

"Our Great High Priest"

Part 17

Hebrews 4:14-8:5

Introduction: Tonight as we return to our study of the book of Hebrews we again return to chapter 6. Last week we stepped into Hebrews 6:12a and it is in this verse that the writer of Hebrews is encouraging his readers to be followers of those who had patiently waited for the promises of God.

The Hebrew believers were under great pressure because of their faith. In the midst of their pressure the writer of Hebrews is calling upon them to surrender completely over to God. As I told you last week the writer was calling on them to do the same as Peter called on his readers to do in 1 Peter.

1 Peter 5:6-7

⁶ *Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:*

⁷ *Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.*

This was the very same idea which the writer of Hebrews had. He was calling on them to cast all their care upon the Lord. In other words the desire of the writer was to get them to live a life completely sold out to God and trust God with the situations that came up around them. But the Hebrew believers were human and there was anxiety and doubt within their minds. There would have been questions and one of the questions would have been, "How do we know we can fully trust God to fulfill His promises to us?"

We find the answer to their question in the next verses. The writer moves on and he points their attention to Abraham.

Notice Hebrews 6:12-14

When Abram was 75 years old God had called him to leave Ur of the Chaldees and to follow God to the land of Canaan. Along with that call God had promised to Abram that from him would come an entire nation of people and this nation would be Israel and from the nation of Israel all the families of the earth would be blessed.

Genesis 12:1-4

Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:

² And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:

³ And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

*⁴ So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and **Abram was seventy and five years old** when he departed out of Haran.*

As the years passed Abram desired that God would make a covenant with him and God did just that in Genesis 15:9-18. But the covenant was not as Abram thought it would be. Abram was the recipient of the covenant but the covenant was based upon the faithfulness of God and not Abram. God made the covenant with Himself in Genesis 19 which meant that the covenant was unconditional. It did not rest upon Abram's faithfulness but it rested upon God's faithfulness.

Notice Hebrews 6:13

God could swear by no one greater so He swore by Himself. The promise is seen in the next verse.

Notice Hebrews 6:14

God promised to bless and multiply Abraham and that He did. This now brings us to where we are in our study tonight.

I. The Example of Faith, Patience and God's Faithfulness

Part 2

Notice Hebrews 6:15

Here in this verse there are many lessons for us to consider when we look back at the patience of Abraham and the promise of God. Let me be more specific and show you some lessons surrounding the birth of Isaac. Let us consider some lessons from this that would have applied to the Hebrew believers and to you and I today.

- 1. Patience and faith is needed as we pass through this world waiting upon the promises of God.**

In order to see the promise as Abraham did there is something else which we need to know.

Genesis 11:29-30

²⁹ *And Abram and Nahor took them wives: the name of Abram's wife was Sarai; and the name of Nahor's wife, Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah, and the father of Iscah.*

³⁰ **But Sarai was barren; she had no child.**

Here we are told that Sarai was barren. This helps us better to understand the setting for the promise. So Abram is given the promise against this background.

Abraham made many mistakes as he waited for the fulfillment of God's promise. In one such occasion he and Sarah decided they would take matters into their own hands.

Genesis 16:1-4

Now Sarai Abram's wife bare him no children: and she had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar.

² *And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the LORD hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai.*

³ *And Sarai Abram's wife took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, **after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan**, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife.*

⁴ *And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived:*

When this took place Abram had been in the land for 10 years which means he was 85 and Sarai was 75. Possibly, because of their age and the fact that Sarai was barren, they came to the conclusion that God's promise to Abram would be fulfilled through Hagar. But it was never God's plan for a man to have 2 wives and so when Abram took Hagar to be his wife he stepped outside the will of God. He should have PATIENTLY waited on God to unfold His plan but instead He and Sarai decided they would "help" and so Abram fathered a son by the name of Ishmael. Ishmael would become the father of the Arabs and would be a consequence of stepping outside of God's will that would bring pain and sorrow to many in Israel and even to many in our day today.

The Hebrew believers who received the book of Hebrews would have known of this and this reference to Abraham would have been a reminder to them that they needed to wait upon the Lord. If they were to take matters into their own hands there could possibly be consequences that would cause them and those around them even more pain and suffering than what they were experiencing at the time. Patience and faith MUST be exercised as they faced the time of waiting or we could say, as they faced the furnace of affliction.

Application: The very same application is true of our lives also. When we are faced with the trials of this life we must be very careful to abide in the will of God. To take matters into our own hands and step across the boundary of God's will is sure to bring consequences and pain not only in our lives but also in the lives of those around us. So as we pass through this world patience and faith are requirements as we wait upon the promise of the return of our Lord.

2. **God has an appointed time for everything.**

In Genesis 18 we find a meeting between God and Abraham and it is in the conversation that we can see that God has an appointed time for everything.

Genesis 18:10-14

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.*

¹¹ *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?*

¹³ *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.*

Here we see that God had an appointed time for Isaac to be born. Abraham could not hasten the day nor could he prolong the day. It would be on God's appointed day that Isaac would be born.

So what would this mean for the Hebrew believers? It would have been a reminder to them that God also had an appointed time frame for their suffering and He had an appointed time for everything in their lives. Notice what Solomon wrote in Ecclesiastes.

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:

² *A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted;*

³ *A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;*

⁴ *A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;*

⁵ *A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;*

⁶ *A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away;*

⁷ *A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;*

⁸ *A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.*

What does all of this mean to us? It helps us to understand that God is sovereign over everything that happens within our lives. Everything is operating within the time frame which God has appointed. God had an appointed day on which we were born and He has an appointed day on which we will die.

Job 14:1-2, 5

Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble.

² *He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.*

⁵ *Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass:*

Our day of birth was appointed and our day of death is appointed and everything in between is appointed.

Ecclesiastes 3:17

¹⁷ *I said in mine heart, God shall judge the righteous and the wicked: for there is a time there for every purpose and for every work.*

Let me give you one more very encouraging lesson.

3. **God's power is NOT limited because of our ability.**

Genesis 18:11

¹¹ *Now Abraham and Sarah were old and well stricken in age; and it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women.*

Sarah was beyond the child bearing years. Let me show you the conversation between God and Abraham said in Genesis 17.

Genesis 17:15-17

¹⁵ *And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be.*

¹⁶ *And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her.*

¹⁷ *Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear?*

God made a promise that Sarah would have a son but humanly speaking it was impossible. She was 90 and Abraham was 100. But here is where our lesson comes in: God's power is not limited because of human ability.

Genesis 21:1-2

And the LORD visited Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did unto Sarah as he had spoken.

² *For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him.*

This thought would have been a great encouragement to the Hebrews. They were faced with persecution and some had lost all they had. The question would have been, "How do we and our families survive?" The answer was, "God in His mighty power will provide all you need."

Application:

You may be in a situation right now and the situation is far bigger than you and it is completely out of your control. It could even be said tonight that what you face is humanly impossible for you to get through. But I remind you tonight that God's power is not limited because of our ability or maybe I should say our inability.

There is a question that comes to my mind as I think about this, "Why has God allowed me to come to this place where I have no ability to change the situation before me?" As I raise that question there are several answers that come to my mind.

1. **He is refining us.**
2. **He is stripping us of self dependence and making us more "God" dependant.**
3. **He brought us to where we are to show us His power.**

Remember in Exodus how God led Israel out of Egypt right up to the edge of the Red Sea? They were being pursued by the Egyptians on one side and they were against the Red Sea on the other. Why did God bring them to that place?

Exodus 14:13

¹³ And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will shew to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever.

God had brought them to that place to show them His power so they would learn to trust Him as they would later face the challenges of life. Remember in John 6 when Jesus led His disciples into the mountains and the hungry multitude followed them. Jesus turned to Philip and asked a question.

John 6:5-6

⁵ When Jesus then lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?

*⁶ **And this he said to prove him:** for he himself knew what he would do.*

Jesus tested His disciples that day and He orchestrated the entire scene so that He could multiply the fish and the bread to show them His power.

Conclusion:

Whatever we face in life we can know these things:

- God has appointed this as part of the path He desires for me to walk.
- I am to be patient and walk by faith on this path.
- I am to trust in the power of God and know that it is not limited because of my abilities or inabilities.