

July 7, 20 – Sermon Notes

## “The Faithful Life of a Faithful Wife”

Genesis 23:1-20

### Prel Rmks

Text ~ Title

(1) Sarah lived one hundred and twenty-seven years; *these were* the years of the life of Sarah. (2) So Sarah died in Kirjath Arba (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan, and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah and to weep for her.

### INTRO

When someone dies, we pause to remember their life and honor their life and, if they were a believer, to recognize how God blessed them and used them. “Funeral” = dead body ... – everything associated with what you have to do with a dead body ...

Funeral service – “eulogy” = eu = good logy = speech good speech

At a funeral service for a person, with the body they lived their life in still before us in a coffin or a casket, we say good things about them.

This morning – as her body in a way is before us here in the Scripture, we are going eulogize Sarah.

Life of Sarah - 80% ~ Lament of Abraham - 10% ~ Land of Promise - 10%

## I. The Life of Sarah 1

(1)

Sarah lived **one hundred and twenty-seven years**; *these were* the years of the life of Sarah.

An indication that she lived an extraordinary life.

Behind every great man there is a great woman.

Sarah was a great woman, and she is recognized so in God’s Word.

**Isaiah 51:1-2** "Listen to Me, you who follow after righteousness, You who seek the LORD: Look to the rock *from which* you were hewn, And to the hole of the pit *from which* you were dug.

(2) Look to Abraham your father, **And to Sarah** *who* bore you; For I called him alone, And blessed him and increased him."

I want us to see 2 things about the identity of this extraordinary woman:

## Her Earthly Identity

Sarai = princess: married to a prince Sarah = noble woman

Abraham's wife = 15 times bore Isaac or mother of Isaac = 10

Approximately half the time her name is mentioned she is referred to as a wife and a mother

Her earthly identity was directly related to the man she married and the child she eventually had

Most of the days she lived, except for a very few exceptions = ordinary ~ the ordinariness of her life ...

Long, hot days living in a tent

No permanent place to dwell – dwelling in strange lands

At the mercy of flaws and failures and foibles of her husband

She would say: "I kinda like it here."

He would say: "Pack up. We're moving."

If she protested, which there is no record that she ever did, he would just say: "God told me. We have to."

Bottom line: not a lot of control over her life. She certainly was not living the self-directed life of a liberated woman. She wasn't living for self-fulfillment.

**Genesis 18:6** So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah and said, "Quickly, make ready three measures of fine meal; knead *it* and make cakes."

She wasn't perfect. She had her own failings:

She had hatched the plan to give her maid-servant to Abraham so that she might give him children by her ... taking matters into her own hands instead of trusting God.

She mistreated Hagar when she did have a child – dealt harshly with her.

That day when God showed up and reaffirmed the promise and plan He had for Abraham and Sarah, she laughed when she heard God say it. Then when confronted about her laughter – she lied about it ... she also had lied to Pharaoh in Egypt and would later lie to Abimelech in Gerar.

But if these were the only failures marked against her in a life of 127 years, we'd have to conclude that's not too bad.

It wasn't all ordinary and monotonous days. There were some days of high drama that were part of her life:

Leaving her home with Abram and his father, Terah, and moving to Haran ...

Later, even more dramatic, leaving Haran, and going to a land where they weren't even sure where they were going.

Arriving in that land and almost immediately being confronted with a famine and having to go to Egypt.

Then in Egypt, when she obeyed Abraham's scheme and lied to Pharaoh claiming to be his sister ...  
 DRAMA ... a scene later repeated with Abimelech.

Looking down at the plain of Jordan and seeing the smoke smoldering up from Sodom – wondering what had happened to her nephew and his family. THERE WAS NOTHING ORDINARY ABOUT THAT DAY.

**Make no mistake, there were days of high DRAMA to interrupt the ordinariness of Sarah's life, but ...  
 Ordinariness**

One word = WAITING ... God would show up and reaffirm the promise, the covenant promise ... WAITING ...  
 GROWING – in her trust for God – her belief in God's Word

WAITING ~ GROWING ~ BOTH ORDINARY &  
 EXTRAORDINARY

Then that day finally came – God's promise was fulfilled: Isaac = laughter ~ oh the joy! Through him = Messiah / Savior

**Perhaps Sarah's favorite hymn:**

Have faith in God when your prayers are unanswered,  
 Your earnest plea He will never forget;  
 Wait on the Lord, trust His Word and be patient,  
 Have faith in God, He'll answer yet.

Her faith had grown to the point and she was in tune with God in such a way that she helped her husband see God's will concerning Ishmael – that he and his mother would need to be sent away.

Sarah lived 37 years after Isaac was born. She never saw him get married. Never had grandchildren. Never saw how through Isaac the promises of God would be fulfilled.

**Her Earthly Identity**

**But what about Her Eternal Identity?**

**What did God have to say about her?**

## Her Eternal Identity

**1 Peter 3:1-7** Wives, likewise, *be* submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, **(2)** when they observe your chaste conduct *accompanied* by fear. **(3)** Do not let your adornment be *merely* outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on *fine* apparel— **(4)** rather *let it be* the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible *beauty* of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. **(5)** For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands, **(6)** as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror. **(7)** Husbands, likewise, dwell with *them* with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as *being* **heirs together of the grace of life**, that your prayers may not be hindered.

Her life was so extraordinary that she is included in the hall of fame of faith:

**Hebrews 11:11** By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised.

## II. The Lament of Abraham 2

**(2)**

So Sarah died in **Kirjath Arba city of four** (that is, **Hebron place of association**) in the land of Canaan, and Abraham **came to mourn wail or lament – to tear the hair or beat the breast** for Sarah and to **weep** for her.

Naturally he would weep for her:

His heart had safely trusted in her all the days of their life together – probably over 70 years

She had done him good and not evil all the days of her life

There's almost always great sorrow at the passing of a spouse – I have ministered directly to a number

The years have gone by so quickly

There has been a sharing together in all that life has to offer: the good, the bad, the ordinary, the extraordinary.

But then the day comes, and there must be a parting ... no matter how long they've have together, it always seems to come too soon.

I've noticed that there's a slight difference in how a man comes to weep for his wife than how a woman sorrows over the loss of her husband. I'm not sure I can put it in words. Maybe I can illustrate it.

{Coach Hanks ... "Paul, We've lost a great one."}

Abraham came to weep for Sarah ...

### The Life of Sarah ~ The Lament of Abraham

## III. The Land of Promise 3-20

Abraham negotiates for a burial place to bury Sarah.

(3)

Then Abraham stood up from before his dead, and spoke to **the sons of Heth**, saying,

10:15 – Son of Canaan = the father of the Hittites

(4)

"I *am* a foreigner and a visitor among you. Give me property for a burial place among you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight."

(5)

And the sons of Heth answered Abraham, saying to him,

(6)

"Hear us, my lord: You *are* a mighty prince **prince of God** among us; bury your dead in the choicest of our burial places. None of us will withhold from you his burial place, that you may bury your dead."

The Hittites at this time were agreeable, magnanimous, cordial people. But like all the Canaanites they would continue to degenerate morally, until God would eventually tell the descendants of Abraham to completely and utterly drive them out of the land.

(7)

Then Abraham stood up and bowed himself to the people of the land, the sons of Heth.

(8)

And he spoke with them, saying, "If it is your wish that I bury my dead out of my sight, hear me, and meet with Ephron the son of Zohar for me,

**(9)**

that he may give me the cave of **Machpelah double portion = cave with 2 chambers OR a large cave** which he has, which *is* at the end of his field. Let him give it to me at the full price, as property for a burial place among you."

**(10)**

Now Ephron dwelt among the sons of Heth; and Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the presence of the sons of Heth, all who entered at the gate of his city, saying,

**(11)**

"No, my lord, hear me: I give you the field and the cave that *is* in it; I give it to you in the presence of the sons of my people. I give it to you. Bury your dead!"

**(12) Humility of Abraham**

Then Abraham bowed himself down before the people of the land;

**(13)**

and he spoke to Ephron in the hearing of the people of the land, saying, "If you *will give it*, please hear me. I will give you money for the field; take *it* from me and I will bury my dead there."

**(14)**

And Ephron answered Abraham, saying to him,

**(15)**

"My lord, listen to me; the land *is worth* **four hundred shekels of silver**. What *is* that between you and me? So bury your dead."

**(16)**

And Abraham listened to Ephron; and Abraham **weighed out the silver** for Ephron which he had named in the hearing of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, **currency of the merchants**.

Abraham was a man of complete integrity in the way he transacted business. Everything was on the up & up.

There was no coinage – standard weights.

I couldn't help but wonder what was going through his mind as he made this transaction with the Hittites? Perhaps he was thinking: "One day this entire part of the world will belong to my descendants!"

**(17)**

So the field of Ephron which *was* in Machpelah, which *was* before Mamre, the field and the cave which *was* in it, and all the trees that *were* in the field, which *were* within all the surrounding borders, were deeded

**(18)**

to Abraham as a possession in the presence of the sons of Heth, before all who went in at the gate of his city.

**(19)**

And after this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah, before **Mamre** (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan.

Some of their happiest times there

When they were younger and still full of hope and wonder

**(20)**

So the field and the cave that is in it were deeded to Abraham by the sons of Heth as property for a burial place.

Abraham – Sarah    Isaac – Rebekah    Jacob – Leah

Site is known: Mosque & Temple or Synagogue entry only by special permission of the government

Bones have been discovered in it.

Here's what we don't want to miss – this was the first land that Abraham ever owned in the Land of Promise

Sarah, in her death, was the catalyst for Abraham to finally own a tiny piece of the entire land which God would one day give him.

## Conclusion

We think about an ordinary life that was extraordinary.

A life of waiting. A life of growing. An ordinary life in many ways on most days. How does a life like that become extraordinary?

**2 Corinthians 5:7** For we walk by faith, not by sight.

**Proverbs 3:5-6** Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; (6) In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.

**Ephesians 2:8-9** For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, **(9)** not of works, lest anyone should boast.

**#179 – Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus**