

Message 2025-11-15

Parsha Chayei Sarah: Genesis 23:1-25:18

Father Abraham had many sons.

Many sons had father Abraham.

I am one of them, and so are you.

So let's all praise the Lord.

My message this week is going to try to answer the question, 'Why is Avraham our father?' I wrote a different message this week as well, which I will share another time. I had good plans, but I felt like it was the wrong message for this week. So, here we are, doing a little d'var Torah.

Our parsha this week is Chayei Sarah, Sarah's life. The parsha begins with the death of Sarah and ends with death of Abraham, but in the middle of the parsha is the story of Abraham's servant going to find a bride for Isaac. There are also details of Abraham's other children and the people groups they want on to form. Sarah and Abraham finish their parts in God's story, but Isaac's part is really just getting started. Endings and beginnings and endings.

The title of this book of Torah is B'reshit, beginnings, because it is full of beginnings. After the death of Avraham, we go on to learn about Yitz'khak's life and then Ya'akov's and then his sons, Benei Yisrael. It is the origin story of the Jewish people, the people of Israel, the people that God chose to be His example. We start with the creation and work our way all the way through to the sons of Israel gathered together for another death, the death of Yosef, but they are together. They are united. They are in Egypt, not the land of promise, but Egypt is where they grow from a family into a people.

All of this is the beginning. We are being shown how Adonai is setting into motion His redemptive plan for all creation through the example of His chosen people, starting with the examples of their matriarch and patriarch, Sarah and Abraham.

Today I think it is only appropriate, as we lay Avraham and Sarah to rest in the parsha, that we look back at their story and learn from the examples they set with their lives.

The author of Hebrews has this to say:

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place he was to receive as an inheritance. He went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he migrated to the land of promise as if it were foreign, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob—fellow heirs of the same promise. For he was waiting for the city that has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

By faith even Sarah herself received ability to conceive when she was barren and past the age, since she considered the One who had made the promise to be faithful. So from one—and him as good as dead—were fathered offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven, and as uncountable as the sand on the seashore.

Hebrews 11:8–12 (TLV)

Emunah

We are all children of Avraham in faith, so let's look back at what set Avraham and Sarah apart. What set them apart was their *emunah*, their faithful trusting in Adonai.

We are told in Habakkuk that,

the righteous will attain life through trusting faithfulness.

Habakkuk 2:4 (CJB)

הַצַּדִּיק בְּאֵמוּנָתוֹ יֵחִיָּה

The righteous by his faith will live.

But what is this faith, this emunah, by which we live? In Hebrews it is defined like this.

Trusting is being confident of what we hope for, convinced about things

we do not see.

Hebrews 11:1 (CJB)

I actually like the translation of this in the NKJV.

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Hebrews 11:1 (NKJV)

So emunah gives weight (matter, substance, density, evidence, form, etc.) to our convictions. It is not belief. It is walking out our beliefs in a tangible way. Our emunah informs the way we live every aspect of our lives. This is similar to how we can, as Rav Sha'ul said, recognize Yeshua as the image of the invisible God.

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

Colossians 1:15 (TLV)

We can know that we are walking in God's ways when we walk in Yeshua's ways. Yeshua is our example of how Adonai wants us to live in emunah. He made God's ways visible to us as we walk in faith like Him.

Getting back to Avraham, it is often portrayed that Avram developed his faith in the one true God out of nowhere, in a vacuum. Hashem called, Avram said 'Hineini' or something like that, he obeyed God, and the rest was history. I don't think that Avram developed his faith out of nowhere though. Here is why.

In Genesis it says Noakh lived 350 yrs after the flood. Avram was born 262 yrs after the flood. He left his country at 75 yrs old. That is 337 yrs after the flood. That means Noakh was still alive for all of Avram's life before leaving for Kena'an. Noakh did not die until the year Ishma'el was born. This means Avram did not grow up without any knowledge of Adonai. He would have heard the tales of Noakh and Shem and the generations before him, because he was blessed to still have them alive. They would not have been old Bible stories to Avram. Yes, much time had passed, and humanity had once again rebelled and were worshipping false gods and not living in Adonai's ways. However, they were not completely ignorant of Adonai's ways, and they knew what was

right. I believe Avram was 'returning' to faith in the one true God, and there were lessons to be learned from his fathers.

What lessons did the faith of Noakh teach Avram? I think he taught him the lesson of emunah. The author of Hebrews (who I do think was Sha'ul) says this:

By trusting, Noach, after receiving divine warning about things as yet unseen, was filled with holy fear and built an ark to save his household. Through this trusting, he put the world under condemnation and received the righteousness that comes from trusting.

Hebrews 11:7 (CJB)

הַצַּדִּיק בְּאֵמוּנָתוֹ יֵחִיָּה

The righteous by his faith will live. That was the lesson of Noakh, and Avraham lived that out in a profound way.

(Avraham) believed in ADONAI, and He credited it to him as righteousness.

B'reshit [Genesis] 15:6 (CJB)

The faith of Avraham was considered righteousness. Rav Sha'ul puts it this way.

Just as Abraham "believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," know then that those who have faith are children of Abraham. The Scriptures, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, proclaimed the Good News to Abraham in advance, saying, "All the nations shall be blessed through you." So then, the faithful are blessed along with Abraham, the faithful one.

Galatians 3:6–9 (TLV)

Notice how this says that 'all the nations shall be blessed through you,' *not* 'blessed without you', and it says that the faithful are blessed *along* with Abraham, not *apart* from Abraham.

What this is telling us is that EMUNAH should be what unites us. Emunah is what brings us all together. Regardless of who we are or what

people group we belong to, we are all sons and daughters of Abraham if we have (and walk in) emunah.

Last Sunday Amber and I went to a Brandon Lake concert at the T-Mobile Center. It was a good concert. It was definitely a *concert* with all the lights and dancing and arena rock moves, but it wasn't all a show. There were meaningful moments of worship and reflection. We do some of the same songs here in worship, and singing them with an arena full of people was fantastic. What struck me was the unity I felt with almost 14,000 people because of our shared faith. Our faith binds us together. I guarantee that I have significant theological differences with most of the people there, but that is not nearly as important as our shared faith in the one true God.

The Promise of the Land

Now, Sha'ul's quote that 'all nations shall be blessed through you' comes from the very first promise God made to Avram. I would like to revisit that now and break it down a little bit.

Now ADONAI said to Avram, "Get yourself out of your country, away from your kinsmen and away from your father's house, and go to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, I will bless you, and I will make your name great; and you are to be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, but I will curse anyone who curses you; and by you all the families of the earth will be blessed."

B'reshit [Genesis] 12:1–3 (CJB)

God tells Avram to leave the comfort and familiarity of his home and to go where God would show him to go. This was the action that Avram had to take in emunah. He did what he was told to do. He gets to Shekhem in Kena'an, and Adonai tells him this is the place.

ADONAI appeared to Avram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land."

B'reshit [Genesis] 12:7 (CJB)

This place where God brought Abraham, the place He promised to give Abraham's descendants, is right in the middle of what Israel's enemies

now call the West Bank. Shekhem is now known as Nablus, and it is a Palestinian terrorist hotbed. So is Beit-el where Abraham goes next. We now call Beit-el, Bethel, Ramallah. So is the place where Abraham and Sarah are buried which is now called Hebron. So are the places where Yeshua was born and raised. This is not just the western bank of the Jordan. It is the heart of the Biblical holy land.

Thankfully the Biblical terms, Judea and Samaria, are being used again officially, but Israel is pressured constantly to give this land away for 'Peace' to people who are very clear when they say they do not want peace. They want a land empty of Jews and Christians and anyone who doesn't believe like them, and then it will be peaceful.

However, this land is not the politicians' to give away. This land is a covenantal promise from El Shaddai, God Almighty, and it is no man's to give away. Giving this land away has seemed 'right' to a lot of men, men who do not walk in emunah, but it has only ever led to death. The willingness of these ungodly men to give away the gift God gave to Abraham and his descendents only encourages violence because it tells the terrorists and their supporters that Israel doesn't really believe in the promises of God.

Sovereignty over Judea and Samaria isn't just Israel's issue, the Jews' problem. The population of Christians in this region has fallen from over 13% to under 1% and those who remain live under constant threat. In Israeli controlled areas (not areas like this that are managed entirely or primarily by the Palestinian Authority) the Christian population is growing. The antisemites forget to tell you this when they badmouth Israel. What I am trying to do is point out that this issue belongs to all of us who live for Adonai in emunah. If we are children of Abraham in faith, regardless of our family line, we must be people who bless Israel and the Jewish people. It is suicidal not to.

I will bless those who bless you, but I will curse anyone who curses you; and by you all the families of the earth will be blessed.

B'reshit [Genesis] 12:3 (CJB)

I will bless those who bless you, but I will curse anyone who curses you -

unless they don't agree with you or like you or influential people make interesting points about you; then it's fine. Curse them.

If we want to see all the families of the earth blessed, we have to be people who bless Israel. There are people today that are telling you that Israel does not matter or that *this* Israel is not *that* Israel, but that is a lie. We have to be people who defend the truth and honor the gifts of God.

The people of Israel returning to the land of Israel, this first flowering of our redemption, is huge. The reestablishment of Israel is huge because it testifies to the faithfulness of God's promises. It proves that God is true, It is not the way the world is supposed to work.

Chayei Sarah

What about Sarah? This parsha is titled the 'Life of Sarah', and I have spent the entire time talking about Avraham.

Rav Sha'ul said Sarah 'considered the One who had made the promise to be faithful', and because of this her descendants were 'as numerous as the stars of heaven, and as uncountable as the sand on the seashore'. Her legacy is also one of emunah. The faith of Sarah was required for the blessing to be set in motion.

Adonai identifies Himself later as the 'God of Avraham, Yitzkhak and Ya'akov'; as the God of Israel. That would have ended with Avraham if not for the faith of Sarah.

Yes, Sarah laughed when she heard she was going to have a son. So did Avraham! Having a kid when you're almost 100 yrs old is a ridiculous notion. God told them to name the child Yitzkhak, which means laughter, and they did. Because it's funny. This is not how the world is supposed to work.

I'm half that age, and, if I heard I was having a kid, I might name it Bekhay, because I would be crying. Although, if God was the one to tell me, I'm sure I would see the humor in it.

Sarah said, "God has given me good reason to laugh; now everyone who

hears about it will laugh with me."

B'reshit [Genesis] 21:6 (CJB)

It is absolutely absurd, but that is often how God chooses to get things done.

But God chose what the world considers nonsense in order to shame the wise; God chose what the world considers weak in order to shame the strong; and God chose what the world looks down on as common or regards as nothing in order to bring to nothing what the world considers important; so that no one should boast before God.

1 Corinthians 1:27–29 (CJB)

The Legacy of Avraham and Sarah

In B'reshit 17, Adonai identifies himself as El Shaddai, God Almighty. He changes Avram's name, which means exalted father, to Avraham, which means the father of many. He changes Sarai's name, which means mockery, to Sarah, which means princess. He does this because who they were is not who they were going to be. During this changing of names God restates his covenant with Avraham.

"I am establishing my covenant between me and you, along with your descendants after you, generation after generation, as an everlasting covenant, to be God for you and for your descendants after you. I will give you and your descendants after you the land in which you are now foreigners, all the land of Kena'an, as a permanent possession; and I will be their God."

B'reshit [Genesis] 17:7–8 (CJB)

Avraham and Sarah did not live to see every promise of God's covenant fulfilled, but they knew that Adonai would fulfill them all in time.

We sang this this morning:

*You have good plans
If it's not good, then You're not finished yet
You have good plans
It's true in the palace and true in the pit*

*If You're in control, then I'm lifting my hands
You have good, good plans
Yes, You have good, good plans*

The lesson of the lives of Avraham and Sarah is emunah. We look back on their lives, and we see lives that were not perfect, not without trouble and sorrow, not without failure and setbacks. But we see lives that are defined by their faith in the One who made the promises because they knew that Adonai was faithful.

Avraham and Sarah did not let go of the good plans God had promised them. Their emunah gave substance to the things hoped for. It was the evidence of things not seen. Adonai was simply not finished with His good plans.

Let us hold fast the unwavering confession of hope, for He who promised is faithful.

Hebrews 10:23 (TLV)

As sons and daughters of Abraham, we too must be people who walk in faith. We also may not live to see all of God's promises fulfilled in our lives, but we cannot lose hope. He who promised is faithful.

Father Abraham had many sons. Many sons had father Abraham. I am one of them, and so are you. So let's all praise the Lord.

Resources

- The Complete Jewish Bible
- Tree of Life Version
- Lexham Hebrew Bible
- Hebrew New Testament
- [Alford Demands Federal Investigation into Domestic Coordination with Foreign Terrorist Organizations | Congressman Mark Alford](#)