

God's Grace Gives us Peace!

**Genesis 18:1-14; Philippians 4:6-7; John 11:32;
Genesis 12:1-1; John 16:33; Hebrews 11:8; Genesis
21:1-7; John 14:6**

Fear of past, present, or future circumstances often make lying down in green pastures to sit beside quiet waters an exceptionally rare occurrence! Even though we know that it is often in the furnace of affliction that God refines us; this does not mean that we always see His gracious hand leading, guiding, and sustaining us! When time and chance (Ecclesiastes 9:11) throws us into a quagmire of chaos of never-ending uncertainty, trials, and tribulations; tranquility and peace soon become but distant memories, forever fragmented in our minds that are so easily broken! It doesn't help that this world that we live in is changing at such a fast pace that norms quickly drift away while uncertainty and the unknown are always crashing upon our shores. In face of the winds of tribulation and the water of uncertainty one can't help but wonder if it is truly possible to be courageous or are we all doomed to sink and be ravaged by fear and pain, only seeing but never achieving any peace, joy, or hope in our lives? The solution to fear is to accept the truth that the Lord is always near and "works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28).

When doubt ravages our minds with fear the cure Apostle Paul says is to, "not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6-7).

So far in this series we have learned that God's grace is with us, for us, sustains us and today we are going to learn that God's grace grants us peace! Sadly, even when God throws us a lifeboat of grace in the crucible of afflictions doubt often robs us from accepting this precious gift from our Shepherd, Lord, Savior, and King! Let's look at three parts of Abraham and Sarah's story to help us understand why seeing, remembering, and giving God the glory for the grace He has bestowed on us is the key to walking by the still waters in peace.

Seeing God's Grace

In Genesis 18 we are told that one day while sitting at the entrance of his tent three men representing the Lord's

appearance¹ appeared in front of Abraham (1-2). He asked them to “not pass your servant by” until he provided water to wash their feet, rest under a tree, and have something to eat (3-5). Abraham hurried to the tent and asked his wife Sarah to take the finest flour they had and bake some bread (6). He then ran to the herd, selected a choice tender calf, and gave it to a servant to



prepare for his guests to eat (7-8). While they ate the food Abraham stood near them under the tree (8). As they ate, they asked Abraham,

“where is your wife Sarah” to which he replied that she was still in the tent (9). Then one of them said, “I will return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife will have a son” (10). Sarah who was listening to their conversation heard what was said and laughed (13). Such a promise seemed ludicrous to her for Abraham was 100 years old and she was 90 (17:17)! Sarah thought to herself, “after I am worn out and my lord is old, will I now have this pleasure (12)? “Then the Lord said to Abraham, why did Sarah laugh and say, will I really have a child, now that I am old? Is anything too hard for the Lord” (13-14)? When the Lord repeated the promise that a son would be born at the

¹ John H. Sailhamer, [“Genesis.”](#) in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1990), 142.

² Taken from Grace Under Fire Series, part Four.

appointed time, Sarah became afraid and lied to the Lord that she had not laughed to which His response was that she certainly did so (15).

The promise of a son born in their old age caught Sarah off guard.² The promised miracle of life seemed to Sarah to be beyond anything God would ever grant her and her husband. Mary and her sister Marthy also had a difficult time believing



that despite bleak circumstances God’s grace was about to be given to them in miraculous ways! The sisters sent word to Jesus that the one he loved was gravely ill and despite the urgency Jesus remained for two more days at Jerusalem (John 11:6-7). When Jesus arrived at Bethany Lazarus had been dead for four days (17)!³ Martha met Jesus and said, “if only You had been here my brother would not

have died” (21) to which the Lord calmly stated, “your brother will raise again” (23)! Martha thought Jesus meant her brother would raise again during the resurrection, but Jesus reminded her that He as the “resurrection and life” had no limitations when it came to raising the dead (25-26). While Martha believed with all her heart that Jesus was “the Messiah, the Son of God” (27)

³ Colin G. Kruse, [John: An Introduction and Commentary](#), vol. 4, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 244.

such a miracle seemed impossible to be performed and yet when Christ cried out “Lazarus come out” he came to life and walked out of that tomb (43-44)!

We serve a God who is sovereign over all things seen and unseen (Colossians 1:16) and consistently breaks through our bleakest, most painful whirlwinds of trials and tribulations and in love and grace sustains and often rescues us!

Maybe you are going through some very difficult times like Sarah, Mary and Martha and you just can't see a future that is filled with love, joy, and peace. Remember, it is precisely in our greatest weakness, when all things seem bleak, that His power is made perfect, and miracles happen!

Remembering God's Grace

Let's now turn back a few chapters to Genesis 12 in remembrance of how Abram (Abraham) was called by God to serve. The Lord told Abram to leave his county, his people, and his father's household and go to a land that He would show him (1). We are told in Hebrews 11:8 that Abram obeyed God and struck out on his assigned journey, “even though he did not know where he was going.” With incredible faith Abram believed God when said, “I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will

be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all the peoples of the earth will be blessed through you” (2). At age 75 Abram, his wife Sarai



(Sarah), his nephew Lot, and his servants gathered up all their possessions and headed out from Hara to an unknown destination. When he stopped at the “great tree of Moreh at Shechem” in the land of the Canaanites the Lord

told Abram, “To your offspring I will give this land” (6). Even though the promise had not yet been fulfilled Abram “went on towards the hills east of Bethel, pitched his tent, built an altar unto the Lord, and called upon the His name (8). Abram in Hebrews is listed as one of the Biblical heroes of the faith for though he was not going to see in his lifetime the promise of becoming a great nation and the possession of the land of Canaan (Hebrews 11:13), he chose to live in tents as a “stranger in a foreign country” (Hebrews 11:9)!

How truly difficult it is to have faith like Abraham! In the storms of tribulations, it is near impossible to hear anything but the deafening roar of anguish and despair! When all “human” solutions have been tried and yet one remains in devastating whirlwinds of pain, doubt of being released from such a prison flood into our very souls. Whom amongst us after having prayed earnestly for deliverance over time have not begun to question why God remains silent, refusing to lift us

back up onto a solid foundation of tranquility? Doubt should not be a surprise to us for many Biblical heroes doubted if God would change their bleak circumstances. Moses gave a litany of excuses because he doubted the Lord could use an insignificant shepherd to lead a mighty nation. Gideon laid out wool fleeces because he felt he could not be the leader who would defeat the Midianites. The apostles, who had left everything to follow Jesus (Matthew 19:27), were devastated when their Lord was



crucified on the cross. What would become of them without the Good Shepherd to lead and guide them? The cure to doubt is faith! Fear of debilitating present or unknown future

is often best cured through building altars of remembering God's grace one has received in the past!⁴ How many times in your life has God entered your storm, calmed the winds, picked up the pieces of your shattered life and placed you upon a solid rock of peace and tranquility? Even when God showed up "late by your estimation" did not your perseverance and reliance on Him lead to the greatest increase in spiritual maturity in your life you have ever experienced? And when God chose to let you experience "light and momentary troubles" if faithfully persevered are they not "achieving for you an eternal glory that far outweighs them all" (2 Corinthians 4:17)? Faith like

⁴ Taken from Grace Under Fire Series, Part IV

Abraham means trusting God even when the reasons for life experiences won't be known until one arrives at the Great Banquet in heaven!

Giving God the Glory for His Grace

Let's turn to Genesis 21 to see God's grace in action. "The Lord did for Sarah what He had promised, and she became pregnant and bore to Abraham a son in his old age" (1-2). This truly was a miracle for Sarah who was past childbearing years



was enabled by God to bear a child (Hebrews 11:11)! Imagine for a moment how excited she must have been when in her old age she had become pregnant and imagine how

Abraham must have felt having a child when he was 100 years old (5)! In response to such an amazing miracle Sarah said, "God has brought me laughter, and everyone who hears about this will laugh with me. Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age" (6-7). Because her "womb was dead" (Romans 4:19)

when Sarah was told of this miracle but a year ago, her response was doubt and to laugh at the very thought! Now that Isaac was born Sarah's first response was to give God the glory! How many times have we received miracles in our lives and have not seen them nor have we stopped and said, thank you Lord for giving me what I did not earn! How many times when we are amid trials and tribulations all we can think about is pain, frustration, and sorrow?

If we could only see the Lord carrying us during these times and if only, we would have faith that perseverance and trust in His sovereignty are the keys to not only being content in all situations but also experiencing God's love, joy, and peace in our lives!

If you are here today and you are experiencing a difficult time in your life my heart goes out to you! When life feels like a quagmire of chaos, and one cannot see through the storms of



tribulations, call upon the Lord. Paul told Timothy that “the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline” (2

Timothy 1:7). When life is difficult and especially when we feel

like we are drowning in a sea of uncertainty, we are to remember that He who raises the dead also controls all things seen and unseen! We have a Good Shepherd who while He sends us out amongst the wolves of this world, He does not abandon but enables us to do good deeds in a manner that shines even amongst the darkest, most vile, hardened hearts of this world! When we feel overwhelmed, we are not to be anxious and filled with fear but instead are to present our requests to God with thanksgiving and petition in our hearts. God promises that He is always near and will work for the good of all who love Him. God's love, joy, and peace are not the by-product of a tribulation free life but of being like Sarah, seeing and thanking God for the unmerited grace one has received throughout the entirety of one's life! And even if the Lord might let you go through seasons of pain and anguish, are these times not truly like Apostle Paul says, momentary troubles in comparison to the glory one is about to receive?

So, with eyes fixed on Christ, heavenwardly focused, let our faith be so great that even amid hurricanes of tribulations we experience the peace of God's grace!
