

“Are You Kidding Me?”

Genesis 18:1-15

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This morning our attention is drawn to an elderly couple by the names of Abraham and Sarah. Abraham is almost one hundred years old, and Sarah is ten years younger. They live in Hebron, about twenty miles south of Jerusalem.

The two of them do not have children, which has been a great disappointment. They were under the impression God would bless them with a son who would carry on the family line and allow their family to be a blessing to the world, but it appears this is not going to happen.

In our text, Abraham is sitting at the door to his tent that is situated under a large oak tree. It is probably close to noon because Abraham has come to his tent to escape the heat and rest.

He might have been taking a nap when something disturbed him, or he could have been reflecting upon a recent encounter he had with God when God promised him a son with his wife, Sarah. Looking up, he saw three men standing near his tent. Quickly, Abraham ran to meet them and to offer them water and food.

It is apparent to Abraham that these three visitors were not merely men from a nearby village, but divine messengers on a mission. The longer they stayed and talked with Abraham, the more he became convinced he was in the presence of God and angels. They knew too much about him and his prayer life to be mere mortals.

“Where is your wife, Sarah?” they asked Abraham. “There, in the tent,” he replied. “Then the Lord said, ‘I will surely return about this time next year, and Sarah your wife will have a son.’ ” (Genesis 18:9-10a)

Sarah, who was inside the tent, heard every word spoken between Abraham and these visitors. Upon hearing the news about giving birth to a child, what did Sarah do? She laughed!

This prompted the Lord to say to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh and say, ‘Will I really have a child now that I am old?’ Is anything too hard for the Lord? I will return to you at the appointed time next year and Sarah will have a son.” (Genesis 18:13-14)

“Is anything too hard for the Lord?” I wonder how much discussion this question has generated down through the ages. How would you answer it?

Perhaps it would help you to know there is a dispute about how this question reads. “Is anything **too hard** for the Lord?” could also be interpreted, “Is anything **too wonderful** for the Lord?” In other words, is some news too good to be true?

It could be that Sarah’s laughter was a combination of disbelief—“Are you kidding me?”—and an expression of joy—“This is the most wonderful news I have ever heard!” If so, then Sarah’s laughter is not to be viewed as a lack of faith but a first step toward it.

Listen to what Sarah said upon giving birth months later to her son, Isaac, “God has brought me laughter, and everyone who hears about this will laugh with me. Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age.” (Genesis 21:6-7)

It appears to me Sarah’s skepticism turned to joy as her faith in God increased. I have to believe this caused God to chuckle.

“Is anything too hard or wonderful for the Lord?” I find this question posed to Abraham in front of his tent on that hot summer day especially enlightening because it tells me as much about God’s character as it does God’s power.

This question reveals God's relentless tenacity, an unwillingness to walk away from a difficult situation or an intimidating challenge. God will never take the easy way out and abandon his children. God loves each one of us too much to leave us feeling lost, lonely and hopeless.

Neither will God break a promise because keeping it is too demanding. Instead, God will bring everything to the table God possesses to tackle any problem that needs to be addressed and every challenge that needs to be accepted. This includes God's wisdom, insight, understanding, expertise, experience, ability, power and resources.

At all times and in all places, we can trust God to help us meet life's toughest challenges and to bring wonderful blessings into our lives, even under the most difficult circumstances. The Lord is our Shepherd, and we need no other.

"Is anything too hard or wonderful for the Lord?" Ask Sarah and Abraham.

Who needs you to be this tenacious and loyal? Who needs your help with their challenges and problems? Who needs you to bring your best to the table? Who needs you to keep your promises? Who needs you to serve as their source of hope in situations where the way to the future seems blocked?

God knows how difficult this is sometimes and stands ready to help you. I hope you will reach out to the Lord today and receive what God has to offer.