**The Intimacy of the Covenant**

Genesis 18:1-15

How close are you with the Lord? Would you describe your Christian life as intimate with God? When a covenant is made there is an intimacy with the other person that is unlike your relationship with anybody else. Of course, in marriage there is a level of intimacy that is reserved only for your husband your wife. If two business partners are in a covenant, there is a business relationship there in which they share details, plans, and finances, where they don’t share with anybody else.

And when someone is in a covenant with God, God promises himself to them. And in that, develops a level of intimacy that he doesn’t give to anybody else. Those who have trusted Jesus for the forgiveness of their sin, by faith has entered a covenant with the Living God, he gives himself to them in a way nobody outside the covenant will ever experience.

And when the God of peace, the Lord of joy and knowledge, the Spirit of wisdom and love enters your life, your very being, there is a closeness where both fully enjoy one another.

When is the last time you could say that you enjoyed God? May we read from the book of Genesis together, and discover this intimacy through the life of Abraham and Sarah.

**I. Abraham, the servant of God**

The LORD appears to Abraham. This name LORD with all caps is Yahweh, God’s covenantal name. This name is for only those who are in a covenant with God. All of creation will recognize God as Lord with lower case, their master or ruler. He is Elohim, the all-powerful Creator for all people. But only those in relationship with God will know him as Yahweh.

He appears at the hottest part of the day. Now everybody recognizes these three men as either God or angels. Some see these as three angels who are visiting under the authority of God. Some see this as God himself with two angels. Others see this as a bodily appearance of the trinity, all three persons. You can take your pick.

Abraham recognized them. We know that because of the extravagant care he would take. Middle eastern culture is a hospitable one and he would take care of travelers. But not like this. First of all, he ran to them. The man is 99-years-old. And it is hot out. Workers would go home right now and rest because it was unsafe to work in this heat. That’s what he was doing. It is extremely hot, he is an older man, and very possible just been circumcised.

He runs to God. There are lots of reasons and excuses for us not to serve the Lord. But looking at Abraham, none of those are valid. He runs and begs them to stay and commands everybody to begin preparing a meal. This is a lot of food. If you were to measure the flour, and the whole goat, you would see that this is way more food than three men could eat. But he gave God his best. He would never short change the Lord.

And when it was time to eat, it said that he stood nearby. That is what a servant would do. He was in a covenant with God, one who could fellowship with the Lord, but in great humility still knew his place.

Before moving on, I want to talk bring some of these things home to us. The only reason we can be in fellowship with God is because he first pursued us. He came to us like he did Abraham. But when he found us in our sin and shame, what does the parable say that he did?

Luke 15:17-20

It shows the father running to embrace the repentant. But our repentance is only valid because Jesus would die in our place.

Matthew 20:28

Now that we are saved, we run to him. Imagine when he finally appears. We run to him. All of the bodily injury and aching, the heat of the day, it wouldn’t matter. We’d run. And we serve him. Yes, we are his children. Yes, we are the bride of Christ. Yes, we are his friend in covenant. But the apostles never introduced themselves like this.

Romans 1:1; James 1:1; 2 Peter 1:1; Jude 1:1

It is an honor to be a servant in the house of the Lord. And yet, in the next passage God will say this.

Genesis 18:19 (Known); John 10:27, 17:1-3

It is Jesus who will say to unbelievers, those who have rejected his Gospel, I never knew you.

And he is going to make known his plan to Abraham because they are bound together now. And what God is doing will affect Abraham. Like Jesus said to his disciples.

John 15:15

**II. Sarah, the blessed of God**

One of the main reasons that God came to Abraham’s house was for Sarah’s sake. The culture wouldn’t allow a visiting man to speak to the wife, so he speaks to Abraham for her to hear. He asks where she is and he answers. The promise he just made to Abraham about the birth of Isaac coming next year, was now given to Sarah who could hear from the tent.

And she laughs to herself. It may not even have been out loud, but in her heart she scoffed at the idea. She’s 90-years-old. For decades she had cried out to God for a child. She’s cried all the tears. She’s given up hope. Now, at her age, she had come to realization that a child was not going to happen. This promise from God seems cruel. Now, when it was way past her time, God is saying that her prayers will be answered. But like Christ, God would open a womb in a miraculous way so that all would praise God for doing what only he could do.

He had told Abraham that he would bless her with a son this time next year. His name would be Isaac. I think Abraham believes that, but Sarah doubts. God came to her in her grief and frustration to calm her spirit concerning this promise. And though she would deny her laughter maybe out of fear or embarrassment the Bible would go on to say this about her.

Hebrews 11:11

Her boy would be named laughter, looking back at their time of unbelief and the unbelievable miracle that occurred. Because there would be laughter at his birth.

Genesis 21:6

This laughter is joy. It is God who blesses people, and in his blessings, he turns heartache to celebration. Though darkness is for a time, joy comes in the morning. It is in Jesus that all of God’s promises will be fully realized. Our heartaches, our sin, our shame, our guilt, our illness, our death, will all come to an end. Our doubts will be no more. For when Jesus comes, all that will be left is overflowing joy where we will enjoy God forever and ever.

**Application**

1) It is an honor to be a servant of the Lord. (Psalm 84:10)

2) May our faith increase in the knowledge of God’s Word. (Luke 17:5)

3) As covenant people, God has made known to us his plans. It is for our sanctification. (1 John 3:2-3)