

#195 “Laughing At God or Laughing With Him”
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Sometimes, we read a promise of God given to us in the Scripture and just laugh in a scoffing, unbelieving way at what God has said. The longer we are believers, the more likely it is that we will find ourselves having laughed at promises of God that we believed were too good to be true. When God moves us to repent through His kind provision or deliverance, we come to laugh with Him instead of at Him. These are instances to remember and to praise God for over and over again because what seemed too good to be true became reality.

We can be encouraged by God’s Word as we see how God patiently bore with faithful men and women before us who also struggled to believe God. In fact, they outright laughed at Him. Genesis 17:15-17 says,

“Then God said to Abraham, ‘As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. I will bless her, and indeed I will give you a son by her. Then I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her.’ *Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed*, and said in his heart, ‘Will a child be born to a man one hundred years old? And will Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?’” (emphasis added)

Abraham was not alone, however, for his wife reacted in a similar fashion. Genesis 18:10-18 says,

“He said, ‘I will surely return to you at this time next year; and behold, Sarah your wife will have a son.’ And Sarah was listening at the tent door, which was behind him. Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age; Sarah was past childbearing. *Sarah laughed to herself*, saying, ‘After I have become old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?’ And the LORD said to Abraham, ‘Why did Sarah laugh, saying, “Shall I indeed bear a child, when I am so old?” 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.’ Sarah denied it however, saying, ‘I did not laugh’; for she was afraid. And He said, ‘No, but you did laugh’” (emphasis added).

Abraham fell on his face in utter laughter at God, while Sarah laughed to herself in her heart. Both had similar thoughts in their hearts that God would have trouble doing such a wonderful thing given the inherent impossibilities. Science told them that they would be foolish to believe, and they laughed. Yet what is not possible with man is possible with God (Luke 18:27), and God wanted to show them His wonder and reveal to them their lack of faith so that they could grow from this experience. God’s intentions were kind and gracious all along, and He fulfilled His promise to Abraham and Sarah, creating in them a pure and joy-filled laughter. Genesis 21:6-7 says,

“Sarah said, *‘God has made laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh with me.’* And she said, *‘Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age’*” (emphasis added).

Sarah had witnessed firsthand a miracle of God, one that took place inside of her over the course of nine full months. God was good to her and to her husband, and every day their son Isaac stood as proof of God’s love and provision. Just reading this story makes us laugh with God at how powerful and wonderful He is. This is Sarah’s testimony for us today. Too often, we laugh at God rather than with Him, failing to believe that nothing is too difficult for Him. Sometimes, we know that God can deliver us, but we laugh when it comes to believing that He actually will. When God promises us something, we can be sure that He will keep it. His Word will never fail, and one day we will laugh with Him at His tremendous provisions and foresight. Nothing that happens to us is purposeless. In the end, our faith can grow, and we will learn more about just how much God loves us.

It is so difficult to believe in the face of obvious impossibilities. So many times we have not seen God heal or help us just how and when we thought He would. Yet, in so many cases, past when we thought all hope was gone, God did the impossible. Perhaps He didn’t take an ailment away, but He gave us strength and provision to endure. Perhaps He miraculously healed a loved one, or maybe He used a difficult time to give us a chance to learn dependence upon Him. Every challenge is an opportunity for faith or for doubt. The more we see Christ faithfully deliver on His promises, the more we realize that we waste our energy stressing about exactly how and when Christ will work things out for our good (Romans 8:28). Rather than fret and worry, we should pray for His mercy, for His deliverance, and for our endurance, thanking Him in advance for what He will do (Philippians 4:6). In the end, it is certain that we will be able to look back and see His goodness and mercy (Psalm 23:6). We will have story after story that testify about our God Who did the impossible even though we laughed at Him. Praise God that He enjoys laughing with us as we praise Him after the fact.

God will never fail us, but He will likely not work just as we would expect. Yet let us not laugh at Him but with Him, believing that, though no escape seems possible and no hope is in sight, nothing is too difficult for Him. “Then our mouth was filled with laughter And our tongue with joyful shouting; Then they said among the nations, ‘The LORD has done great things for them.’ The LORD has done great things for us; We are glad” (Psalm 126:2-3).