

Discover More: Together

Individual Devotions

Week of September 26-October 1

Discover Scripture and Life

+ Read the scripture.

Respond to one of these questions.

- + What's the best news you ever received? It could be medical news, or something about your job or future or family.
- + Three strangers show up at the Oaks of Mamre. There is no indication Abraham was expecting anyone, much less God, yet Abraham shows hospitality. When have you had unexpected visitors? What did you do?

Discover More about the Message

Message Introduction: Abraham and Sarah are old, beyond the normal years for having children. God restates the promise of a family, and both Abraham and Sarah laugh in disbelief. They had given up on the promise, there was nothing more to discover or learn when it came to promise of children. They were done with God. God was not done with them. Sometimes in the journey of faith, we come to moments

when it seems there is nothing more, that the trail of promise is closed, and we give up on God. The story of initial disbelief on the part of Abraham and Sarah is familiar, for often we too have given up and do not believe there is anything more to discover. The surprise in the journey of faith happens when we pay attention to God's surprising ways to fulfill God's promises and to experience the grace of God in unexpected way.

Reflect on the message you heard in person or on-line.

- + What is something you heard that was interesting or engaging?
- + Is there anything that raised a question or needed more explanation?
- + What is one thing you take with you? It may be something to do, something to trust, or a wisdom of insight to have.

You can listen to the message online here.

<https://www.firstlutherancr.org/>

Together in Spirit

Take time to reflect about your day, your concerns, and how God may be speaking to you.

OPTION 1: One word

As you reflect about your day, what is one word that summarizes how you are feeling? What might God be saying to you in this word?

OPTION 2: Reflecting on the past 24 hours

Ask God to calm your self and help you see your life from God's perspective.

Review the last 24 hours. What happened? What stands out? What captures your attention? What is a High and Low of this time?

Give your day to God your day. Ask for forgiveness where needed. Give thanks.

Look forward. How might you be more loving this day? What is God calling you to do?

Close in the Lord's Prayer

Genesis 17:15-19; 18:1-2, 9-14

¹⁵God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. ¹⁶I will bless her, and moreover I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall give rise to nations; kings of peoples shall come from her." ¹⁷Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said to himself, "Can a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old?"

Can Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?" ¹⁸And Abraham said to God, "O that Ishmael might live in your sight!" ¹⁹God said, "No, but your wife Sarah shall bear you a son, and you shall name him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring after him.

¹The LORD appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day. ²He looked up and saw three men standing near him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent entrance to meet them, and bowed down to the ground. ⁹They said to him, "Where is your wife Sarah?" And he said, "There, in the tent." ¹⁰Then one said, "I will surely return to you in due season, and your wife Sarah shall have a son." And Sarah was listening at the tent entrance behind him. ¹¹Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age; it had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. ¹²So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "After I have grown old, and my husband is old, shall I have pleasure?" ¹³The LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh, and say, 'Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?' ¹⁴Is anything too wonderful for the LORD? At the set time I will return to you, in due season, and Sarah shall have a son."

Five Minutes with God

Genesis 17:15-19

Spiritual practices are intentional activities that deepen our relationship with God. This story from Abraham's journey of faith highlights hospitality as a spiritual practice full of surprise and grace. Abraham did what any good person of his time did in a world without McDonald's and Holiday Inn: he welcomed strangers into his home. His intentional hospitality deepened his relationship with God when the strangers' message became reality in the joyful fulfillment of God's promise.

Hospitality usually doesn't end in such a momentous event as Abraham experienced, but it almost always brings more kindness and warmth into our world. Hospitality can be very simple: holding the door open for a stranger; greeting family members when they return home; taking time to listen to a coworker who is having a rough time; sharing a sandwich with the homeless guy on the corner. Hospitality is extending welcome, and sometimes this is as basic as letting someone know they matter. Watch for little acts of hospitality that you can intentionally do this week to bring more welcome into people's lives. Then, watch for God's surprises of grace.



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