

Morning Sermon February 7, 2021

“Laughter” – Genesis 17:17-19; 18:12-15; 21:5-7

I. The Bible and laughter –

1. God’s laughter -

A. When the Bible speaks of God laughing, it is not “funny” for those He laughs at, for instance, He laughs at the lack of challenge He receives from ungodly men, who seem to think they might dethrone Him –

<sup>1</sup> Why do the nations rage, And the people plot a vain thing? <sup>2</sup> The kings of the earth set themselves, And the rulers take counsel together, Against the LORD and against His Anointed, *saying*, <sup>3</sup> “Let us break Their bonds in pieces And cast away Their cords from us.”

<sup>4</sup> He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; The LORD shall hold them in derision. Psalm 2:1–4 (NKJV)

B. He laughs too, at the calamity of those who ignore His wisdom

–

<sup>26</sup> I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your terror comes, <sup>27</sup> When your terror comes like a storm, And your destruction comes like a whirlwind, When distress and anguish come upon you.

<sup>28</sup> “Then they will call on me, but I will not answer; They will seek me diligently, but they will not find me. Proverbs 1:26–28 (NKJV)

C. The Bible never says “Jesus laughs” but it does say <sup>35</sup> Jesus wept. John 11:35 (NKJV)

Jesus is described as –

<sup>3</sup> ... A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief... Isaiah 53:3 B (NKJV)

This is because Jesus was on a serious mission to save us from our sins

-

2. Man’s laughter –

A. As a pursuit in life –

<sup>2</sup> I said of laughter—“Madness!”; and of mirth, “What does it accomplish?” Ecclesiastes 2:2 (NKJV)

B. As having a place in life –

<sup>4</sup> A time to weep, And a time to laugh; A time to mourn, And a time to dance; Ecclesiastes 3:4 (NKJV)

Can you think of a circumstance or time where or when laughing would be inappropriate?

C. Laughter is compared to medicine -

<sup>22</sup> A merry heart does good, like medicine, But a broken spirit dries the bones. Proverbs 17:22 (NKJV)

II. Laughter at something unbelievably wonderful –

1. Abraham laughed first –

A. Abraham’s laugh was big, he fell on his face -

<sup>17</sup> Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, Genesis 17:17 A

B. In his heart he ponders this; it seems too wonderful; this is something Abraham rejoices in -

and said in his heart, “Shall a *child* be born to a man who is one hundred years old? And shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a *child*?” Genesis 17:17 B

C. Abraham would be satisfied if Ishmael would walk with God -

<sup>18</sup> And Abraham said to God, “Oh, that Ishmael might live before You!” Genesis 18:18

2. But God has bigger, better plans –

A. Sarah will have a son -

<sup>19</sup> Then God said: “No, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, ... Genesis 17:19 A

B. You will name him Isaac, Isaac means laughter - and you shall call his name Isaac; Genesis 17:19 B

C. It is with Isaac (not Ismael) God establishes the Covenant - I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his descendants after him. Genesis 17:19 C

D. God hears Abraham about Ishmael and “blesses him” with material and multiplication blessings, but the covenant He will make with Isaac -

<sup>20</sup> And as for Ishmael, I have heard you. Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly. He shall beget twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation. <sup>21</sup> But My covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this set time next year.” Genesis 17:17–21 (NKJV)

### III. Sarah laughs a laugh of unbelief –

<sup>12</sup> Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, “After I have grown old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?” <sup>13</sup> And the LORD said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh, saying, ‘Shall I surely bear a *child*, since I am old?’ <sup>14</sup> Is anything too hard for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.” <sup>15</sup> But Sarah denied *it*, saying, “I did not laugh,” for she was afraid. And He said, “No, but you did laugh!” Genesis 18:12–15 (NKJV)

*How do we know this is a laugh of unbelief? God challenges Abraham and Sarah about it. Also, He provides the obvious rhetorical question - <sup>14</sup> Is anything too hard for the LORD? To which we should give a resounding answer, “No, nothing is too hard for the LORD!”*

#### 1. God does not need our numbers or gifts -

<sup>7</sup> The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; Deuteronomy 7:7 (NKJV)

<sup>26</sup> For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*. <sup>27</sup> But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; <sup>28</sup> and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, <sup>29</sup> that no flesh should glory in His presence. 1 Corinthians 1:26–29 (NKJV)

#### 2. At another time, much later, when Israel was a nation but in a down condition, God both comforts and challenges them by having them look back to their humble beginnings; the nation Israel, started with just one elderly couple -

<sup>51</sup> “Listen to Me, you who follow after righteousness, You who seek the LORD: Look to the rock *from which* you were hewn, And to the hole of the pit *from which* you were dug. <sup>2</sup> Look to Abraham your father, And to Sarah *who bore* you; For I called him alone, And blessed him and increased him.” <sup>3</sup> For the LORD will comfort Zion, He will comfort all her waste places; He will make her wilderness like Eden, And her desert like the garden of the LORD; Joy and gladness will be found in it, Thanksgiving and the voice of melody. Isaiah 51:1–3 (NKJV)

*This is the church too – Galatians 3:29*

### IV. Sarah’s laugh of great joy –

<sup>5</sup> Now Abraham was one hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. <sup>6</sup> And Sarah said, “God has made me laugh, *and* all who hear will laugh with me.” <sup>7</sup> She also said, “Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? For I have borne *him* a son in his old age.” Genesis 21:5–7 (NKJV)

1. *Note here are the numbers Abraham 100, Sarah 90 when Isaac was born, even in those days, that was old – Genesis 21:5*

2. *Sarah was laughing a joyous laugh, because though childless all her life she gives birth at 90, who would have thought it? Who would have said it? Only God – Genesis 21:6-7*

3. *We too have reason to rejoice –*

<sup>3</sup> You have multiplied the nation *And* increased its joy; They rejoice before You According to the joy of harvest, As *men* rejoice when they divide the spoil. Isaiah 9:3 (NKJV)

<sup>6</sup> For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. <sup>7</sup> Of the increase of *His* government and peace *There will be* no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this. Isaiah 9:6–12 (NKJV)

A. *Isaac’s name Isaac means laughter. Jesus means “Jehovah saves” –*

<sup>21</sup> And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.” Matthew 1:21 (NKJV)

B. *He is also called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Isaiah 9:6*

C. *He is also called – Immanuel -*

<sup>22</sup> So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: <sup>23</sup> “Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which is translated, “God with us.” Matthew 1:22–23 (NKJV)

*What a great grace it is to have God “with us” and on our side – Romans 8:31! See Romans 8:31-39*

*Arnold Breivick*