

Is Anything Too Hard For The Lord? Gen. 18:14

I. INTRODUCTION

A. *The Question*

Is anything too hard for the Lord?

B. *Simple & Short*

1. The message this morning will be both simple & short.
2. You see, it's my aim, my task as a teacher to faithfully explain the text of God's Word.
3. And sometimes, the best way to do that is with fewer, not more words.
4. The text is so obvious, so straightforward, there's little need to explain it.
5. The need is to simply accept and apply it.
6. If the teacher isn't careful, his words can obscure, not clarify.
7. Our text this morning is an example of this.
8. There's little need for interpretation – the need is in application.
9. It all begins with a question –

Is anything too hard for the Lord?

II. TEXT

A. *Set the Scene*

1. Let's set the scene for our text –
2. Abraham is 100 years old, Sarah is 90.
 - a. they have no child,
 - b. though the promise of God they would have many descendants had been given to them over 25 years before.
 - c. Sarah has been barren – and now because of age, she's double infertile since she's been through menopause.
3. They're living as nomadic shepherds in the region of Hebron with an impressive community that has grown up and around Abraham.
4. One afternoon, as he was sitting in the shade of his tent door, he looked up to see three men approaching his camp.
 - a. he ran out to meet them in a demonstration of that famous hospitality the Bedouin of the Middle East are known to this day for.
 - b. he bowed before them and invited them to stop for refreshment.
 - c. they consented and Abraham laid out a feast.
5. When they were done – they struck up a conversation with Abraham that proved they were more than mere passers-by; this was the Lord, accompanied by two angels.

B. Vs. 9-15

9Then they said to him, “Where is Sarah your wife?” So he said, “Here, in the tent.”

10And 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?”

13And 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.”

15But Sarah denied it, saying, “I did not laugh,” for she was afraid. And He said, “No, but you did laugh!”

1. V. 8 tells us while the visitors enjoyed their meal, Abraham stood nearby in the posture of a waiter, ready to bring more food & drink.
2. When the meal was finished, they asked him –
 - a. “Where’s your wife?” using her name, ‘Sarah’;
 - b. this was the new name God had only recently given her.
 - c. this clued Abraham in to the fact that these were no ordinary men who had just happened to stumble into his camp.
3. He replied that Sarah was just inside the tent.
4. Then the Lord said that the long awaited promise of a child would soon come to pass.
5. The 2½ decade long delay was now at an end.
6. Sarah, who was just around the corner inside the tent was listening in to the conversation.
7. When she heard these words, she snickered behind her hand and thought, “We’re too old!”
8. No more do these words form in her mind and she carries on this little internal dialog than she overhears the Lord asking her husband why she’s making light of and denying the promise of God.
9. Then he asks – “Is anything too hard for the Lord?”
10. He repeats the promise of a son.
11. At that point, Sarah stepped out of the tent to deny that she’d mocked the Lord and His promise.
12. But God denied her denial, and she, finally realizing the foolishness of arguing with the Lord was silent.

C. Is Anything Too Hard For The Lord?

1. God challenged Sarah with an important question – “Is anything too hard for the Lord?”
2. That question was tied to God’s freshly spoken promise.
3. Sarah had heard the word of God, but lacked the faith to believe it.
4. For years, she’d heard the promise second-hand from her husband.
 - a. God had appeared to him again & again and told him he and his wife would have a child.

- b. for years she'd heard reports of Abraham's encounters with God and the repeated promise of a son.
- c. but by now she'd given up hope in these second-hand promises.
- 5. This is the first time she's heard the promise directly from God.
- 6. And when it's spoken to her, she laughs.
 - a. why! Well, where is she looking – what does she say?

“After I have grown old, shall I have pleasure, my lord [meaning Abraham] being old also?”

 - b. she looking at herself; at her age and inability.
 - c. she looks at Abraham and his advanced years.
 - d. it's pretty clear to her – they do not possess the ability to have a child!
- 7. There's a little clue here to another factor that may have led to the seeming impossibility of their having a child.
 - a. she remarked – “shall I have pleasure.”
 - b. this is probably a reference to the fact that Abraham and Sarah had stopped being physically intimate.
 - c. the combination of age and the disappointment of the years of barrenness have made love-making just too much work & too emotionally painful.
 - d. this is very likely why she laughed within herself –
 - e. it's pretty hard to have a child when she and Abraham are no longer enjoying this part of their relationship.
 - f. and this explains why God comes to them at this time to renew the promise and tell them it's time for its fulfillment.
 - g. though the promise is sure, they must act on it in order to see it fulfilled.
- 8. Sarah's mistake was when she heard the promise of God, she looked at herself and her circumstances and saw only her inability.
- 9. God's question was aimed at lifting her eyes off herself and onto Him!
 - a. her conceiving had nothing whatsoever to do with hers or her husband's ability.
 - b. it had to do with the Lord's ability.
 - c. and the fact of the matter was – the very thing that had led to Sarah's lack of faith was what the Lord was using to bring about His promise – the passage of time without it being fulfilled
 - d. you see, their son had to be a miracle, not just the result of the ordinary way children are conceived.
 - 1) no – this son had to be a miracle -
 - 2) so that he and all those who would come from him would realize they exist by the grace and power of God.
 - 3) they would be the ones through whom God's blessing and salvation would come to the world
 - 4) so they could not be the result of man's strength or genius.
 - 5) they had to come by God's grace!
 - e. so God closed Sarah's womb so she wouldn't conceive.
 - f. then He waited until well after menopause.
 - g. and now that it's clear conception is impossible for them in their own strength, God comes and tells them the time has arrived.

10. When Sarah finds the promise too good to be true – she expresses her doubt with inward scorn.
11. But God challenged her disbelief with a simple question –
Is anything too hard for the Lord?
12. It may be too hard for YOU Sarah – It may be impossible for Abraham.
13. But is anything too hard -- for the Lord?
14. And of course, the answer is – NO!
 - a. nothing’s too hard for God.
 - b. if He’s said it, if He’s given His word, if He’s made a promise, then IT WILL COME TO PASS!
 - c. it doesn’t matter if it’s been 25 days, 25 years, or 25 centuries!
 - d. God’s word cannot fail because God cannot fail.
15. All that’s left for us to do is believe and order our lives on the basis of the surety of God & His Promise.
16. For Abraham and Sarah, that meant they needed to restore their relationship to physical intimacy.

D. Wonder!

1. God makes use of an interesting word here when He asks, “Is anything too HARD for the Lord?”
2. The word “hard” is the same word translated as “wonderful” in Isaiah 9:6 where we read –
Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given - and His name will be called Wonderful.
 - a. the word means that which is marvelous, awesome.
 - b. it stirs us to marvel, to be in awe.
 - c. it’s so good we stand back in wonder at how it could be.
 - d. it surpasses human ability, human ingenuity, human prowess and skill.
 - e. it’s the kind of thing that makes men and women stop and say – “That has to be the work of God!”

III. CONCLUSION

A. For Us!

1. Just as God gave a promise to Abraham and Sarah, He’s spoken many promises to us!
2. With some of them, just like Abraham and Sarah, we’ve waited a long time and they’ve yet to be fulfilled.
 - a. some of us have given up on their literal fulfillment.
 - b. we’ve spiritualized them just like Abraham and Sarah did when they suggested Ishmael could be the fulfillment of God’s promise.
 - c. and now, like Sarah waiting inside the tent, when the Holy Spirit comes to renew God’s promise and say it’s time for it to come to pass,
 - d. we snicker behind our hand, look at ourselves and our circumstances and say there’s just no way.

- 1) we've tried! We've given it our best shot.
 - 2) but we're tired and tired of being disappointed.
 - 3) so we dare not hope any longer – it's just too painful
 - 4) and we've resigned ourselves to barrenness in that area of our lives.
3. Is anything too hard for the Lord?
 - a. it may be too hard for you and me but is anything too hard for God?
 - c. we may wonder HOW it can come to pass – but should we wonder at God?

B. Practical

1. Listen – if we know what God's will is – should ANYTHING present a barrier to our belief that God can make it happen?
2. So let me make this real practical –
3. Does God want your marriage to be a relationship of mutual, blessed intimacy that brings delight to Him and both of you?
4. You single people – It is God's plan either for you to be married or to remain single.
 - a. discerning which is easy –
 - 1) are you content in your singleness and find your need for companionship satisfied in fellowship with the Lord and His people? Then you are probably gifted with the single, celibate life.
 - 2) do you desire romantic companionship? Then marriage is God's plan for you, IN HIS PERFECT TIME!
 - b. don't worry about your age or circumstance and don't lose hope in God to bring you into that relationship in His time!
 - c. don't think you need to help God out as Abraham and Sarah did in their goof with Ishmael.
 - d. wait on the Lord – Is anything too hard for Him?
5. There are lots of people here today who have unsaved loved ones.
 - a. the ache, the pain is intense as we yearn for them to be saved.
 - b. we've been praying for them for many years.
 - c. just as Abraham and Sarah longed for a child we long for them to become a child of God.
 - d. but nothing's happened – and our prayers have lost fervency & frequency.
 - e. listen to God's Word – He is not willing that any should perish, but that all would come to repentance and a knowledge of the truth. [2 Pet. 3:9]
 - f. armed with that promise, with that understanding of God's will – can we not pray with renewed fervor?
 - g. armed with that truth, can we not begin to act on it just as God called Abraham and Sarah to act on His promise?
 - h. we can pray for their salvation, and we can begin to treat them in such a way as though God IS at work in their lives to bring them to repentance.
 - i. Is anything too hard for the Lord?
6. Is there some area of your life of persistent stumbling; some sin that keeps tripping you and sending you headlong into moral failure?
 - a. tell me, does God will for you to find victory?
 - b. then believe, and claim His promise NOW!

- c. it may very well be that you still wait for victory because you've been trying to overcome it in the power of your own flesh.
 - d. God has been waiting for you to die to yourself, your own strength, your own ability -
 - e. so that just as He did for Abraham and Sarah, He can work a miracle for you and you can only stand back in worship-filled wonder.
7. What's your NEED today? What is it you're desperate for?
 8. To that very thing God asks – "Is anything too hard for ME?"