

Dear Friends in Christ, grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

“The difficult we can do immediately; the impossible takes just a little longer.” What an attitude! Jesus had that attitude. He took seven loaves of bread and a couple fish and fed over 5,000 people. He said to a man who was paralyzed that his sins were forgiven and then told him to stand up and walk. He touched the eyes of a man who was blind and asked what do you see. The man said I see people but they look like trees. Jesus touched him again and he saw perfectly. When we read the Gospel of Mark, we see Jesus again and again demonstrating power over all manner of things.

The history of God as recorded in the Bible is of impossible things happening. God creates a world out of darkness and void, separating land and water, light and darkness, creating animals and people. God helped a teenage boy named David kill a menacing giant named Goliath. God is doing the impossible.

We come to our lesson today, the story of Abraham and Sarah. Three travelers come to Abraham’s tent. They are treated to a banquet. Typical mid-eastern hospitality. One traveler, who turns out to be the Lord tells Abraham that in a year’s time that Sarah will give birth to a child, a son. Abraham is 99 and Sarah 90. Sarah breaks out in laughter at the idea. The Lord asks who laughed and Sarah denies it. But her laughter is a response of disbelief. It is a common reaction to a surprise. It is a human response to the difference between divine promise and human possibility.

The impossible happens and Sarah conceives a child who is born within the year. Just in the last few months, we have heard of a 65-year-old woman giving birth as a surrogate mother. Impossible, but it happened. The story of Abraham and Sarah having a child in their nineties continues the promise of God to make of Abraham a great nation.

In our Gospel story the disciples ask Jesus who can be saved if a person’s actions don’t qualify them. Jesus responds that it is possible with God. Our God, our savior is a God of the impossible.

How do we bring that concept into our life, into our world? In a book written by a neurologist, called *Incognito, the Secret Life of the Subconscious*, the author states that a child under the age of ten can lose half their brain and still function fully. Impossible it seems, but apparently, up to that age the brain can compensate or adapt to the trauma. Saul of Damascus, a man who hated Christians and was doing everything he could to wipe them out, was stopped in his tracks one day and converted to a follower of Christ. There are examples of cancer that gets to a point, then goes back on itself, and eats itself up.

Does it always work that God does the impossible? No, sadly it doesn’t. I spent a whole summer praying that God would help me grow five inches. I didn’t. We all know of illnesses that don’t get better and people die. Some situations don’t change. Those are hard to take and we wonder why and what happened and where is God in all this.

**But—**and I see that word used many, many times in the Bible, the history of our faith—that word stands in the midst of life. People in their nineties don’t have children, but look at Abraham and Sarah. Look at David and Goliath; look at Jesus, dead and buried and resurrected three days later; eleven men and four or five women begin to tell the world that Jesus is their savior and now over two billion people on earth are Christians. It shouldn’t have been able to happen, BUT---

In the musical “Man of La Mancha”, Don Quixote sings, “to dream the impossible dream, to beat the unbeatable foe”. It is a story of taking on the challenges you want to achieve your dream. William Glasser in his work on Reality Therapy and Control Theory asks the question, “How do you want your world to be?” He then asks, what is the picture of how you want your life to be, what do you need to do to make this happen, what can you do to achieve that? Glasser found that many people see themselves as victims and helpless or want to blame others instead of themselves and end up doing nothing. They stay where they are and their picture of what they want remains only a picture. Glasser asks them to decide what needs to be done and start doing that.

Jesus said that He had come that we might have life and have it abundantly. That sounds like an impossible dream, but—if our God and our Lord is a God that does the impossible, it may not be a dream. Millions of people, dealing with addiction, have had their life restored through giving their life over to a higher power; millions of people have gotten down on their knees and asked Jesus to take over their life; millions of people have said, “Lord, I believe, help my unbelief.”

God called Abraham and Sarah to continue trusting in the Lord’s promise. To believe despite evidence is called faith or trust. But maybe it isn’t believing without evidence, for we have a history of God acting in the pages of the Holy Bible. Abraham and Sarah were real people. They had their dreams and hopes and their doubts, BUT---they held on to the Lord through the ups and downs, ins and outs, and saw the promise of God fulfilled.

Jesus calls us to trust that He can help us be the people He and we want us to be. Let us not sell our Lord Jesus short. Amen.