

Sermon Title: The Promise is Here

Sermon Text: Genesis 21:1-7

Have you ever had to wait on God's timing?

Have you ever found yourself laughing about how/when His timing came about?

Abraham and Sarah had been waiting 25-30 years for the fulfillment of God's promise to them, that they would have a son... 25-30 years!!!

Abraham was 100 years old & Sarah was 90 years old when Isaac was born! Talk about a reason to laugh... No one would have thought it was possible!

And in the previous 3 chapters in Genesis there had been nothing but bad news & tragedy, but now God provides a reason to celebrate! The promise that was given all the way back in Ch. 12, has finally come to fruition!

Isaac, the child of the promise, was finally here! His name means "laughter" Abraham laughed when God told him that he would have a child in his old age (17:17). Sarah did the same when the angels of the Lord told her (18:12)!

But guess who had the last laugh? God! The God of improbable possibilities gave Abraham & Sarah a child when it was an absolute impossibility!

Genesis 21:6 – "And Sarah said, 'God has made laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh over me.'" Only God could have done this!

This was a time of great joy and laughter because God was faithful, God had provided a son, and hope for the future of God's people had been restored!

Today is Palm Sunday, another day of improbable possibility! On this day in history a man named Jesus entered into the city of Jerusalem with the crowds claiming that he was the promised Messiah!

But God's promise of a Messiah came hundreds/thousands of years before. 400 years had past with silence from God, but then there's news of a miraculous birth, then a prophetic voice in the wilderness, then a ministry of signs, wonders, & teaching w/authority - all pointing to this Jesus being the One!

But we don't see him entering into Jerusalem on a horse, with an army behind him! No entourage except for a crowd of peasants & 12 disciples! And he is riding on a donkey – a sign of royalty but not a sign of power!

The ways of God can be funny! Can't they? We could probably fill in many different words here as well, but sometimes laughter is all that comes out!

How often does God's fulfillment of His plan look very different than what we would have expected, preferred, or even imagined?

Abraham & Sarah probably thought maybe a year or two would go by before the arrival of their promised child. But those hopes faded over time!

The Israelites had high hopes of a coming Messiah after Malachi's prophesy (***Malachi 3:1***), but 400 years of absolute silence from God was their reality!

A miraculous birth took place in Bethlehem, but then another 33 years goes by? All for what? A humble entrance on a donkey? Where's the Aladdin entry?

God's ways do not always measure up to our expectations, but they don't have to! God is doing what He is doing, & it is good, it is for a purpose, and whether we understand it or not, & even if it makes us laugh, it's His plan!

What can we take away from this story, & from this day - Palm Sunday?

- 1) God's ways are higher than our ways! Beyond our ability to grasp!
- 2) It's never too late when it comes to God's timing – His timing is perfect! It may not have been Abraham's/Sarah's/Israel's timing, but it was God's timing!
- 3) If God makes a promise, He will see it to completion! Both the birth of Isaac, and the coming of the Messiah gives evidence to that!
- 4) If you think you are too old to be used by God, to experience His plan at work in your life, you are not! Remember Abraham & Sarah!
Age doesn't matter when it comes to God's ability to fulfill His purposes (kids & teens remember that too)! You are never too young, or too old!
- 5) What can be done is not limited to what we can imagine, it is limited to what God declares! ***"Thus saith the Lord"*** is the trump card in all of life!
- 6) It is appropriate to celebrate, even laugh, when God comes through in ways that only He can! The birth of Isaac... & the coming of a Savior in Jesus Christ... riding on a donkey, testifies to this truth!

May we trust God, no matter what, & may we laugh as He surprises us with His faithfulness! God is bigger than our circumstances, & His ways are perfect!

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