

# Sermon for Proper 6A

## The Text: Genesis 18:13-14:

*“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? I will return to you at the appointed time next year, and Sarah will have a son.’”*

Is anything too hard for the LORD?

Have you ever had the awkward situation where you have burst out laughing at something that was said in the crowd you thought was hard to believe and no one else laughed? You try to conceal the laugh with an embarrassed cough. You can identify, then, with poor Sarah. She laughed at what seemed impossible. Abraham is 100 years old and Sarah is 90 years old and the Lord tells them “I will return at the appointed time next year and Sarah your wife will have a son. She tried to conceal her laughter. But the Lord said, “Why did Sarah laugh?” she denied it and said, “I didn’t laugh.” But the Lord knew differently and said, “No, but you did laugh.”

Would you have done the same? Laughed at what seemed to be a joke? Can you really blame Sarah for laughing at what appeared to be the impossible?

In Genesis 12 God calls Abraham to leave homeland and family to go to a land he has never seen.

God makes a three-fold promise to Abram, as he’s called in chapter 12:

That he will make Abram into a “great nation” (12:2).

That he will be a blessing to the whole world (12:3).

That Abram and his offspring will inherit the land of Canaan (12:7).

As the story of Abram continues in Genesis there is a major problem with this promise. Abram and Sarai have no children. It’s hard to be the ancestor of a “great nation” if you don’t have even one child!

Abram and Sarai tried to solve the promise themselves when Sarai gave Hagar, her handmaid to Abram to have child for a descendant. Hagar had a son and they named him Ishmael.

When God tells Abram that Sarai will now be called Sarah “for I will bless her and will surely give you a son by her” Abram who is now called Abraham, fell facedown; he laughed and said to himself, “Will a son be born to a man a hundred years old? Will Sarah bear a child at the age of ninety?” And Abraham said to God, “If only Ishmael might live under your blessing!”

God tells Abraham “no”; my covenant will be through the Son born to Sarah whom you will name Isaac.

When the Lord comes with two others while Abraham is sitting at the tent at the trees of Mamre, and Sarah hears that this time next year, he will return and she will have a son, Sarah laughs at what seems impossible.

Hearing her laugh, the Lord says, why did Sarah laugh and say, Will I really have a child, now that I am old?

Then the Lord said, Is anything too hard for the LORD?

Perhaps, like Abraham and Sarah, you've prayed for something for years, but God has not answered. And yet God says, “Is anything too hard for the Lord?”

We need to reflect on that question ourselves. Is there anything too hard for God? Is there something you have been praying to God about, and you struggle with doubt as you wait on God to act?

You may wonder whether God is hearing your prayers. You may wonder, why doesn't God answer? Why doesn't God do something?

If we believe nothing is too hard for God, then we can believe he has all power, even in the face of sickness, suffering, and even death itself. But what are we meant to do as we wait for God's appointed time to put his plan into action, whatever that plan may look like?

Well, we simply pray as Jesus did in the garden of Gethsemane: “Lord if it be your will take this cup of suffering from me, yet not my will but your will be done.” We pray and call on the one with whom nothing is too hard.

Sounds too easy, doesn't it? Pray, hand it all over to God. But our human nature is impatient, isn't it? When we or our loved ones are suffering, when our livelihoods are in danger, when we see senseless evil in the world, we want to see some response to our prayers. We know God is all powerful, so we cast all our problems on him so he will give us rest.

Rest comes when we have complete trust that God is always with us even in our sufferings. In fact, particularly in our sufferings, because when we know we can't fix what is happening, it's then we rely totally on God for nothing is too hard for him.

We heard in Romans 5:6: “For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.”

These are amazing words. We were weak and helpless because we could do nothing to save ourselves. Someone had to come and rescue us. God sent Jesus at the right time to put his promise into action. It all happened according to God's schedule.

When it comes to our salvation, God has shown this is not too hard for him, but it did cost him dearly. God showed his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us. There is no person with whom it is too hard for God to save.

Keep that in your minds as we enter the time of growing in the church year. Is anything too hard for the Lord? Jesus said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.'

What does God want his workers to do? To see the people who are wandering around as like sheep without a shepherd. To find the lost sheep and tell them the kingdom of heaven is near. To spread the good news of the Gospel.

As the colours of the church now show the colour of growth, let us ask the Lord of the harvest to send workers into his harvest. When the thought enters our mind that we should go and visit a person in need, we go with a word of comfort and strength and an act of kindness.

When strangers come as with Abraham, we show hospitality for we don't know when we are entertaining as if it were the Lord himself.

We commend all that we do to the Lord of the harvest, and as we wait for his appointed time, where we will see all that we do bear fruit, we trust in his promise to be with us always. We don't rely on our own strength, but we pray and trust that the Holy Spirit will lead and guide us as willing workers into the harvest.

God will keep his promises as Abraham and Sarah found out when they least expect it. The promise that we proclaim and hold on to, is that nothing is too hard for the Lord. Some may laugh, but for us we are confident he will keep his promises.

The promise to be with us always and the promise that all who believe in Jesus will not be condemned but have eternal life. Amen.