

Genesis 18:1-15 – A Meal, a Message, a Mocking

TSK, HebrewLexicon, Poole, Gill, Henry, Trapp, Pulpit, Whytock, Calvin, TSK, JFB, PasN, Delitzsch, INT

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: So many deals have been made because people take the time to sit down to eat. So many friendships have developed because people take the time to sit down to eat. I saw this happen this past week at Camp Tamarack. So many things you learn from your children because you sit down to eat. I don't know if there is anything scientific that takes place in the brain or in the heart, but eating together is usually beneficial. Now this is not an excuse for eating too much, but it certainly gives you some idea that it is an important thing to do. We did that just recently ourselves as a church. In our sermon today you will see how Abraham showed hospitality 好客 and unknowingly invited 3 messengers (the Lord Jesus and two angels) to sit down and eat with him. As a result of his invitation (see how sovereignty and responsibility worked) Abraham was blessed by the message the messengers brought. And even though Sarah did not believe the message of the angels and first and mocked it, she too was blessed. Of course the sermon is much more than about your need to be hospitable, as you will also see how God used hospitality to preserve the Line of Promise.

Our headings are: A Meal, a Message, and a Mocking.

Our goals are: That as children of God through Christ's blood, you will learn to be hospitable, that you will learn to trust the Lord's words and his promises to you, and that you will see his love for you—a love that persevered the Line of Promise.

A Meal – A Kind Invitation to it

1 Then the LORD appeared to him by the terebinth trees of Mamre, as he was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day. 2 So he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing by him; and when he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the ground, 3 and said, "My Lord, if I have now found favor in Your sight, do not pass on by Your servant. 4 "Please let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. 5 "And I will bring a morsel 少量 of bread, that you may refresh your hearts. After that you may pass by, inasmuch as you have come to your servant." They said, "Do as you have said." 6 So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah and said, "Quickly, make ready three measures of fine meal; knead it and make cakes." 7 And Abraham ran to the herd, took a tender and good calf, gave it to a young man, and he hastened to prepare it. 8 So he took butter and milk and the calf which he had prepared, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree as they ate.

1. When Jehovah (Jesus) appeared with two angels to Abram in the middle of the day, Abram did not recognize him. Abraham simply thought he was just another traveler. Both Jesus and the angels took on human bodies. But Moses identifies one of the angels as Jehovah (LORD).

2. What is good about Abraham's action was that he was so genuinely kind to strangers.

a. Sitting in the door, it appeared that Abraham was looking to see who might pass by so he might help them. But it was also wise to rest in the heat of the day and work when it was cooler so the body would not be overly fatigued 疲乏.

b. Abraham ran over to meet the 3 men... though he was nearly 100 years old... and it didn't bother him that there were 3 people. And his wife didn't complain that the house was not in order... or they didn't have enough food for 3 extra people. He thought of others, not himself. He longed to help those less blessed – like he had helped his nephew Lot.

c. Abraham bowed before the men, not in worship, but in respect. He himself was a great man of great wealth and great power, but he was also a man of great humility.

d. It is obvious that Abraham love the fellowship of friends and strangers as well. He and his wife got personally involved in preparing for the 3 guests.

e. He literally begs them to come to his house so he might serve them... but the reason he calls them "lords" was because he saw them as heads of households, not as Jehovah.

3. This principle of showing hospitality continues today. Everyone who has had his sins removed by Jesus and had his sins forgiven shows kindness to others. Remember the warning from Hebrews.

Hebrews 13:2-Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly 不知情地 entertained angels.

And it doesn't matter that someone might not be worthy... or you don't have something special to give, or some of your food is "wasted,". It is better to feed five drones雄蜂, or wasps, than to starve one bee. Those who misuse your hospitality will be judged by God. But remember to show hospitality. Calvin said: "The great number of inns (hotels) are evidence of our depravity堕落, and prove it to have arisen from our own fault, that the principal duty of humanity has become obsolete among us." Sadly many Christians don't even trust many Christians any more.

4. After the men came in, Abraham washed their feet. Abraham's talk was translated into actions. He did not make empty promises. And you have to understand what washing you feet is like in the heat, with hot sand, & sandals. Christ himself has taught us to wash one another's feet, in humble love. John 13:6-7-After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded. Then He came to Simon Peter. And Peter said to Him, "Lord, are You washing my feet?"

When you wash someone's feet (serving another) you are saying that: "He is so precious to me that I delight to minister to him." Remember, faith without works is dead faith.

5. The food - and Abram offered fresh bread from "fine meal" - was not moldy 发霉的 grains with weevils 象鼻虫. He took a young calf...for tender meat...and butter and milk...luxuries- and offered it to the Lord and the angels. Little did Abraham realize that he was fellowshiping with the Bread of Life, the one who would give his own body for his food...food that would satisfy Abraham's hunger forever. It is interesting that whenever you fellowship with the Lord, you are blessed! You think you are giving him something, but you are receiving much, much, more.

A Message of Hope and Promise

9 Then they said to him, "Where is Sarah your wife?" So he said, "Here, in the tent." 10 And 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.

1. The messengers of God then asked Abraham where his wife was. This was done in order to draw Sarah to pay attention to what he was going to say. Of course the Lord knew where she was. She was behind a curtain. And the Lord then announced that Sarah would soon have a child. This was a reconfirming of the message that he had earlier given...but now there was a definite timeline.

2. This message was confirmed by 3 witnesses, instead of 1 as before. This triple confirmation that God would do what he said would even more strongly reassure Abraham of God's promises. And these strangers...how would they have known the son for which they had been waiting...unless they were from God? So the message confirmed who they were also.

3. The problem was that Sarah looked at her own body and the body of her husband...and shook her head, saying: "It's not going to happen."

A Mocking of that Hope and Promise

12 Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, "After I have grown old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?" 13 And 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." 15 But Sarah denied it, saying, "I did not laugh," for she was afraid. And He said, "No, but you did laugh!

1. Sarah laughed, just as Abram laughed before, with doubt that God would do for them what he had promised. She viewed having a son as impossible, as they were old and dry, and therefore it was impossible for God. She viewed the world from her own eyes. She viewed herself as sovereign. No wonder she doubted. ("If I can't do it, the Lord certainly can't.") She doubted the Lord could

give her the pleasure of having children. (But what a positive view of children – they were a pleasure... She saw them as pleasure, not just because children are sweet, but because they could be raised for the glory of the Lord. But the long wait for a child weakened her faith. Doubt led to mocking. Yet, the purpose for the long delay was to show beyond a doubt that their bodies were dead and that it was God who was giving life. God did not want them to have the slightest thought that the child was from their own strength. He wanted to kill the desire of the sovereignty of man!

2. Because of Sarah's mocking laugh, she was confronted and rebuked by Jesus through Abraham. But this accusation of Sarah would further confirm to Abraham that this was God. How? The angel told Abraham what Sarah was saying in her heart – when she was behind the curtain. Only God could know that the heart. Certainly Sarah later admitted this to Abraham - that that was exactly what she was thinking. So the Lord rebuked Sarah for her **lack of faith**, her **laughter**, and her **limiting God's abilities**. Interesting here is that this same message announced by the Lord strengthened Abraham's faith, but it had no impact on Sarah's. Maybe the 3 Hebrew boys in Nebuchadnezzar's furnace recalled this weakness of Sarah and instead said:

Daniel 3:17 "If that *is the case*, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver *us* from your hand, O king.

Or maybe this man who came to Jesus recalled her failure and learned from it:

Matthew 8:2 And behold, a leper came and worshiped Him, saying, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean."

He has healed the broken hearted. He set the captives free. He healed the sick. He raised the dead. He walked upon the sea. Yes, he is able.

3. Nevertheless, because of God's promise to Abraham, even though Sarah lacked faith, he did not drop them from the Line of Promise, but reiterated 重申 that they would have a child shortly. Why? Election is not based on how good man is, or how strong his faith is, but on the basis of God's pure and gracious love.

4. Because Sarah thought that the mocking of the promise was internal, she thought no one would ever know. But Jesus pointed out what was in her heart – that she did laugh... further evidence of the ability of God. Brothers and sisters, boys and girls, no sin ever goes undetected. But in typical human fashion, when Sarah thought no one knew what she did, she denied it as you would often do. But the thoughts of the hearts are laid open before the Lord. She did not do like Jonah who confessed and took the consequences of his sin. She did not confess like the Psalmist...!

Psalms 139:2 You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off.

Instead she chose to cover her sin with another sin – a lie.

Proverbs 28:13 He who covers his sins will not prosper, But whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy.

5. The Lord rebuked her again a 2nd time for denying that she laughed at his promise and then he left.

Conclusion:

What kind hospitality Abraham showed to strangers... whom he found out were not strangers at all, but angels from God. What a good example of hospitality! His great kindness was rewarded! He would have a son. Sadly, Sarah doubted God's promises and he had to rebuke her for mocking the promise of God. But the promise of the son was not based on the good works of Abraham and Sarah (Abraham had doubted and laughed at God's promise before) but on God's promise to redeem the world. They were not spiritually or physically fit to be the parents of Jesus. It was the grace of God that Christ came through them.

Brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ: You too must learn to follow the example of Abraham and show hospitality to others... Have someone you don't know well over for a meal. Invite those neighbor kids to play a game. Pick up someone to come to church. Help that lady trying to take that stroller on the bus. There are many little ways you could be showing acts of kindness...and you may be helping an angel at the same time. And there is another lesson here: See how God was faithful to keep the Line of Promise open, even when there was a doubt and mocking. His love is so great that he did not get fed up with your spiritual mother and father. And the Lord did come...and he did die...and he did rise again...and he does rule over you...and protects you and keeps you safe... You have all the more reason to show kindness to others...so that they too might praise the Lord. And when the Lord finally returns, not quietly as before, or with the shame of the cross, but when he comes with the sound of the trumpet, you will be much rewarded for your faithfulness in service to him.

Finally, if you accept the life and death of Abraham and Sarah's Son as a substitute for your sins, you live. If you don't, you die. Chose life. You won't ever regret it.