

## 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:*

**Confess!** Tell the Lord about all the ways you fall back into disbelief, doubt, and disobedience. Agree with Him on the foolishness of such ridiculous behavior. Ask Him to forgive you and strengthen your faith in Him.

**Breathe.** In God's great mercy and patience, He does not blot us out in an instant as we deserve. He has provided this time to not only confess our sins to God, but to trust Christ's work on our behalf.

**Look to Bless Others!** Ask the Lord to deliver you as only He can. Take Him at His word to bless you and forgive you in His blood.

## 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 31st, 2019

Morning Service:

Genesis 20: 1 – 18

### **Again with the Same Lies?!**

1. After Everything God Has Done, Abraham Still Struggles.
2. God Demonstrates His Justice and Mercy Again.
3. God Uses His People in Blessing and Cursing Others.

Abraham has a clear weak spot. His military prowess belies a significant insecurity that often leads him to deceit and endangering Sarah instead of protecting her. The root is his struggle to trust God in life and death situations. In this *deja vu* situation, Abraham falls back into his old patterns of sin and disbelief. Yet God remains faithful. He not only protects Sarah and Abraham, but blesses them and uses them to bless their neighbors.

Evening Service:

Hebrews 2: 1 – 4

### **So Great a Salvation!**

1. To What Must We Pay Careful Attention?
2. Why Must We Pay Careful Attention?
3. How Do We Pay More Careful Attention?

Christianity invites us to use our brains more, not less. God, in His infinite kindness to us, actually explains Himself to us. He didn't have to, but He did. And He tells us to pay careful attention to the good news of the salvation He has provided in Jesus so that we will cling to Him instead of useless idols. He even provides to us the power to pay attention to Him.

## Taking Gathered Worship Home

Do you ever struggle with the same sins? How can we continue to rebel against God when He has done so much for us?! God graciously shows us Abraham's repetitive sin, not to put him down, but to show us God's mercy to His people. And to show us how God works through us to show mercy to others.

*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 20:1-18**. DISCUSS, Why do we continue to distrust God? What are the ways you are most likely to fall back into disbelief? Why? How does God rescue us from those things? Sometimes He lets us suffer the consequences of our folly for a time. Why? PRAY for God to embolden us to trust Him even when we are very much afraid. Ask Him to enliven our faith in Christ who alone saves us.

### Sunday PM

READ today's passage: **Hebrews 2:1-4**. DISCUSS, To what are we supposed to be paying attention? Why? How can we? PRAISE God for His grace in securing our great salvation.

### Monday

READ **Genesis 12:10-20; 20:1-18**. DISCUSS, What similarities do you notice in these episodes? What differences do you see? Why would Abraham do this again? What do you do that makes no sense in light of God's promises and faithfulness? PRAY for God to transform us. EXTEND His grace to someone today. Show them the grace Christ has lavished upon you.

### Tuesday

READ **Genesis 20:1-18; Romans 2:1-16**. How does God judge us? Based on what? Is He just? PRAY, "Father God, we praise You as the God of all Justice! Jesus, thank You for Your victory over injustice. Holy Spirit, enable us to live justly and to love mercy."

### Wednesday

READ **Genesis 20:1-18; Second Timothy 2:8-13**. DISCUSS, God is faithful. He cannot be faithless. MEDITATE on this reality. Consider FASTING for a meal or longer and pray for our neighbors. PRAY, "Lord, have mercy on my neighbors, especially \_\_\_\_\_ (name them). Make Yourself known to them. Open their eyes to see You as You truly are. Enable them to repent of their sin and to trust You, Jesus."

### Thursday

READ **Genesis 20:1-18; First Corinthians 1:4-9**. DISCUSS, How has God demonstrated His faithfulness to Sarah and Abraham? How about to you? Make a list of ways He has blessed you. PRAY, "Jesus, You have blessed us in spite of all our disobedience. You are faithful and we are not. You know our weakness better than we know ourselves. Forgive us. Change us by Your grace to make us more like You, Jesus."

### Friday

READ **Genesis 20:1-18**. How have you been learning from this passage this week? Confess to the Lord ways that you have trusted yourself instead of Him. REJOICE for Christ has faithfully loved us. 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. Do what you can today so that you will be less rushed tomorrow. READ **Genesis 21:1-34**. Come to worship tomorrow expecting to hear from God through His Word 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.