



READ: Genesis 18:1, 9-15; 21:1-7 (ESV)

And the LORD appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day. They said to him, "Where is Sarah your wife?" And he said, "She is in the tent." The LORD said, "I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife shall have a son." And Sarah was listening at the tent door behind him. Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in years. The way of women had ceased to be with Sarah. So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "After I am worn out, and my lord is old, shall I have pleasure?" The LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?' Is anything too hard for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, about this time next year, and Sarah shall have a son." But Sarah denied it, saying, "I did not laugh," for she was afraid. He said, "No, but you did laugh." (Genesis 18:1, 9-15)

The LORD visited Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did to Sarah as he had promised. And Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age at the time of which God had spoken to him. Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him, whom Sarah bore him, Isaac. And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. And Sarah said, "God has made laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh over 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." (Genesis 21:1-7)

ENTER THE STORY:

Did you notice the name change? In Genesis 17, Abram and Sarai *STILL* don't have any children, but God intensifies his promise by revealing a subtle change with some new names. God changes Abram, which means "exalted father" to Abraham, which means "father of a multitude", and God assures Abraham that nations and kings would come from him. God also changes Sarai's name, which means "princess," to Sarah, which means "noblewoman," because she will be the source of these nations and kings of peoples shall come from her too.

Being given a new name with a powerful meaning is great, but Sarah, who had likely spent the better part of her life enduring a visceral monthly reminder of the failure of her body to do its job and produce an heir, still didn't have even *ONE* child, let alone a nation of kings.

Naturally, this caused Sarah to question the extent of God's abilities...because it seemed like it was too late. Too much time had passed...24 years to be exact. Abraham was 99 years old, and she was 90. And so she wondered, why did he wait so long? She was too old. She didn't even have a monthly cycle anymore. This is what the text means when it says "*the way of women had ceased to be with Sarah.*" Her body was as good as dead.

But what have we been learning about our God through this advent? He is the God that brings life from dead things. He brought life from dust...he brought life from a dead stump...and now he will bring life from a dead womb.

God's response to her says it all, "*Is anything too hard for the LORD?*"

What about you? Do you believe this statement in the deepest part of your being? Have you ever questioned God's ability to accomplish the impossible?

Sarah did – and God reminded her of this truth. *NOTHING* is too hard for him! God, who made the promise to give them offspring as numerous as the stars, is the same God who made those stars and called them by their name! He is more than capable of opening Sarah's womb and blessing her with a child.

In fact...wasn't that the whole point all along? God's promise would not be accomplished by man. It would be an incredible feat that only God could bring about.

Sure enough, nine months later, Abraham, who was 100 years old, and Sarah, whose womb was as good as dead, gave birth to a bouncing baby boy.

They named their son "Isaac", which means "son of laughter", and Sarah did laugh, but this time it was a deeply joyful laugh, because, as she said, *"God has made laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh over me."*

This baby boy was well worth the 25 years it took for him to arrive.

Many years later, God would again accomplish an extraordinarily, impossible feat when he opened another woman's womb, but this woman would not be old in years and past the normal age of childbearing. She would be young and a virgin, not yet married. God would take his Son, and fashion him into a tiny baby boy and by the power of the Holy Spirit place him in this young woman's womb — *"The Word made flesh."*

He would be born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he would humble himself by becoming obedient to the point of death...even death on a cross. (Philippians 2:7-8 paraphrased).

What a remarkable way for Jesus to enter our world...but praise God that our ways are not his ways and our thoughts are not his thoughts. May we never forget that *nothing is too hard for the LORD!!*

PRAY: *Heavenly Father, you did the impossible when you gave Abram and Sarai a baby in their old age, and you did it again when you sent your Son to be born of a young virgin girl. Even though people had to wait a very long time for his arrival, he was worth the wait! Now that he has come, we can finally rejoice and laugh because having you with us brings us true joy Amen.*