

Learning Together 2nd After Pentecost Covid-19 – Waiting

Long, long ago, before there were Christians, or Muslims, or Jewish people, there was a woman named Sarah and her husband, Abraham, who left their home in the land that is now called Iraq, and made their way to settle in the lands now known as Israel and Palestine. I bring up Christians, Muslims and Jews, because all three tell the stories of Abraham as an ancestor of their faith, and so all three are sometimes called “Abrahamic faiths”. When you hear the story of Sarah and Abraham, it is no surprise that so many different people should claim them as their ancestors, because that is exactly what the story says God promised Abraham.

The story goes that God told Abraham he and Sarah would have as many descendants as there were stars in the sky. There was just one problem as far as Abraham was concerned – he and Sarah didn’t have any children. Years went by, and still no children. They got old enough to be grandparents, but still no children, so of course, there could be no grandchildren either. Abraham and Sarah got impatient, so Abraham had a baby with Sarah’s servant, Hagar, but God’s promise had been to Sarah, too, and that still hadn’t happened.

Then one day three strangers showed up at their tent. In those days, there weren’t hotels and places for visitors to stay, or restaurants for them to eat at, so Abraham and Sarah invited them in. Sarah began making extra bread and Abraham had one of his servants prepare the tenderest beef for a barbecue for the strangers, while Abraham himself offered them some cheese as a snack while they waited for the meal to be prepared. One of the strangers had a message from God, saying that within a year, Sarah would finally give birth to a child. When Sarah heard this from where she was busy baking, she laughed out loud, because it sounded ridiculous – by then she was old enough to be a great-grandmother! Women that old don’t have babies!

And at the same time, Sarah also laughed for joy at the thought that God’s promise might finally be coming true. Her long waiting to become a mother might finally be over! And it was! What the stranger said came true. Shortly after, Sarah became pregnant and within a year, she had given birth to a healthy baby boy! Even though the waiting was hard for Sarah and Abraham, God kept the promise to them about having a child.

I wonder if you feel like you have been waiting longer than you want to for things to change? I wonder if you have felt impatient with God during this time of staying at home? I know I sure have! Waiting is hard! I wonder what you might think of to do to help make the waiting easier?

This story of Sarah laughing helped me to think of something to do while we are waiting. My challenge to you this week is to make someone laugh – share a joke, watch a funny movie together, read a funny book – whatever you can think of to bring a little laughter into this time of waiting. Laughter can help heal bodies and spirits, especially when the situation around us doesn’t give us much to laugh about. So find the laughter you can this week and – and this is the important part – share it with someone else!

Say this echo prayer with me:

God of waiting...God of laughter...we thank you for jokes...and funny stories...that help us find joy...even in tough times....Help us to bring that joy...to other people...and to share your love....In Jesus' name we pray...Amen.



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