

Laughing With God

Genesis 18:1-15 Then the LORD appeared to him by the terebinth trees of Mamre, as he was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day. ² So he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing by him; and when he saw *them*, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the ground, ³ and said, "My Lord, if I have now found favor in Your sight, do not pass on by Your servant. ⁴ "Please let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. ⁵ "And I will bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh your hearts. After that you may pass by, inasmuch as you have come to your servant." They said, "Do as you have said." ⁶ So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah and said, "Quickly, make ready three measures of fine meal; knead *it* and make cakes." ⁷ And Abraham ran to the herd, took a tender and good calf, gave *it* to a young man, and he hastened to prepare it. ⁸ So he took butter and milk and the calf which he had prepared, and set *it* before them; and he stood by them under the tree as they ate. ⁹ Then they said to him, "Where *is* Sarah your wife?" So he said, "Here, in the tent." ¹⁰ And He said, "I will certainly return to you according to the time of life, and behold, Sarah your wife shall have a son." (Sarah was listening in the tent door which *was* behind him.) ¹¹ Now Abraham and Sarah were old, well advanced in age; *and* Sarah had passed the age of childbearing. ¹² Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, "After I have grown old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?" ¹³ And the LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh, saying, 'Shall I surely bear *a child*, since I am old?' ¹⁴ "Is anything too hard for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son." ¹⁵ But Sarah denied *it*, saying, "I did not laugh," for she was afraid. And He said, "No, but you did laugh!"

Sarah Laughed At God

We are privileged to live in a nation in which we have the right of free speech. We can ridicule and make fun of our leaders. There are not many times in history when this was true. We are privileged to laugh at those in power without getting our heads chopped off and we love to do.

But just because we can does not mean that we should. It is easy to criticize. It is easy to find fault. It is easy after the fact to say what this or that one should have done. Certainly, our leaders make a lot of mistakes. And unfortunately, we have leaders now that make terrible laws even against God's word supporting abortion and divorce and homosexuality. We know they are wrong to do these things, but that is their sin. When we laugh at them in derision that is our sin.

The biblical example that is given to us is Michael the archangel who do not even speak an unkind word to Satan but left it up to God to judge. We are privileged to have the right to laugh at others but that privilege also has responsibility. And isn't it so much better to laugh with people rather than at them.

In our text today Sarah did not laugh at a man who is also a sinner. She laughed at God. Even more than that she laughed at His promises. Here God comes with this wonderful promise that he is going to give them a child and Sarah laughs in derision at him.

If I was trying to do some good thing for someone. If I came home and said to Vanessa that I was going to take her out tonight, and her response was to laugh in derision, I would be pretty angry.

Here God makes this wonderous promise to Abraham and Sarah and Sarah laughs in derision. No wonder Sarah lies and pretends that she did not laugh. She had good reason to be afraid. She was mocking God.

This is a sin against the second command. She is taking God's name in vain. Maybe not with her words but in her heart.

God says, "I will not hold him guiltless who takes my name in vain."

Sarah ridicules God's gracious promise and yet God did not strike her down with lightning.

We are privileged to live in a nation where we can ridicule our leaders without fear, but we are even more privileged to have a God who forgives us even when we laugh in his face.

Like Sarah we ridicule God in our hearts making fun of his gracious promises. We hear him speak his promises to us and in our hearts, we think yeah right. He promises to answer our prayers. He promises to take care of us. He promises that if we seek his kingdom and his word first, he will take care of all the rest. He gives us all these promises and many more and yet we so often ridicule his promises. God makes these promises to us just as he made this promise to Abraham and Sarah and mostly, we think yeah right I'll believe it when I see it.

Sarah laughed at God and God did not strike her down but sent his only son to die for her sins and ours, what a privilege to be forgiven when we laugh at God.

Sarah Laughed with God

And yet this privilege is nothing compared to what would happen in a year.

A year later Sarah laughed again, except this time it was not at God but with Him. A year later God fulfilled his promise and gave Sarah a son and she named him Isaac which means "laughter." Sarah was not laughing at God in derision this time but filled with joy at receiving the promise she laughs in joy with God at all that he has done.

Isn't it so much better to laugh in joy with someone than to laugh in derision at someone? Even more so it is with God.

God has given us promise that seem just as ridiculous as telling Sarah she will have a child. We can laugh in our hearts at these ridiculous promises, or we can wait and laugh with God when he fulfills them.

We are privileged that in God's mercy he does not strike us down when we laugh at Him in derision of his promises but even better, we are privileged to laugh with him in joy when he fulfills those promises that he has made.

Amen