

Genesis 17:1-27

Trust the Basics: God, Jesus & the Bible

In recent weeks two very interesting articles appeared in our states leading NewsPapers. One by a social scientist is titled **“AS GOOD AS IT GETS, our material comforts are catered for but, meanwhile, social connection seems to have collapsed. It’s time to rethink our search for happiness.”**

The article is a fascinating social commentary on where we are as a society and it has this amazing quote by another social commentator, Hugh Mackay **“We have yearned for a guiding story to help us make sense of what is happening to us.”**

Now contrast there was an article on the Anglican Church in Sydney in which Peter Jensen, it’s Head is question why the church as grown by 9% in the last 12 months. Now listen to His answer, **“It’s about “Getting back to the basics: God Jesus and the Bible.”**

In other words to quote Mackay again some people in Sydney **“have yearned for a guiding story that would help them make sense of what is happening to them.”** and have found the their **guiding story** to be as Peter Jensen says **“God Jesus and the Bible”**

Now I want to suggest to you that God is doing a similar thing with Abraham and with you and me tonight. He’s taking us back to the basics. To convince Him and us to trust Him and His great promises which include Jesus. And having done that He desires that we response appropriately as we hear **“His guiding story.”**

Last week we **“went around the circle”** one more time. It really was as we saw a sad tale of **“listening to the wrong voice.”** As David reminded us.

Chapter 16 begins with Sarai’s determination to realize God’s promise, but of course the scheme fails miserably and the Lord has to **‘work his purposes through the mess.’** **Now notice in v1 that God appears to Abram. He’s appeared before ch 12:7 and he appears again in 18:1**

Why? Well God has something important to tell him and us...

Look with me at Ch 17:1 “ When Abraham was ninety- nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, I AM MIGHTY.

But why does God appear again to Abram? I believe it’s to arouse Abraham out of his complacency. Notice our text says he is 99 yrs old. It’s now 13 years

since Ishmael was born. Abram's accepted Him as his son. But then suddenly God appears to refocus Him on the basics.

Look with me again at verse 1 " When Abraham was ninety- nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, I AM MIGHTY."

Firstly we need to Trust God's mighty power in our weakness Why does God say He all powerful? Well He saying to Abram, "I am creator I have ultimate power, and therefore it's not a hard thing for you to have a son when you and your wife are old.

In chapter 18:16 The Lord asks Abraham why Sarah laughs when she hears she is going to bear a son. Notice the Lord's reply, "Is anything to hard for the Lord."

Do you feel your weakness tonight, your lack the strength, the power to do certain things or cope with difficult circumstances? Is it a new job or some subject a Uni or school and your thinking, Or maybe it's preserving at work or in the home with difficult children or in a very difficult financial situation or health problems. "How on earth am I ever going to be able to do this, it's just to hard for me.

Be encouraged, God says to you what he said to Abraham "I am, going to display my power to you, I'm going to make it happen " But you must trust me, lean on me, rely on me to demonstrate my mighty powerful.

What did Christ say to the Apostle when He prayed to be delivered from a constant difficulty? "My grace is sufficient for you: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." (2 Cor 12:9) It's the is the same thought - Trust God to show you His strength in your weakness.

We not only need to trust God's mighty power in our weakness but...

Secondly I want you to TRUST GOD'S MIGHTY PROMISES v2, 4 -9

Look at v2.a "And I will make my covenant between you and me....
But hadn't God established His covenant in 12:2-3 15:18?. Yes but now, He's making it operative, putting it into force. When I flick one of my light switch it_____ electricity, it's the same. It's as though God says "Abram you've waited 24yrs but trust Me, 12 months later in as we see in ch22:5 Isaac become a reality.

God promises a new family and a new name v4 "As for me, behold my covenant is with you and you shall be a father of many nations"

What a contrast with last week., in 16:2 Sarah said... But here v4 could be translated as for me my covenant with you still stands. How v6 "I will make you exceedingly fruitful.."

Look at v5 "No longer will your name be call Abram, but your name shall be called Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations.

But why did God give Abraham a new name? To match His new character and function. That's why names in biblical times where very important.

So every time Abraham threw his undies on the tent floor or left the lid off the toothpaste or the toilet sit up Sarah would shout "Abraham...you're done blah blah again" He thought to himself, whoops, but then the sound of his new name made his heart leap " I m going to be a father not just of one son but generations.

But notice God's promise a new relationship & a new home v7

See how He repeats it twice in v8 " And I will be their God." God now promising His descendants a new relationship they had is lost in Adam. It also means God promises to be working 24/7 for your physical, spiritual and eternal happiness. Now you may not get what you want, He may bring you into suffering. But in the hard times He promises " to be God to you! As He did Abraham.

v8 "Also I will give you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession..." Why did God repeat the promise of a new home? Because he was homeless, He lived in a tent! We're told in Hebrews 11:13 They died not having received the promises... and in v14 ..They seek a homeland in v15 they desire a better, that is a heavenly country. God's promises you heaven, if you're a Christian what a comfort.

God promises to send a crusher - Look at v6c "and kings shall come from you."

Who would these kings be? Well amazingly one is the Lord Jesus Christ, the King of Kings! "Abraham this is the "crusher" I promised long ago to Adam He will make right you right with Me forgiving you, bring us into relationship.

You need to not only TRUST GOD'S MIGHTY PROMISES...

Thirdly you need to respond to God because He is Mighty and makes great Promises

We need to respond because we've different look at v10 - 27 v10 " This is the covenant you shall keep, between you and Me and you and your descendants after you; Every male child among you shall circumcised."

For Abraham it's his sexual organ that got him into trouble in the first place, so it's natural for God to say, I'm going to hit you where it hurts. But is God being cruel? Of course not! Because the instrument that caused the problems of Ch 16 is going to be the very thing that provides the solution! This how Abraham is to show He is in Covenant with God. The knife came out in Ch 15 and here it is again.

Every time Abraham was naked and saw his circumcised penis it reminded him that He was now in an agreement with God. But God had promised to bring a miracle of new life through His penis and the seed that came from it would issue in a greater son. Even the Lord Jesus

For those of us who are Christians, God has circumcised our hearts so we are different now

So God wants us to live differently Look at v1d "Walk before Me and be blameless." (Gen 17:1d)

Why is Abraham to be walk before God and be blameless? If we think back to the Garden of Eden, what did Adam do? He walked with God... In other words God is asking Abraham to live the way He intends every one He has made to live. In a relationship free from sin to live innocently to be perfect, not guilty and injured by sin.

But if that is not enough God adds, **"and be blameless."**In chapter 16? He wasn't blameless was He, but to blame.

This word means to be clear, innocent, pure free from blame it's the opposite of blame,

What is to be our motivation to live differently tonight? Isn't it the same as Abraham, look back at ch 15:6 **"And he believed God and He accounted it to him for Righteousness."** What would motivate him to obey? This incredible fact that when God looked up His accounts to see who owes Him, because sin pays wages, he sees under Abraham's name , **Paid in Full.**

Next time you tempted to waste another hour watching some rubbish on TV, or you ducking out for some "Retail Therapy" Or you're tempted to snarl at your husband or wife or the kids. God says "Walk before me and be blameless. Stop

and think I am not going to do this, because over my account in heaven is Thomo (pause) **Paid in Full! What a motivation!**

Next notice God wants you to daily adore Him Look at v3a “ Then Abram fell on his face...” For Abraham it is the most natural thing in the world to worship this mighty, powerful God because He has just told Him that He is going to activate this covenant with Him and give Him what he now so desperately wanted; a son.

Aren't we to worship God to adore Him because of what God has promised us in the Gospel? Read again Romans 1-11 the notice what the Apostle says. ... Now here it is and I quote the NASB because it brings it the meaning... **You're spiritual service of worship...**

How are to daily do this? Romans 6:11 “Reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God How? Through Christ Jesus our Lord. This is how we are to worship God

God challenging us to trust Him, because He is powerful in our weakness and He makes mighty promises that can transform our lives. Christian the words of this hymn leave us with this challenge...

**Who is on the Lord's side? Who will serve the King?
Who will be his helpers, other lives to bring? Who will leave
The world's side? Who will face the foe? Who for Him will go?
And may our reply come back.**

By thy grace Divine, I am on the Lord's side, Saviour you are thine!

But maybe you're not a Christian tonight. You here because Mum and Dad expect you to come. You been switched off and now the message is almost over, at last! Let me be blunt with you. God says His promises aren't for you to night. You're a child of the devil, and if that's not bad enough your going to Hell forever not heaven. You worship yourself, it's all about you and this is a great offense to God.

How do I know, well by your own admission, you refuse to have Jesus rule your life, you've condemned yourself. Don't be foolish!

Stop trusting in your brains or the great education your receiving or the awesome career it's going to give you. So you can earn heaps of money and buy lots of stuff. No!

God is calling you tonight to become His friend You know enough to become a Christian. What's stopping you? Look at Jesus Dying on the cross for someone as selfish as you. Come to Him, cling to Him, embrace Him now!

Ask Him for the power to trust Him and turn from your selfishness. He will do it. He promises. Amen