

A Journey of Faith (Part 11)
A Study of the Life of Abraham
(Gen. 21)
“How to Laugh with Your Faith”

Introduction: *Those who live life trusting God to be in control of all things, all the time, learn to laugh with their faith.* In our text today, we see from Abraham’s example there will be times we will leap with laughter, and times our laughter will be limited. Ultimately, Abraham shows us how we can build a life time of laughter and laugh with our faith.

I. ABRAHAM LEAPS WITH LAUGHTER: (v.1-7)

A. God’s character – (v.1, 2) This is a red-letter day in the life of Abraham – for God did what He said He would do, when He said He would do it!

1. We see the faithfulness of God’s word – (Titus 1:1-3)
2. We see the greatness of God’s power – (1 Cor 1:27-29)

B. Sarah’s carol – (v.3-7)

1. Once Sarah laughed with doubt –
2. Now Sarah laughs with discovery –

C. Abraham’s compliance – When things calm down around the camp (which I’m sure took a long time). . .

1. We see Abraham’s compliance in the naming of his son – (Gen.17:19) (lit. laughter)
2. We see Abraham’s compliance in the nature of his obedience

II. ABRAHAM LIMITS HIS LAUGHTER: (v.8-21) One of the most difficult problems most of us face at some point in our lives involves the results of our past mistakes. Sometimes we can put them behind us for good, and other times we have to face their lingering consequences.

A. The mockery of Ishmael – (8-9) Ishmael and Isaac represent a picture of the struggle between the flesh and the spirit here.

B. The misery of Abraham – No doubt Abraham thought the past was dead and buried – the results of his mistakes behind him (at least he was hopping so.) But here it was face to face with Abraham again and it distressed him (v.11) (i.e.) his joy turned to depression as he probably wondered – won’t the past ever go away?

C. The mercy of God – (v12) Sarah laid the burden at Abraham’s feet, and Abraham handed it to God – and God mercifully took it. (v.13)– his joy is restored as the burden is lifted.

III. ABRAHAM LIVES A LIFE OF LAUGHTER: (V.22-34)

A. Abraham’s visitor from the past – The last time these two met, God was doing some serious discipline with Abraham – But discipline if received, will result in restoration – (22b)

B. Abraham’s visitors’ plea – Righteousness is what Abimelech thought he saw in Abraham, he comes seeking peace and Abraham’s reaction confirms he is a righteous, peaceful man. (Rom.12:18)

C. Abraham’s visible peace – Abraham has learned to live a lifetime of laughter by trusting God is in control of all things all the time.

Conclusion: Here’s a winning formula to learning how you too can have a lifetime of laughter with your faith:

If you want to be distressed – look within,
If you want to be defeated – look back,
If you want to be distracted – look around,
If you want to be dismayed – look ahead,
If you want to live a life of laughter with your faith – look up!

(Formula, adopted and edited from Dr. John Maxwell’s book winning attitude)

Those who live life trusting God to be in control of all things, all the time, learn to laugh with their faith.