

Genesis—Series Overview

Embarrassing Ancestors and Our Glorious Hope

The book of Genesis is all about God making an extravagantly gorgeous Creation to declare His glory and the horrifying result of our ancestors' rebellion against His kingly rule. It was written to remind us of our good God's promise to undo all the terror that our treason has wrought. It shows us our ancestors' faltering walk of faith and His faithful care for them, all the while paving the way for the coming King who would deliver us from ourselves and all who oppose our good God. The New Heavens and Earth will perfectly declare His praise.

APPLYING GOD'S WORD

Please ask the Holy Spirit to guide you:

Rejoice! God is Creator, Redeemer, and King. He has pursued us and rescued us from our cynicism. Sing His praises! Celebrate and declare His greatness! We are no longer enslaved as His enemies, but now know Him as Father and Lord.

Laugh! Delight in God's goodness and mercy. Recount to yourself and others the many ways He has delivered you from the bondage of self-absorption and despair.

Pray! Ask the Lord to continue to expand our sense of wonder and praise for all His greatness.

The Life of Faith—Hebrews

Rooted in God's Promises & Running to New Jerusalem

The book of Hebrews was written to encourage and exhort God's people who were tempted to turn back from the gospel. They were reminded that the promise of salvation comes through the Son who reveals His Father's glory and provides Sabbath rest. This is the basis for the Christian hope as we await the New Jerusalem whose architect has secured our resurrection life in the eternal city of peace.

Sermon Notes and Daily Devotional
First Congregational Church of Woodstock

Pastor Doug Warren
March 17th, 2019

Morning Service:

Genesis 18: 1 – 15; 21: 1 – 7

How Sarah Came to Understand the Gospel of Grace

1. Sarah Was Trapped in Cynical Disbelief.
2. Sarah's Laughter Was Transformed By Wonder in God.
3. Christ Has Come to Transform Our Laughter.

God transformed the bitter, cynical laugh of an old woman to joyful delight. He rescued her from her disbelief and the death that it brings. He can transform your laughter too and fill you with wonder. Is anything too hard for Him? Nothing is too hard for the Lord.

Evening Service:

Hebrews 1: 1 – 4

So Great a God!

1. The Son Is Supreme in All Things.
2. The Son Secured Our Promised Salvation.
3. Christ's Superiority Is Shown in His Sacrifice.

Jesus is the perfect Son of God who has created all that there is and who has accomplished our long awaited redemption. The book of Hebrews shows Jesus as He is—the fulfillment, completion, and perfection of all that went before Him in the Hebrew Scriptures—to point to His saving work of His people. This introduction opens with comparing Christ to both the prophets and the angels and showing how He is superior to them both. How will you respond to so great a Son?

Taking Gathered Worship Home

God came looking for Sarah. Where others noticed her and immediately sought how they could use her for their benefit, God sought her out to bless her. He met her in her disbelief and gave her the gift of faith. God took her bitter despondency and transformed it into joyous wonder. Laughter. He gave her joyful laughter. He delights in her and enlivens her to enjoy Him. Can you imagine?

Please use the devotional material below each day this week to meet with Jesus. Ask Christ to teach us His ways that we may walk in them to accomplish His purposes.

Sunday AM

READ **Genesis 18:1-15; 21:1-7; Hebrews 11:11-16** DISCUSS Why did God pursue Sarah? Why did she initially laugh? How did God transform her laughter? How's your laugh? PRAY for God to enliven us to delight in Christ. Ask Him to enable us to live by faith in Christ in our environment.

Sunday PM

READ today's passage: **Hebrews 1:1-4**. DISCUSS, Was Jesus a prophet? How does He compare to other prophets? Was Jesus an angel? How does He compare to the angels? PRAISE God for His greatness.

Monday

READ **Genesis 18:9-15; Romans 9:6-16**. DISCUSS, Why does God bless Sarah? How is His mercy shown? PRAY for your neighbors, peers, friends & family asking God to show them His mercy in Christ. EXTEND His grace to someone today. Show them the grace Christ has lavished upon you.

Tuesday

READ **Genesis 18:9-15; 1 Peter 3:1-7**. What does it mean for husbands and wives to submit to one another? How is this demonstrating faith in God? PRAY, "Father God, we praise You as the God of all Creation! Jesus, thank You for Your victory. Holy Spirit, enable us to live out these truths."

Wednesday

READ **Genesis 18:9-15; 21:1-7**. DISCUSS, Did God do what He promised Sarah? MEDITATE on the God's faithfulness. REJOICE if you have been adopted through Christ's sacrifice. PRAY, "Lord, thank You for the fullness of Your love for us. We praise You for doing what only You could do in making us Your people. Help us proclaim and live out the reality of Your grace together."

Thursday

READ **Genesis 21:1-7; Romans 4:16-25**. DISCUSS, How did God use the faith that He gave Abraham and Sarah to bless us? REJOICE in God's delight in us through Christ. PRAY, "Jesus, You have pursued us just like You did Sarah. You have not left us in our disbelief and shame. Thank You for Your mercy and kindness. Teach us to delight in You and laugh."

Friday

READ **Genesis 18:9-15; 21:1-7**. How have you been learning from these passages this week? Make a list of things that make you laugh in wonder at God's goodness. REJOICE for Christ has died 'once for all' obtaining for us eternal life! PRAY for your neighbors to know this same delight that God has blessed you to know. Ask the Lord to open their eyes to His goodness and wonder.

Saturday

PREPARE today for the gathered worship service tomorrow. READ **Genesis 18:16-19:38**. Come to worship tomorrow expecting to hear from God and to learn more about our God together. Pray for God's glory to be more and more manifested in the Woodstock area. Pray that He will use us to extend His grace as we celebrate it together.