**Genesis 18:1–14** The Lord appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, as he was sitting by the door to his tent during the heat of the day…14Is anything impossible for the Lord? At the set time next year I will return to you, and Sarah will have a son.”

Sometimes it is rather hard for us to grasp why things have changed so much. For instance, why, in the early history of our world, did God choose to work directly, that is, to appear directly to various people and prophets? Why doesn’t he do that now? Or just the issue of miracles. Why don’t we find the level and intensity of miracles in today’s world that there were in the days of the prophets or even in the days of Jesus? I think we ask these questions because we have a tendency to second guess the Lord. We think that faith would be better, that more people would believe if God did the things today that he did of old.

Yet that is not what God has chosen to do. And I will try to help you understand why. As mankind progressed through the centuries, especially after the fall into sin, the trend of man was to deny, ignore and despise the Lord. Take the world before the flood. In the sinful world before the flood, any man at any time could easily determine if there was a “God” or not. Do you know how? All anyone had to do was try to get into the original Garden of Eden. Once Adam and Eve were expelled from that Garden we are told this: **“In front of the Garden of Eden he stationed cherubim and a flaming sword, which turned in every direction to guard the way to the tree of life.”** As far as I know, until the flood, the cherubim and sword were there keeping people out of the garden. If you wanted to know if God were true, all you had to do was go and try and get into the Garden. You would find it just as we are told, that flaming sword and angels would keep you out. And yet, I want you to notice that eventually there was the flood because mankind was only inclined to evil. In other words, though there was a visible sign of the truth of God, mankind denied, ignored and despised the Lord!

After the flood God chose to keep revealing himself to mankind. God sent his prophets. Many of those Prophets were able to do miracles, with the Lord’s permission. Yet the prophets were ignored and often times persecuted in the world, yep even among the so-called believers they were persecuted. God allowed them to do miracles to show absolutely that they were of and from him. Didn’t matter. Through most of the Old Testament, God was denied, ignored and despised.

Of course the prime example of this godless attitude of mankind is the Lord Jesus. Here is God’s son, a man who does incredible things, miracle after miracle, visible, verifiable, awesome wonders and signs. You would think he would have people in the palm of his hand. Instead, within three years they determined it would be best to kill him. I have often wondered at that. Here is this guy doing nothing but good and helping thousands every day and despite that marvel, because you don’t like what he says, you, the leaders and religious powers decide to kill him. They killed the perfect son of God!

Why do I remind you of all of this? Because it is a good way to help you realize that without any doubt, how God has and is doing things is the best way to do it for our would! God knows what is best. God knows the answers even before you can ask the question. God knows what He is doing and just because you and I don’t get it, doesn’t mean that God is wrong. Nope, God is always right, always does what is right, and always does what is best for the salvation of the souls of humankind. In other words, the point and focus of faith is that we trust, put our hope and heart into the promises of the Lord our God.

In many ways that is what the lesson is today. It is really a lesson taken from the life of Abraham and Sarah. A lesson on the truth of God. A lesson on hoping in God. A lesson in trusting the Lord God.

So here is Abraham, wandering around in the land of Canaan, the land that God said his descendants absolutely inherit. That’s one of the reasons Abraham is there, because of this promise of God that the land he lived in would one day belong to his family and their multitude of children. But that hasn’t happened yet. The land was not his yet. The biggest obstacle though was the fact that Abraham and Sarah had been unable to have children. Abraham is 99 and Sarah is 89. It is made clear in our text and in the book of Hebrews that for both of them, the child producing abilities of both was dead. Now, Abraham was told at 70 or so that he was going to produce descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky…but here, almost twenty years later, nothing!

Abraham is sitting by his tent on one particular day. I want you to remember that Abraham is an extremely wealthy man. God has blessed him with an abundance of just about everything, except kids. Abraham is wealthy and I can tell you his tents and his community of people no doubt reflected that wealth in every way. At this point in his life, Abraham was used to being honored and exalted by others, in other words, people humbly and respectfully sought an audience with him. That was the normal course of the life of Abraham at this point.

Yet we are told that these three men were seen standing before Abraham. Do you see what happened? Abraham sees these three men, and he runs from his comfy seat at the entrance to the tent, to go and bow to these three men. Think about that. What you have to grasp is that when these three men are seen, there is something so extraordinary, something so awesome about them, that Abraham clearly reacts to them as one of absolutely lower rank. Is it that there are no other “travelers” with them, no caravans or camels or other attendants? It would be usual to have such a group. Is it their dress, their deportment, something in their appearance that showed they were very special men? What is it that Abraham sees? And perhaps it doesn’t matter because clearly the text tells us this was the Lord and clearly Abraham himself grasped that this was the Lord. God himself had come and appeared to Abraham! No wonder the bowing and the graciousness of Abraham in dealing with these men. Not just men, but rather an appearance, a manifestation of the Lord God himself.

Needless to say it even boggles my mind that God, this manifestation of God actually sat and ate. I hope you noticed that while they ate, Abraham did not join them. Our text says that **“Abraham stood beside them under the tree while they ate.”** What I can tell you of that time period is that Abraham’s actions are the actions of a servant, one who waits on and takes care of someone greater and more important than they are. Don’t you just marvel at that? The Lord our God ate, like a common man, the Lord our God ate a meal. This is the graciousness of God on display. This is God demonstrating that though He is God, he is not unreachable or even beyond our world. He partakes of our world. He shares what our world is. He eats and drinks in our world showing that He has a care and compassion for us. This is God demonstrating a humility of self so great that it is obvious his feeling of oneness, his desire for fellowship and his love for us and our world. No wonder Jesus would teach: God so loved the world. You can see that love here with Abraham.

Then note that the men ask about Sarah. Note how it is spoken: **“They asked him.”** Did they speak together or was it just clear that all were very interested in the answer. But I note one other thing. There is no record of Abraham telling them of his wife and her name. In truth, they, the three men ask this question because they know where Sarah is and they know Sarah is listening. They want to make sure that Sarah gives her complete attention to what is now going to be said.

Note the change in number. Now the text says, **“One of the men said, I will certainly return to you when this season comes around next year. Then Sarah your wife will have a son.”** Now there is a singular spokesman. I will tell you that there are many pastors out there who think that this one person speaking is none other than a pre-incarnate Jesus. Here is the eternal Jesus giving the promise of the child through whom His incarnate being will be born. It just makes your mind reel. God, Jesus, giving promises about his own human descendant.

It is then that we are told Sarah laughed. There is no doubt that this is not the laugh of joy or hope or excited faith. This laugh is caused by doubt and unbelief. Sarah simply can’t grasp how this is going to happen. She is 89. Abraham is 99. Our text tells us, **“Sarah was past the age for childbearing.”** Sarah just couldn’t believe what was being said. She just couldn’t fathom how this was going to happen. For 70 years of her life she tried to have children. And now that everything had stopped, stopped long ago, now she is told she is going to have a son. Not just a child, but specifically she would have a son. Honestly, she just couldn’t believe it.

But here is where all of us need to pay attention. **“The Lord said to Abraham…Is anything impossible for the Lord? At the set time next year I will return to you and Sarah will have a son.”** Again marvel. The promise is being repeated and emphasized. Sarah, you are going to have a son just like I said. Note why this is true! **IS ANYTHING IMPOSSIBLE FOR THE LORD?**

There is the point of all of this. We are dealing with the Lord God. Do you think there is something that God cannot accomplish and do? Do you think God to weak and feeble to carry out his promises and Law? How you answer that question might just be an indication of where your faith is at.

If you answer, “No, he can’t do anything,” then you have a serious faith problem. You do not grasp the majesty and awe that God truly is. You do not grasp his power and wisdom, his very nature and being as God. To believe in God is to grasp that nothing is impossible for Him and to not believe is simply to reject this reality of God. No doubt, there is a faith problem if you can’t grasp and believe this truth.

If you answer, “Well I think God can do a lot but not everything,” again I will tell you that you have a faith problem. Is this problem because you have been convinced by the god “Science” that the world was not created? Or because you have been led by false theologians to think that God’s Word is not what God says it is. They tell you how there are other books out there that should be in the Bible and they are not. They tell you that we know this and that but we can’t verify this therefore the Bible is wrong. They tell you that the Great Lakes were formed by glaciers and an ice age instead of a flood as the Bible says. Why would you be led astray like that? Why would you let yourself be talked out of God by men! Why would you rather put your confidence in men and what they do and say? If you actually look at what men do the best you can say is that it is a freefall mess. Every time we fix something six other things go wrong. In the 1960’s we were told we were going to eradicate every disease because we were so smart. But what we find is new and more destructive diseases and we are not doing well against them. Seriously, why would you ever listen to the philosophies and wisdom of men? Would it not be better to simply trust God?

To trust that God can through men produce a book that tells us everything we need to know about Him and His salvation. We have this truth of God. I don’t need men to amend or change it, I just need to grasp that God is God and He has revealed himself in every way in His holy and true Word.

To trust that God has and still does move in this world, for the good and salvation of men. I may not see it or observe it but it is true nevertheless. That’s what God has demonstrated and that’s what God still does. He acts and moves in ways that benefit the souls of his children even when we can’t see it. It tells me I can put my hope, my confidence, my very life and soul into the hands of God. He says it. He promises it. He is faithful and just.

To trust that Jesus, an historically verified fact, walked this earth at the time the Bible says and did exactly what has been proclaimed. Jesus lived the perfect life we could not. Jesus offered himself on the cross for our sins. Jesus was crucified, died and was buried only to rise again the third day because that is exactly what God’s Word said would happen. Because of what Jesus has done, we have the gift of eternal life, the promise of forgiveness and the status as God’s dearly loved children.

All of this is what our faith is about. How God so loved us that in Jesus and the gift of faith, he offers and gives us forgiveness and with that forgiveness, eternal life and salvation. Trust God! Trust His Word! Trust that He does know what He is doing!

That is my plea. But please note God’s grace. Abraham and Sarah through no power of their own will have that son. Sarah had doubts even with God in her presence but notice that God does not stop his plan or change it because of Sarah’s weakness. What God did was show her, as the next year unfolded, that He is right, worthy and is to be trusted, hoped in and believed. Lord, may you guide all of us in this way. Amen.