebrews, chapter 11 and verse 11, again. It says, "Through faith also Sarah herself received strength to conceive seed (literally 'to deposit seed'), and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised". Earlier, we read the same thing about Abraham. Romans chapter 4, verse 20 and 21: "[Abraham became] strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able also to perform". Sarah also became strong in faith as she watched her husband's example; she followed after him, and this was pleasing to the Lord.

Husbands, God has designed you to be a leader in the household so that your wife and children can look to you and see God working through you. There have been some extreme teachings that say that a woman can only get to God through her husband. That is not true. Any woman can get to God without the husband, but husbands, God had designed you to be an example to your family. He has designed you to teach your family, by your example, of how Jesus rules over His Church. If you exercise your authority as God designed, your family will learn to submit to you in love as the Church submits to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Hebrews, chapter 11, verse 11, says again, "...She judged him faithful who had promised". Verse 12 continues, "Therefore (or 'because of this') sprang there even of one (Abraham), and him as good as dead..." In other words, in the natural, Abraham was as capable of producing a child as a dead man. This verse continues, "so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the seashore innumerable". God said, "Abraham is going to produce two races in this earth and both of them will be innumerable. The natural race will be called the Jew, and the supernatural race will be called the Body of Christ". One race is described as the stars of the sky; that is the supernatural race. The other is described as the sand of the earth; that is the natural race.

Verse 13 says, "These all died in faith". I am going to ask you a question: Can you think of a better way to die? If faith is good enough to live by, it should be good enough to die by! My friend, these heroes used faith throughout their lives on earth. When it came time to die, why change? Let's go back and see how Abraham died. Genesis, chapter 25, verses 5-7 say, "And Abraham gave all that he had unto Isaac. But unto the sons of the concubines, which Abraham had, Abraham gave gifts, and sent them away from Isaac his son, while he yet lived, eastward, unto the east country. And these are the days of the years of Abraham's life which he lived, an hundred threescore and fifteen years". Abraham lived to be 175 years old. Notice what the next verse says: "Then Abraham gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years..." I want you to notice that it does not say, "Full of cancer, full of arthritis, full of rheumatism"; it says "full of years". You can believe God for health and believe God to be free from disease, but you cannot believe God to be free from years.

Should the Lord not come for a while, you are going to get old; but I cannot think of a better way to die than the way Abraham did. He laid down. The Bible says that he "gave up the ghost". The Hebrew simply says that "he expired" or "breathed out". When you are born, you inhale; when you die, you exhale. That is what happened with Abraham; he breathed out - he went to be with the Lord. My friend, should the Lord not come, I am going to die in faith, full of years! How did Moses die? At 120 years old, the Bible says that his eye was not dimmed, nor his natural force abated. Psalm 91 says, "With long life will I satisfy him (or 'you')". The Bible says that when the Israelites followed after the Lord, coming out of Egypt into the wilderness, He took sickness out of the midst of them and that there was not one feeble one among

them. Again, Abraham had been an example of faith all of his life, and when he came to death, he just followed after the Lord in the same way - he died in faith - he breathed out.

Hebrews, chapter 11, verse 13, says again, "These all died in faith, not having received the promises but having seen them afar off..." In John, chapter 8 and verse 56, Jesus was speaking to the Pharisees of that day and He said, "Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad". Abraham saw the day of Jesus. Jesus was the seed of Abraham, and Abraham got to see Jesus through the eye of faith, although he never saw Him physically. Verse 13 says again, "...and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth". The heroes of faith listed in chapter 11 not only believed God, they accepted the promises of God. Accepting those promises is actually being a doer of the Word.

Philippians, chapter 3, verse 20, tells us that we are strangers in this earth but our citizenship is in heaven. My friend, while I am here on earth I have another citizenship and that is in heaven. I have natural citizenship in this earth, but that is not the one that counts. The citizenship that counts is the fact that I am a citizen of heaven. That city which was prepared for Abraham is also prepared for me. There may be things that God will tell us during our lifetime that we may never get to see; but my friend, I will embrace it and live like that promise is going to come to pass. I will die in faith. Abraham died in faith. That is what I want to do, don't you? Praise God!

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