

First Baptist Church Merritt Island

Faith Overcomes Impossible Problems

Hebrews 11:11-12

February 24, 2019

Main Point

By faith, Abraham and Sarah experienced the promise-keeping power of God to overcome their impossible problem. Their example is a reminder that God will work the same way in our lives when we come to Him in faith.

Getting Started

During the course of his life, Abraham received several promises from God, one of which had to do with his offspring. Abraham was told that he would have more descendants than could be counted. The imagery the Lord used to reveal this truth to Abraham was to compare his descendants to the stars of the sky and the grains of sand on the shore. Could you easily look up at the sky and number all the stars you see? Could you take a walk on the beach and number the grains of sand under your feet? So too would Abraham's descendants be, yet this promise was given to Abraham before he even had a child.

“And he brought him outside and said, “Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.”

— *Genesis 15:5*

God told Abraham something that, naturally speaking, was impossible. How was an old, childless man, going to become the father of many nations? It was going to happen because God was going to do something miraculous. Abraham believed that God could do this even before he saw it fulfilled, and true to His word, the Lord delivered on His promise. Faith overcomes impossible problems!

Observation

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ HEBREWS 11:11-12.

What did Sarah receive from God that made all the difference in her life?

What impossible odds did God overcome in Sarah's life for her to conceive a child?

How did faith in God's promises play a role in what God did for Sarah? What does this passage say about Sarah's consideration of God's faithfulness?

How did the author of Hebrews describe Abraham in this passage? How did God overcome impossible odds to bless him?

What did God ultimately accomplish through his promise to Abraham and Sarah?

Read Genesis 18:9-15.

What did the Lord say would happen in Abraham and Sarah's life a year from the time He spoke to Abraham in this passage?

How did Sarah respond to this promise? What made it difficult for her to believe God's promise to her?

Sarah doubted the Lord's ability to fulfill his promise for her and Abraham in this story. The Lord repeated his promise to Abraham and confronted Sarah's unbelief. He wants us to trust him. He invites us to take him at his word and to believe in the promises he has given us in his word. Let's take Jesus at his word!

Application

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

Share with your group members about a time God came through for you when things seemed impossible. What happened and how did it turn out? Take time to celebrate God's faithfulness to you!

What promises from God's Word has He given you recently? What do those promises mean to you? Ask your group to pray that you would take God at his word.

Hebrews 11 highlights several heroes of the faith who can serve as our biblical inspiration and encouragement for trusting in God's faithfulness and goodness. We also have living examples of his faithfulness. Who do you turn to when life gets hard? Who encourages you to keep trusting God's promises when circumstances tell you otherwise? Encourage each other in your group! Lift each other up in prayer. Become those living encouragers who challenge each other to trust God.

Re-read Genesis 18:9-15. Are there times when you doubt God's faithfulness to you like Sarah did? Tell God about it. Commit by his power to trust his promises.

Prayer

Dear God, thank you for doing the impossible in my life by saving me from my sins and making me a part of your family! Please help me trust in your promises, even when life seems impossible. I love you and ask that you would strengthen my faith in you.

Commentary

11:11-12 That Sarah laughed, apparently in unbelief (Genesis 18:9-15) is potentially problematic for her role as an example of faith. However, (1) the author is happy to speak of the true faith of Sarah despite her failings and (2) Sarah apparently later had a change of heart, as her laughter became a genuine expression of joy at the birth of

Isaac, whose name means Isaac. Although some translations give Abraham as the subject, it is best to take 'Sarah' as the subject here because (1) both Sarah's name and 'herself' are in the nominative case (indicating she is the subject of the sentence) and (2) making Abraham the subject requires either an unusual grammatical understanding of the words for 'Sarah herself' or an assumption that a early copyist made an error in transcribing those two words.

Adapted from www.smallgroup.com and www.desirejesus.com.