

“Disappointment: Abraham” – Genesis 18:1-15

Pastor Burt Garwood – August 13, 2017

This room is filled with stories of disappointment. There isn't a person in here who hasn't experienced an unkept promise. A broken trust. A shattered dream. A wound from someone close to them. Or expectations not met. We have a tendency to keep track of all the little things and it starts to build up.

- Sadly, we do the same with God. Little disappointments tend to build up over time, into a laundry list of reasons why we can't trust God to come through for us.
- Because we haven't found healing. We ask for God to take away a sinful desire, but the appetite is still there. Or even just little things that God didn't do for you, one after another, over time, that make you feel like God just doesn't care.
- So we become disappointed with God. People leave churches and they leave God all the time because of this.

We ask questions:

- God's goodness...does God care about me?
- God's justice...doesn't God see what evil is pressing in on me?
- God's power...maybe he just isn't powerful enough to do anything about it after all.
- Is God trustworthy? We stake our life on God...and when he doesn't come through in the way we expected...in the timeframe we were hoping...we walk away.

Have you ever looked at it through God's point of view?

- We have been culturally conditioned to look out for self. Personal rights...personal freedoms...what is best for me.
- If we're honest with ourselves, we're many times too preoccupied with our feelings to see God's point of view.

God promises to turn Abraham's family tree into a great nation. (Genesis 12)

- Abraham moves with Sarah from the land of Ur, to the land that God promised him. But when he arrived, the land was in the middle of a famine. Disappointment.
- Abraham is 75...and still not one child. Disappointment.
- By the time he's 85, Sarah tells him to take Haggai as a second wife and have a baby with her. (Genesis 16) Joy over Ishmael, but disappointment that Abraham and Sarah couldn't have one of their own.

By the time he's 99, God finally shows up, so to speak.

- That's a long time to wait for God to answer prayer. That's a long life filled with disappointment.
- For any parent who has experienced infertility or a tough time trying to have a baby, any amount of time waiting feels like a lifetime.

READ: Genesis 18:1-15

- Verse 1: The Lord appeared to Abraham. The other two men were angels. Many scholars believe that the Lord mentioned here is Jesus himself.
- John 1:18 Jesus said, *“No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.”*

Genesis 18:10 *“Then the Lord said, ‘I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife will have a son.’”*

- Sarah heard this and laughed because she was 90 and Abraham was 99. (Genesis 18:13-15)
- Imagine the years of disappointment. Her laughter might more have been a laughter of pain. Like when you're the brunt of a brutal prank gone wrong, and you laugh, just to save a little face. Sometimes you're just so spent, so exhausted, so beat down...that all you can do is laugh.
- When you dig into Sarah's emotions and her long wait, you realize that she's just like you. I get Sarah...and I think you do to.

What did God want from Abraham and Sarah the entire lifetime of waiting? Only faith can be the answer. READ: Genesis 18:14

“How does my disappointment affect my faith?” When it doesn't happen on my timeline...When I don't get the answer I want...When it doesn't even seem like God heard my prayer at all...

- Will my disappointment destroy my faith? Or can I look at this thing from God's point of view?
- READ: Hebrews 11:8-11. This doesn't mean that the wait doesn't hurt or that you will finally get what you want. This does mean that we live by faith in our Creator, our Father-God, to see us through.

How do we move on? There must be a mindset, an understanding or foundation within us that keeps life in perspective so that when the tough times come and God seems not to hear our prayers for help, that we resolve not to waver...and trust God no matter what.

- Thanks to the Holy Spirit's power at work in our life. That is the essence of faith.
- And we can allow our faith to reach a new level of maturity. That possibly, from God's point of view, he has pulled back, specifically for the purpose of deepening our faith in him.
- When it comes to disappointment, we don't have all the answers and all the reasons why God allowed it to happen. But in the meantime, we can still have faith, no matter the outcome.
- READ: Job 19:25-27. That's faith...even in the midst of disappointment.
- More on handling disappointment next week.