

God Chooses an Imperfect Family

Presented By Pastor Scott Walters on 06/14/20

At Crossroads Untiled Methodist Church

Waunakee, WI

Today is the start of a sermon series, "God's Dysfunctional Family:

The patriarchs and matriarchs of the Hebrew Bible.

—strangely relevant to today—

Today, we check in with the first Pat. & Mat: Abraham & Sarah.

Years before, Abraham and Sarah traveled to a new and strange land in the strength of God's promises;

- 1) That they will have their own land, and;
- 2) That they will have a son.

But, as we meet Sarah and Abraham today, in the 18th chapter of Genesis, they are past believing those promises.

We hear it in Sarah's laugh when the promise is restated;

But if you turn back a page in the Bible, and you'll see Abraham

"falling on his face, laughing" when God says to him, "I will bless Sarah, so that she will become nations."

Abraham is laughing so hard, he can't stand up.

As I reflect, today story points to what happens to people when they give up on the promises of God.

Walter Brueggemann says, "The word of God ... never comes to fruition as we expect it," and so we figure that God's word has failed.

Brueggemann says that WHEN we think God's word has failed, either we are driven back our our own seemingly adequate resources or, if we have no resources, we are drive to despair.

Giving up on God's promises. How about today? How can THAT look today?

- o It can look like human trafficking – men, women, children enslaved – when we think we've come so far;
- o Can look like soaring unemployment rates with inadequate safety nets for families;
- o It can look like riots in the wake of another black life not just lost, but TAKEN, and taken too soon;

Giving up on the promises of God can look like irreconcilable differences in a government or in a family, in ANY community
– we stop trying to understand each other –

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dysfunctional.

But there is another point to share:

There is a need for joy at all times in our lives. Especially in difficult times.

One poet suggests that our joy is connected to our mortality; regardless of our age, we are in the process of dying.

Allows us to see others who are very different from us with empathy because they are no different than we.

Maybe that's why Abraham was open to those three visitors or the openness we might feel toward people who are different from us in any number of ways.

[Mention is made of "The Hospitality of Abraham" by Andrei Rublev]

These ideas of joy and death and connection are very Christlike, because the one thing that WAS impossible for Christ was to escape suffering and death. (Andrei Rublev)

Jesus didn't want to die on the cross, that's why he prayed in Gethsemane.

OUR JOY is tied to Christ's willingness to enter share that kind of life with us.

So joy isn't easy. But it's possible. Everything is possible because God stays with us through the night and God is faithful to his promises.

We can see it sometimes in the small things of life – ordinary things.

BUT, we can learn of God's faithfulness in IMPOSSIBLE things, too—things we would have never seen coming.

*The one thing I'd like to have you do as a result of this message is to consider this story as an invitation to openness in your life.

Crossroads Breakthrough Prayer: "Amazing and Loving God, we stand at the crossroads of your hopes and the lives of your people. Break through Crossroads UMC and our community that we may "walk in a good way," to bring your kingdom closer to reality on earth. Amen.

Only you know where you need that spirit of openness ... to see where God may be breaking through.

Pay attention to those places.

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Today's passage from Genesis says, God is paying attention to you.