

### SMALL TALK

1. When have you ever been unreasonably fearful?

### VIEWPOINT

2. **READ Numbers 13.** What did Caleb say? (13:30) What reaction did he get? What rumors were spread?
3. **READ Numbers 14:20-23.** What was the root cause of the failure of those who were not allowed to enter the promised land?
4. **READ Joshua 1:8-13.** How did Joshua (and Caleb) avoid this failure?

### GETTING PERSONAL

5. Does faith include risk? What risks does God call you to take for him?
6. How can faith in Christ give you the courage to face difficulties this week?

### PRACTICE!

7. What promise would you like to “receive,” “rejoice”, and “remember”?

January 23, 2022

## **A Promising Year**

### **3-REMEMBER God's Promises**

In 2012, a 60 year old, seemingly homeless cowboy by the name of Timothy Henry Gray died of hypothermia under a Wyoming overpass. There are a number of oddities about his life. The first oddity was that there was a 9 year old cashier's check written out to him for a significant amount of money that was in his wallet but never cashed. Why not? Why did he never cash this money? Obviously he needed the money. Did he not believe the check was valid?

There are parts of the story that cannot be known. Although he died as if he was penniless, it was soon discovered that he was due an inheritance worth 19 million dollars that he never collected! Did he not know about his inheritance? Did he not believe it? Did he think he would never receive it? We don't know.

#### **Seems tragic doesn't it? How did it happen?**

Perhaps the same way it happens to so many of us who fail to cash in on God's promises!

- 1) Maybe we don't know about them, or
- 2) Maybe we don't believe the inheritance is really ours.

**To experience a promising year, like this series is describing, is to live by faith in our promise making, promise keeping God.**

#### **I. REMEMBERING is a prerequisite to persevering faith**

*Genesis 12:1–2 (CSB) The Lord said to Abram: Go from your land, your relatives, and your father's house to the land that I will show you. <sup>2</sup> I will make you into a great nation, I will bless you, I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing.*

- Although Abram (Abraham) was **childless** and **75** when he was given this promise,
- HE believed, and acted accordingly, packed and left to follow God's promise
- I. REMEMBERING is a prerequisite to persevering faith.

#### **II. Persevering faith will pass the tests of...**

### A. TIME

The initial decision was difficult but exciting. After the excitement wears off, time, specifically difficult delays, causes questions for Abraham that he raises with God in **Genesis 15** (an important chapter to read), but God forewarns that there is quite an ordeal ahead.

**WAITING** is challenging at any age, but waiting to get pregnant for many years when you are 75 and getting older takes the challenge of waiting to a whole new level.

**Unfortunately, Abraham and Sarah took matters into their own hands with disastrous results. Painful for them, and for world events for thousands of years to come.**

**What is the opposite of faith?** Trusting your will rather than God's will. The world's message is to trust your feelings and trust yourself. That is not God's message.

*Proverbs 3:5–6 (NIV) Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; <sup>6</sup> in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.*

Taking a wrong turn always leads to crooked paths we regret, but God graciously takes us back to his way and his path when we submit and turn to him again in faith. **25 years** and 9 chapters later we read how God fulfills his promise. God is faithful even when have been faithless.

A wrong turn leads to crooked paths and regret, but God is faithful to his promise. When you turn back to God, he puts you back on the promising path!

**WAITING is a challenge to everybody's faith.**

**25 years** after the promise, when Abraham was now 100 and Sarah 90, they finally gave birth to their own biological Son together, the heir of promise!

- **Sarah laughed! They named their child Isaac, which means "Laughter".**

## II. **Persevering faith will PASS the TESTS of...**

### A. **TIME**

## B. DIFFICULTIES

You might think it was smooth sailing after the joy of this celebration FINALLY. But no. The next test was even more difficult! Read about it in Genesis 22. God tested Abraham's faith by asking him to offer Isaac as a sacrifice to him. **What!? That's horrible!! How does that make any sense?! What is going on here?!!!** So much is going on, but in the interest of time, and the fact that this is an overview, here are 6 things.

1. **God had a plan.** He doesn't explain his plan in advance.
2. **God stopped Abraham** before Isaac was actually sacrificed. This was only a test (kind of like the emergency broadcasting system—this is only a test). The test was preparatory for the real deal that was coming.
3. **What was going through Abraham's mind is significant!** This is only hinted at in Genesis 22. But it is clearly explained in Hebrews, and in Romans.

*Hebrews 11:17–19 (CSB) By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac. He received the promises and yet he was offering his one and only son, <sup>18</sup> the one to whom it had been said, Your offspring will be traced through Isaac. <sup>19</sup> He considered God to be able even to raise someone from the dead; therefore, he received him back, figuratively speaking.*

4. **The Location was significant.** God told Abraham to take Isaac to Mt. Moriah, which was later to become the hub of Jerusalem, the Temple mount in Jerusalem. The whole Old Testament sacrificial system is built on this picture of sacrifice. God provided a sacrificial substitute.
5. **Isaac's Question & Abraham's Answer was significant.**

*Genesis 22:7–8 (NIV) Isaac spoke up and said to his father Abraham, "Father?" "Yes, my son?" Abraham replied. "The fire and wood are here," Isaac said, "but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" <sup>8</sup> Abraham answered, "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." And the two of them went on together.*

And he did, not just in Genesis 22, **that was just the test**, the reality emergency Response was God's only Son Jesus! Who God provided to us as a sacrifice.

6. **Abraham's FAITH was significant.** Abraham was credited with righteousness because he believed God's promise! The Apostle Paul put it this way.

*Romans 4:20–25 (CSB) He did not waver in unbelief at God's promise but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, <sup>21</sup> because he was fully convinced that what God had promised, he was also able to do. <sup>22</sup> Therefore, it was credited to him for righteousness. <sup>23</sup> Now it was credited to him was not written for Abraham alone, <sup>24</sup> but also for us. It will be credited to us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. <sup>25</sup> He was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.*

This is all amazing, but we are not done.

## **II. Persevering faith will PASS the TESTS of...**

**A. TIME**

**B. DIFFICULTIES**

**C. SILENCE**

**Waiting while God is silent is a repeated pattern throughout the Bible.**

**IN GENESIS 15.** The context is God reassuring Abraham regarding the promise. But God is always full of grace and truth. There would be a 400 year delay! Abraham's heirs would be enslaved and mistreated, then they would be brought back and given the land of promise!

**This waiting pattern repeats from cover to cover of salvation History.**

Are we not ourselves waiting and many times in seeming silence now?

## **III. REMEMBERING makes all the difference!**

It made all the difference for Joshua and Caleb: **Read about it in Numbers 13.**

10 scouts forgot to remember. Only these 2 remembered.

How could they have possibly forgotten the promise and the power of their God? I know the answer from my own experience.

When I fixate on problems I forget God's promises, and I begin to think and act more like an atheist than a believer.

### How do we avoid this tendency? How did Joshua and Caleb avoid it?

*Joshua 1:13 (CSB) "Remember what Moses the Lord's servant commanded you when he said, 'The Lord your God will give you rest, and he will give you this land.'*

They remembered the promise!

We learn how they remembered a few verses earlier!

*Joshua 1:8–9 (CSB) This book of instruction must not depart from your mouth; you are to meditate on it day and night so that you may carefully observe everything written in it. For then you will prosper and succeed in whatever you do. 'Haven't I commanded you: be strong and courageous? Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.'*

God sets up this pattern to help us remember!!! Then Jesus came... and left us with a challenge of TIME, DIFFICULTY, and times of seeming SILENCE. And Jesus tells us what to do!

*Matthew 28:18–20 (CSB) Jesus came near and said to them, "All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. <sup>19</sup> Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*

**REMEMBER God's promises! If you are a follower of Jesus Christ, You are a child of promise, with an inheritance!!! READ THE WILL!!! AND SPEND THE MONEY!!!! This is how you persevere through the tests of time, difficulties, and silence. Hear Jesus voice to you now: Say it with me: Remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age!"**