

Still Waiting on Your Prophetic Promise? Remember This Truth

In the past two weeks, I have examined the lives and faith of Abraham and Sarah. We read in Genesis that God promised that from Abraham's descendants, all the families of the earth would be blessed.

But 24 years passed since the Lord first spoke to Abraham and Sarah about having a son, and their faith has weakened. God, however, appears to them in Genesis 18 and tells them that Sarah shall conceive and have a son by the set time next year.

"Is anything too difficult for the Lord? At the appointed time I will return to you, at this time next year, and Sarah will have a son" (Gen. 18:14).

As promised, Sarah gave birth to the son of promise, "and the Lord did for Sarah as He had spoken" (Gen. 21:1).

What promise have you been waiting for? Remember, He is God Almighty, El-Shaddai, the all-powerful God who is enough! He is able to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves!

Abraham and Sarah's son of promise, and the promise of many descendants, was to rest upon El-Shaddai—Almighty God. Their future prosperity and posterity were not found in their ability, but in God's ability. So it is for us.

Abraham is highlighted 74 times in the New Testament, second only to Moses. Abraham is the only person in the Bible called a friend of God (James 2:23)—perhaps the highest honor anyone can receive.

Abraham is the father of faith and the faithful. Throughout his life, faith is exemplified. Even when Abraham was weak in

faith, God saw him as a person of faith.

Abraham and Sarah learned through their journey that they could trust and obey God. They weren't perfect, but they trusted God through the process. From this "friend of God," we learn that faith is not perfect character or integrity. Rather, it is simply taking God at His word and trusting Him. By doing so, Abraham became the model of faith for all believers.

Abraham and Sarah had to align their lives with God's prophetic promise to see it fulfilled.

Abraham discovered God as a Father—One who deeply loves us. God communicates vision to us through love—not demand. It's an invitation to journey with Him. He builds us up through His promise revealed and inspires us to partner with Him to impact our world.

The Father is looking for friends! Jesus said to those who would follow Him, "I no longer call you servants ... But I have called you friends" (John 15:15). God loves us unconditionally; performance is not required to earn God's love and favor. Yet from a place of intimacy with Father God, He invites us to believe His prophetic promises and risk. Prophecy reveals the perfect heart of Father God—His love and goodness.

Abraham had to start with some "basic steps" to fulfill God's purpose for his life. He had to believe God's promise, obey God's promise and give himself to God's eternal purposes. The same is true for you and I if we are to see prophetic promise fulfilled in our lives.

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out into a place which he would later receive as an inheritance. He went out not knowing where he was going. By faith he dwelt in the promised land, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs of the same promise, for he was

looking for a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. By faith Sarah herself also received the ability to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised. Therefore from one man, who was as good as dead, sprang so many, a multitude as the stars of the sky and innumerable as the sand by the seashore (Heb. 11:8-12).

Abraham Believed God's Promise (Heb. 11:9)

Abraham and Sarah dwelt by faith in the land of promise and patiently waited for the son of promise, Isaac. Prophetic promise enables you to see when circumstances cloud the promise. Like a marathon runner getting a drink, hearing God's voice (promise), refreshes and strengthens you to keep running your race (Heb. 12:1-2).

Impossible circumstances didn't bring Abraham into unbelief; rather, his faith was strengthened as he waited in faith upon God's promise. Abraham's faith grew stronger rather than weaker. He continued to give glory to God as he waited for the promise. The promise releases grace to believe.

"Against all hope, he believed in hope ... and not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body ... he did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully persuaded that what God had promised, He was able to perform. Therefore 'it was credited to him as righteousness'" (Rom. 4:18-22).

Don't stop believing God's promise to you. When faith weakens, prayer ceases!

Faith occurs when we cease trying to do something by our own efforts and simply trust God! Romans 10:17 says that "faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." It doesn't say "from having heard," but by "hearing" a God-breathed word for now. It's the intimate, communing heart in the present

tense that is ready for God's deposit of faith. Hearing now is a key to faith—Abraham had to hear “now,” and so it is for you and me.

Faith is fastened to the heavenly realm. Unbelief is attached to the natural (seen) realm. Faith lives from the invisible toward the visible. Use your promise as a foundation for prayer!

Faith that hears, believes and obeys God's promises isn't always easy. It involves trust, patience and a willingness to risk. It means waiting upon God, believing in God's goodness when others might easily give up.

Paul writes that each of us has been given a “measure of faith” (Rom. 12:3); it is up to you to develop your faith that “sees” clearly what God is offering in His unseen kingdom realm. Measure is from the Greek *metron*, and implies a unit of measure, with dimensions or volume. You've been given a portion of faith from God; you must cultivate what He has given to see faith increase. Your ability to believe His promises is connected to your stewardship of the faith given to you.

You must also be “imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises” (Heb. 6:12). The Greek word for patience means patient endurance, longsuffering. Enduring faith in God's promise and prophecy is needed to fulfill your purpose and destiny. Your faith is sustained with patience and endurance.

Remember, you are responsible for God's promises—you must steward what God has given you! Others aren't responsible for your promise to come to pass—you are.

The Holy Spirit reveals the plans God has for you—to give you hope for the future (see Jer. 29:11). God reveals by His Spirit things that your eye hasn't seen—things God has prepared beforehand for you. Your mind can't conceive it, but

the Spirit reveals those plans God has for you (see 1 Cor. 2:9-10). Your mind will eventually believe and conceive the reality of God's plans.

Prophecy releases kingdom identity. You may have taken a wrong turn, but with God, your destiny is redeemable through surrender. He is a loving Father! Identity, calling and destiny are discovered through a Father-son, or Father-daughter, relationship.

Abraham Obeyed God's Promise (Heb. 11:8)

Abraham's faith was demonstrated by leaving his family in Haran and journeying to unknown lands. He lived in Canaan, the land of promise, waiting for the son of promise, Isaac.

When God spoke to Abraham to "get up and get out to a land I will show you," he had to believe and obey (see Gen. 12:1-4). God led Abraham and Sarah on a 1,500-mile journey that began with believing and obeying God's directive. This theme of God speaking to His people, and God's expectation for us to believe and obey, is repeated throughout the Old and New Testaments.

Like Abraham, we're walking a faith walk that requires obedience even when we don't understand. God's promise empowers us to act and obey. God was saying to Abraham, "take the first step and I'll show you the second!" It took years for everything to unfold, but they had to begin by going to the land of promise.

It's one thing to "hear" God's directive, but another matter to believe and obey God.

Later, Abraham is told to view the land before him, and God said, "All the land that you see I will give to you and to your descendants forever" (see Gen. 13:14-17). He doesn't even have the son of promise yet; just a word!

Oswald Chambers, an early 20th-century Christian evangelist, teacher and author of the devotional *My Utmost for His Highest*, stated regarding faith, "Faith never knows where it is being led, but it loves and knows the one who is leading it." Intimate relationship with God yields strong faith that trusts God even when it doesn't know where it is being led.

After Isaac was born, God tested Abraham. It required extreme faith and obedience to God.

"Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you" (Gen. 22:1-2).

Abraham and Isaac are a shadow of the Father offering His only begotten Son, Jesus, to die in our place (John 3:16). God's love for us has provided forgiveness for our sin—God's love never fails us in Christ! God's requirement to sacrifice Isaac was the supreme test that demonstrated Abraham's trust in God and his confidence in God's faithfulness to keep His promise.

Abraham is ready to sacrifice his son and the angel calls out to him to stop. God provides a lamb in the bushes that Abraham can offer up instead. God commends Abraham for his faithful obedience and reaffirms the covenant with Him. Abraham named the place "Jehovah-Jireh" which means the Lord will provide (see Gen. 22:1-19).

Jehovah-Jireh, or more accurately from the Hebrew *Yhwh-rā'āh*, which means God who provides what is needed. But *rā'āh* also means to see, to perceive by sight, to understand, to have prophetic vision.

Before Abraham saw the ram in the thickets, he had to see God as the one who provides!

What if Abraham's love for Isaac prevented him from fully trusting God? God was bringing Abraham into a deeper level of authority and fatherhood. It required him to be willing to let

go of the “promise” for God’s greater purpose to be accomplished. Sometimes our love for the promise fulfilled prevents us from moving into a greater sphere of influence or ministry that God desires. When God says, “let go,” trust Him!

Remember, God’s provisions are available along the road of faithful obedience! Like Abraham, this doesn’t mean your walk of faith is perfect. No, it means that you discover your life in God is a journey, and as you endeavor to stay close to Him, God promises to care and provide for you. Prayer keeps you in an intimate place with God to believe Him and then act upon what He reveals.

I heard the Lord say while praying this week, “I rejoice over every prayer you make!”

“Let us then come with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb. 4:16).

Every prayer we make is a delight to our heavenly Father. Confidently approach Him; it’s in the secret place of intimacy and worship where God reveals His secrets to friends, and He gives more grace to believe! Faith for the promise and provision is realized when we are close to His heart.

Stayed tuned to for Part 2 of this article Friday. {eo}

Bob Sawvelle is the founding and senior leader of Passion Church in Tucson, Arizona. Passion Church is a vibrant, kingdom-minded church in the heart of Tucson that values God’s love and presence. He is a DMin doctoral mentor for the Randy Clark Scholars cohort at United Theological Seminary (UTS), an adjunct professor teaching master’s level classes in evangelism, discipleship and church planting with the Global Awakening Theological Seminary (GATS), and an online course facilitator for Global Awakening’s Christian Healing Certification Program (CHCP) and Christian Prophetic Certification Program (CPCP).