

A Meeting in Mamre

Genesis 18: 1-15

In our text today, Abraham's journey of faith continues. He has been walking with God for twenty four years now. Ishmael, the son born of Hagar is now thirteen. God had promised a son with Sarah, but as of yet, that had not happened.

Likely this day seemed no different than any other. It appears that Abraham has settled in to life, and is patiently waiting on the Lord. However, this day would be anything but ordinary. Before the day was over, Abraham would have an encounter with the LORD. (I am convinced Abraham met a pre-incarnate Christ on this day in Mamre. This is referred to as a theophany.)

Although these events happened thousands of years ago in the life of Abraham, there is practical application for our lives as well. I hope our study will increase our passion and devotion for the Lord, while encouraging us to remain faithful even in times of difficulty. As we consider the [events](#) of that day, I want to preach on: [A Meeting in Mamre](#).

I. A Sovereign Visitation (1-2) – The opening verses reveal Abraham's encounter with the LORD. Notice:

A. Abraham's Position (1) – [And the LORD appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day.](#) As the LORD came that day, Abraham was found sitting in the doorway of his tent, during the heat of the day. We must understand that this was a common practice during the hottest part of the day. They would often retire to their tents in order to escape the scorching sun. I do find it interesting though that Abraham was seated at the tent door. Apparently he wanted to keep a clear vantage point, in case anyone came by.

- Abraham had no idea the LORD would come by, but there is a principle here we need to consider. Even in those moments during the heat of the day, the difficult seasons in life, we need to be ready to be of service unto the Lord. When the opportunity arises, we must be prepared.

B. Abraham's Perception (2-3) – [And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw *them*, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground,](#) ^[3] [And said, My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant.](#) Abraham recognized this was not an ordinary, casual visit. Somehow Abraham knew the Lord had come by his way. He would not be denied an opportunity to visit with the Lord.

- I have never experienced a physical visitation from the Lord, but I have been in His presence many times. I want to be like Abraham, living in such a way that I immediately recognize the Lord when He is in the midst, running to meet Him in an attitude of worship and adoration. I fear we often miss these glorious opportunities because we are not seated at the tent door, looking for an opportunity to commune and fellowship with our Lord.

II. A Submissive Devotion (3-8) – Here we discover the submissive attitude Abraham had, along with his desire to serve the Lord. Notice:

A. Abraham's Plea (3-4) – *And said, My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant: ^[4] Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree.* Abraham wanted to do all he could to accommodate and please the Lord during His visit. Following his bowing in worship, Abraham pleaded with the Lord to stay. He knew they must have been hot and tired from their journey, and Abraham wanted to bring water to wash their feet, providing some much needed rest. The Lord had come to visit, and Abraham was in no hurry for Him to leave.

- Surely we want to be in the presence of our Lord every time we have the opportunity. When that opportunity comes, I pray we will make the most of our visit with the Lord, seeking to worship Him, spending some precious time at His feet.

B. Abraham's Priority (5-8) – Abraham knew the significance of this moment. He wanted to do all he could to provide for his heavenly guests. We see:

1. A Desire to Serve (5) – *And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts; after that ye shall pass on: for therefore are ye come to your servant. And they said, So do, as thou hast said.* Clearly Abraham had a desire to serve the Lord, even admitting that he was His servant. Abraham had many servants at this time, but he was committed to serving the Lord himself. He wanted to serve personally, and was not about to miss such a wonderful opportunity.

- We need to obtain and maintain such a desire. The church is often filled with spectators, those willing to observe from a distance; but we need those who will actually get involved and serve the Lord. There are plenty of others who can and will, but that doesn't release me from my obligations. I don't want to be guilty of allowing or expecting someone else to do what the Lord desires of me. He doesn't have to use me. In fact, God's work will continue with or without me, but I am thankful He provides an opportunity to serve Him!

2. A Desire to Satisfy (6-8) – Abraham was not content to serve bread and water. The Lord had come to visit, and he spared no expense. He told Sarah to make fresh cakes of bread to serve them. Abraham then went and prepared a young calf from his herd for them to eat. He brought all of this with butter and milk. While his visitors ate, Abraham stood by them. Apparently he stood by, ready to provide anything else they might want or need. He was determined to serve in a way that pleased and satisfied the Lord.

- This portion of the passage convicted me. How often do I serve the Lord without a genuine desire to please Him? I fear we often go through the motions of service, but lack the desire and commitment to genuinely please the Lord with our efforts. We may have the knowledge and skill needed to perform a particular task, but do we serve the Lord with a heart of thanksgiving and praise. It is never a burden to serve Him; we are privileged to have the opportunity! May we be like Abraham, standing by the Lord anticipating an opportunity to serve.

III. A Sarcastic Hesitation (9-15) – In our closing verses we discover the sarcastic attitude of Sarah. Before we become critical, we may need to examine our hearts as well. Consider:

A. The Promise (9-10) – *And they said unto him, Where is Sarah thy wife? And he said, Behold, in the tent.* ^[10] *And he said, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah heard it in the tent door, which was behind him.* Although Abraham and Sarah continued to wait, the Lord again promised they would have a son. They were well up in years at this point, but God would keep His word. A son would soon be born unto them. Life can be difficult at times. We grow impatient and weary waiting on the Lord. Like Abraham, we must continue to trust in the Word of the Lord and rest in His promises. We walk by faith, not sight.

B. The Pessimism (11-12) – *Now Abraham and Sarah were old and well stricken in age; and it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women.* ^[12] *Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?* While I do not condone Sarah's doubt, we must realize she is around ninety years old. Abraham is nearly one hundred. She had heard these words before, and yet the Lord had not sent their son. She assumed that it was now too late for her to bear a son.

- Sarah hadn't said a word; she laughed within herself. Clearly this was a laugh of doubt, feeling as if the promise would never be fulfilled. We will have to admit that we have been guilty of doubting the Lord as well. Like Sarah, we may not have spoken a word, but our hearts revealed the doubt we felt. We know the Lord is able to do whatever He pleases, and yet many times we doubt He will actually work in our situation.

C. The Providence (13-14) – *And the LORD said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old? ^[14] Is any thing too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.* Although Sarah doubted, the Lord affirmed to Abraham that His promise would be fulfilled. Sarah would bear the promised son. There is nothing too hard for God. There isn't anything that He can't do. He always works within His time and according to His sovereign will. As we read the Bible, we find numerous accounts of the Lord working in the midst of impossibility, make a way where there seemed no way. Mary question the angel of the Lord regarding the birth of Christ. *How shall this be, seeing I know not a Man?* The angel declared – *For with God nothing shall be impossible.*

- Situations in life are often difficult to bear. At times we are prone to doubt and unbelief, especially when we are expected to endure for a prolonged time. We are not promised that faith will come easy, but we know it is essential if we are live victoriously. Even in seasons that appear impossible, we must trust the Lord with our impossibility. With Him nothing is impossible!

D. The Protest (15) – *Then Sarah denied, saying, I laughed not; for she was afraid. And he said, Nay; but thou didst laugh.* Hearing the words of the Lord, Sarah became afraid and denied laughing. It appears that she then recognized the Lord and was ashamed of her unbelief. However, the Lord declared that she had laughed. He was well aware of her doubt. He knew her heart.

- Thankfully her doubt did not hinder or alter the Lord's plans for Isaac. He would be born in spite of her unbelief. I am thankful the Lord doesn't respond in my life according to the faith I possess at times. He doesn't remove us from fellowship or refuse to work in our lives. I know there are occasions in the Bible where doubt hindered the Lord's work, but He has a sovereign plan for our lives. He remains faithful even when we are not. He knows the desires and doubts of our hearts. We must trust Him and be willing to submit our lives unto Him.

Conclusion: I believe everyone here can relate to this passage in some way or another. Are you excited about your opportunities to serve the Lord? Are you seeking to please Him with the life you live? Maybe the Lord has encouraged you, affirming a promise, and you want to give Him praise. Maybe you are like Sarah and your heart is filled with doubt. Regardless of where we are, the Lord already knows. He wants to share in our burdens and our joy. Why not come before the Lord and share your heart. If you are unsaved, He is waiting for you to respond to the offer of salvation. Come as the Lord leads.