

Mother's Day 2008  
Sarah: Not So Perfect  
Genesis 16:1-8

INTRO: Sarah, the wife of Abraham, struggled with many of the things that women struggle with today. She made mistakes; she was far from perfect. She was a fit thrower, temperamental, manipulative, impatient, cruel, jealous, and unreasonable. She whined, complained, and at times was downright mean. She laughed at the thought that God would allow her to become pregnant in her old age! (Gen 18:12). Then she lied saying she hadn't laughed (Gen 18:15).

Sarah does not give any of you ladies an excuse for wrong actions. Sarah and her family suffered because of her attitude, and the world suffers today because of her sin of impatience.

Like most women, she had weaknesses. But it was her strengths, her love, and submission toward Abraham (I Pet 3:6) and her faith in God that encourage all of us to be overcomers (Heb 11:11-12).

- I. THE BEGINNING OF HER WALK WITH THE TRUE GOD (GEN 12:1-5; HEB 11:8).
  - A. "Sarai" – her name was not changed to "Sarah" until she was ninety years old (Gen 17:15). She was born and raised in the Ur of the Chaldees. A city, modern and affluent for its day, situated on the Euphrates River.
    1. The journey toward Canaan began under the leadership of Terah, Abraham's father. It stalled at Haran, and continued under Abraham's leadership after Terah's death.
    2. Abraham left Haran. He traveled another 350 miles and reached Canaan having traveled a total of 1,000 miles since leaving the Ur of Chaldees. At Bethel, he worshiped God by building an altar (12:8). Sarah, the city girl, faithfully followed Abraham who had become a nomad living in a tent. HERE are some lessons we learn from Sarah:
      - a. Do not get attached to material things or the pleasures of the world (I Jn 2:15).
      - b. Follow those whom God has placed in leadership over you. Follow their faith. God is using someone to lead you– acknowledge this.
      - c. Walk by faith not by sight (II Cor 5:7).
  - B. The stay at Bethel was short because of a famine in the land; so

Abraham, Sarah, and the others went further south into Egypt.

1. When they got to Egypt, Abraham has a real concern. Sarai is stunningly beautiful even at the age of sixty-five! Some wish for greater beauty, but Sarah, at this point in life, may have wished to be a little more plain, like Sarah plain and tall! For in Egypt, her beauty could cause potential problems.
2. In Genesis 12:11-13, Abraham tells Sarah to tell a half-truth. She was his half sister. They had the same mother, but she was also his wife. That was not to be mentioned.
3. The Egyptians saw Sarah and commended her to Pharaoh, and she became part of his harem (Gen 12:14-15). Poor Sarah, what could she have been thinking? Will I ever see Abraham again? Will he leave town without me? What was Sarah to do?
  - a. She was to “wait on the Lord and be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart” (Psa 27:14) and renew her strength (Isa 40:31).
  - b. She was to rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him (Psa 37:7; 62:1).
  - c. She was to be patient, hope, and wait (Lam 3:26).
4. Sarah was in a mess. “But God” came on the scene and worked mightily sending a plague on Pharaoh and revealing that Sarah was Abraham’s wife (Gen 12:17-20).
5. What happens when you fail one of God’s tests? You have to take it again. Twenty-five years later, Abraham did the same thing again when Sarah was ninety. It is true that people lived longer in that day, but ninety was young. Sarah at 90 was a beautiful woman. This time, the man was Abimelech. Abraham told the same half truth, and Sarah was placed in another harem. Once again, God intervened.

## II. CONTINUED FAITH FOR THE WALK– HOPE

- A. In Gen 15:1-4, God again gave reason for Abraham and Sarah to have faith and hope. In Gen 15:7-21, God satisfies the covenant with Abraham.
- B. Sarah and Abraham wanted a child because they believed what Genesis 12:2-3 says. How could Sarah keep on believing, keep on having faith?

1. She had to choose to believe or not to believe, to doubt or to believe. God wants you to believe His promises.
2. She had to have and exercise faith by believing that through Abraham's seed all the world would be blessed. She wanted a miracle child that would fulfill the covenant promise and bless the world through the coming Messiah (Gal 3:8-9, 13-14, 16-17). Sarah had an understanding of the promise and grabbed hold of it (Heb 11:11).

### III. ONE STEP FORWARD; TWO STEPS BACK (GEN 16:1-3)

- A. We all know the story of Sarah, Abraham, Hagar, and Ishmael. Ishmael is known as the child of the flesh, not the child of faith.
  1. Sarah wanted to help God get His work done.
  2. She gave Hagar to Abraham. They had sex and Hagar conceived. Sarah thought this would fulfill the promise of Gen 15:4.
- B. Acts 2, the flesh brings heartache, pain, and disillusion.
  1. Sarah lost her temper and acted unreasonable (Gen 16:5) when Hagar provoked her (Gen 16:4).
  2. Acts of the flesh hang around. They keep coming back. Although Sarah sent Hagar away, she was sent back (Gen 16:9). The flesh can not save us, but it sure can haunt us!

### IV. THE PROMISE FULFILLED

- A. Do not lose heart when difficulties come and it seems there is not way to see God work (Gen 18:11-15).
  1. Nothing is impossible when you put your faith in God.
  2. Do not doubt the Word of God. "Nothing promised by God is ever beyond His resources, His ability, His love! Nothing!" (George 39).
  3. Is anything too hard for God?
    - a. The heartache you are suffering. Is it too hard for God?
    - b. The problems in your family or even your marriage—are these too hard for God?
    - c. Your financial straits—are they too hard for Him? No, but don't keep digging the hole.
    - d. Are your physical pains too hard for God to help you with?
    - e. Face today's difficulties with God for nothing is

impossible with our God!

- B. Sarah's faith, though weak at times, is rewarded by God (Gen 21:1-3).
1. What God has promised, dear one, He will do! The Bible contains well over 7,000 promises. Whatever you face, God has a promise for you. There is no storm that He cannot pilot you through. He has grace and promises for trials, afflictions, tragedy, spiritual and physical failures. "My God is an awesome God!"
  2. Dear lady, do not lose heart, your faith will carry you through. God has already performed miracle after miracle for you! And He desires to do more.
    - a. He saved you and gave you life eternal (Jn 5:24; 10:28).
    - b. He gives you grace that is sufficient for your (II Cor 12:9).
    - c. He gives you His promise of presence: "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee" (Heb 13:5). Wherever as child of God goes, He is there. "Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest" (Joshua 1:9).
    - d. God will give you strength for the journey of life. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil 4:13).

**CONCLUSION:** Life is hard, but God's grace is truly sufficient. He will carry you through by faith.

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