



Road Trip - Part 9 Sermon Discussion Notes

Opening thought

We seem to have to wait for things we really desire in life. Lewis Smedes describes the waiting condition of human beings this way:

"Waiting is our destiny. As creatures who cannot by themselves bring about what they hope for, we wait in the darkness for a flame we cannot light. We wait in fear for a happy ending we cannot write. We wait for a 'not yet' that feels like a 'not ever'." Lewis Smedes

Perhaps the quote above described Abram's feeling as he and Sarai waited for the promised child. In Chapter 17 of Genesis the wait is almost over. God's big plan for Abram and Sarai is about to arrive in a little tiny infant named Isaac.

Primary Scripture

Genesis 17:1--27

1 Abraham and the Covenant of Circumcision

When Abram was ninety-nine years old the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless, 2 that I may make my covenant between me and you, and may multiply you greatly." 3 Then Abram fell on his face. And God said to him, 4 "Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. 5 No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations. 6 I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you. 7 And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. 8 And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God." 9 And God said to Abraham, "As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations. 10 This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. 11 You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you. 12 He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised. Every male throughout your generations, whether born in your house or bought with your money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring, 13 both he who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money, shall surely be circumcised. So shall my covenant be in your flesh an everlasting covenant. 14 Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant." 15 Isaac's Birth Promised And God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. 16 I will bless her, and moreover, I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and

she shall become nations; kings of peoples shall come from her." 17 Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed and said to himself, "Shall a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?" 18 And Abraham said to God, "Oh that Ishmael might live before you!" 19 God said, "No, but Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring after him. 20 As for Ishmael, I have heard you; behold, I have blessed him and will make him fruitful and multiply him greatly. He shall father twelve princes, and I will make him into a great nation. 21 But I will establish my covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this time next year." 22 When he had finished talking with him, God went up from Abraham. 23 Then Abraham took Ishmael his son and all those born in his house or bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house, and he circumcised the flesh of their foreskins that very day, as God had said to him. 24 Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. 25 And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. 26 That very day Abraham and his son Ishmael were circumcised. 27 And all the men of his house, those born in the house and those bought with money from a foreigner, were circumcised with him. ESV

Discussion Questions

1. Abram was 86 years old when Ishmael was born (through Hagar) - now he is 99 years old and Ishmael is 13. A great deal of time has elapsed since God's last encounter with Abram. Discuss this principle: Seasons of silence do not mean God's purpose for us is not in God's master plan for our life.
2. Everybody's life tells a story and inside of that story is a principle from God to teach those around us. How does Abram and Sarai's story illustrate this principle: God does for us what would be impossible for us to do for ourselves?
3. The big take away idea from Abram and Sarai's life story is God does for us what is impossible for us to do for ourselves. Discuss how this applies to your salvation (**Galatians 4:21-31**), hardships in life like job loss, loss of a loved one or an uncertain future.
4. A new name for God is introduced in this chapter. That name is El Shaddai or El Shadday ("God Almighty" **Genesis 17:1**). What does the name mean and what does it imply?
5. Abram's name is changed to Abraham. Abraham means father of a multitude. It is a name that speaks of the future. Discuss how easy it is to live under past labels when God wants to give us a name that speaks of our destiny and future.
6. Compare Peter's name change to Abram's name change see **John 1:40-42**. Simon, another name for Peter, comes from Simeon one of the sons of Jacob. See how Simon's Old Testament counterpart was impulsive and rash (**Genesis 34**).
7. Sarai's name is changed to Sarah and means princess or noble lady. Her lineage will give birth to a prince or king. Jesus is the ultimate King that will come out of the line of this princess. See **1 Timothy 6:12-16, Revelation 17:14, Revelation 19:16**.

Final Thought

God has a new name for each of us. Sometimes we have negative names for ourselves. We have these verbal labels that we place on ourselves that are negative. As God gave Abram a new name, Abraham, a name that spoke of his destiny and future so God has a good name for you - a positive name that speaks of your future and your destiny.