

July 14, 2024

Season: Eighth Sunday after Pentecost:

Theme: Jesus & his Ancestors

Scripture: Genesis 21:1-7

1 The Lord was attentive to Sarah just as he had said, and the Lord carried out just what he had promised her. **2** She became pregnant and gave birth to a son for Abraham when he was old, at the very time God had told him. **3** Abraham named his son—the one Sarah bore him—Isaac. **4** Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old just as God had commanded him. **5** Abraham was 100 years old when his son Isaac was born. **6** Sarah said, “God has given me laughter. Everyone who hears about it will laugh with me.” **7** She said, “Who could have told Abraham that Sarah would nurse sons? But now I’ve given birth to a son when he was old!”

Matthew 22:23-33

23 That same day Sadducees, who deny that there is a resurrection, came to Jesus. **24** They asked, “Teacher, Moses said, *If a man who doesn’t have children dies, his brother must marry his wife and produce children for his brother.* **25** Now there were seven brothers among us. The first one married, then died. Because he had no children he left his widow to his brother. **26** The same thing happened with the second brother and the third, and in fact with all seven brothers. **27** Finally, the woman died. **28** At the resurrection, which of the seven brothers will be her husband? They were all married to her.”

29 Jesus responded, “You are wrong because you don’t know either the scriptures or God’s power. **30** At the resurrection people won’t marry nor will they be given in marriage. Instead, they will be like angels from God. **31** As for the resurrection of the dead, haven’t you read what God told you, **32** *I’m the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?* He isn’t the God of the dead but of the living.” **33** Now when the crowd heard this, they were astonished at his teaching.

Sermon Title: To Surprise & Disclose

Sermon in a Sentence: Isaac was the fulfillment of a promise that did not appear to be coming, but the name Isaac (to laugh or rejoice) suggests that God is in the business of surprising us, and in that surprise, we often see what was not previously imagined.

Call To Worship - Traditional

ONE: We come to celebrate the God who seeks to make a way when we do not believe there is a way.

ALL: We shall open our ears, hearts, and minds to the God who seeks to surprise.

ONE: So often we look in one direction, while God is beckoning us in an entirely new direction.

ALL: Will we notice? Will we have the courage to take a step into the unknown?

ONE: Let us discern the work of our God, who loves us beyond measure,

ALL: And who is seeking to make a way when there does not appear to be a way.

ONE: Thanks be to God! Let us worship...

Contemporary Call To Worship: We come to celebrate the God who seeks to make a way when we do not believe there is a way. Open your ears, hearts, and minds to the God who might be beckoning us in a direction we never previously imagined. The God we worship is full of surprises!

Opening Prayer: O God and Gracious God, you are the One who was in existence before there was existence as we know it. In your mercy, you have worked with all creation, beckoning and inviting us to take a step toward greater faithfulness—toward the fulfillment of your dream. There is much for us to learn as we look back, but let us listen for your Spirit as we draw upon ancient stories and seek to apply them to the present. Things have changed, but you and your love have remained the same. We offer these words of prayer as we enter into this time of praise and worship. Amen.

Traditional Prayer for the People:

ONE: Allow your hearts to be drawn to the Lord.

ALL: We center ourselves in the presence of a gracious God.

ONE: It is God who first loved us and made a way for this life-giving relationship.

ALL: We are thankful!

ONE: The Lord of love is with you.

ALL: And also with you.

ONE: Let us pray...

With so many in our community uncertain and frustrated, we pause at this time to lift them before you, Lord God. The question on the minds of many people today is about the next step, followed by a long list of questions like: Can I get through to the insurance company? Why haven't the roofers come? And do I have anything besides peanut butter to eat? With our heads spinning and our hearts feeling heavy, we take a moment for the purpose of breathing in your Spirit and finding some respite in your presence (pause for 10 seconds or so).

With your church trying to determine how best to do ministry, let us look to Jesus and the simplicity of a handful of people moving from town to town, from one need to another. With Jesus as their guide and teacher, those who followed him learned the way of humility and kindness, never allowing frustration or unexpected obstacles to hinder the larger work. Encourage us where we need encouragement; help us to find peace and solace in the promise of your eternal presence; and keep us mindful of the way you often illuminate the path that no one has previously noticed.

And today, we lift up all those whose lives have experienced serious interruptions—surgeries and treatments postponed; even a funeral delayed. Wherever the church can show empathy and speak words of compassion, we pray for that sacred capacity. Now bless the church in all of its manifestations and all of its locations as it seeks to surprise the world with your immeasurable love and kindness. In Christ's name, we pray. Amen.

Call to Communion: When we cannot see the fulfillment of your promised love; where we are unable to perceive the what the next thing needs to be for the work of your church; when we

Sermon Background: This sermon series will look at different Old Testament characters that are mentioned in the Gospels, specifically looking at what they might reveal to us about Jesus. Isaac was a surprise, even to Sarah and Abraham, who had heard the promise of God. There was laughter at the prospect of Sarah having a child at her age, but the laughter turned to rejoicing when Isaac was born. As an adult, Isaac becomes one of the Patriarchs of the faith (Jewish), often listed in a series of names, including in the Exodus story when God encounters Moses through the Burning Bush (Exodus 3:6), and God says, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Jesus borrows this quote when he is confronted by the Sadducees on the topic of resurrection. The Sadducees were considered traditionalists, basing their faith solely on the Pentateuch (first five books of the Bible), unlike the Pharisees, who based their faith on the entire Hebrew Bible (what Christians often call the Old Testament). Because there is no direct reference to

the resurrection in the Pentateuch, the Sadducees do not believe in the resurrection, and so, with a well-crafted question, they approach Jesus thinking it would not leave Jesus with any good answer, thus undermining him as a good teacher. But these individuals, who were seeking to limit how one might learn of God, were suddenly confronted with a verse of scripture from their own limited understanding that challenged them and expanded what they believed to be possible.

Key Words/Phrases: Surprise, limitations, restrictions, disclose what was not previously noticed

Isaac, dead, alive

Present tense

Challenging narrowness, freedom, liberated from

The power of God is not limited by death; rather death is limited by the power of God.

Jesus - a good and faithful Jew

Music:

This Is a Day of New Beginnings #518

O God, Our Help in Ages Past #67 (1-3, 6)

Sing My Song Backwards #334 (1,3&4)

Softly and Tenderly #340

We Come as Guests Invited #386 - Communion

What a Beautiful Name

Great Things by Phil Wickman

Amazing Grace (Chains are Gone)

Freedom Jesus Culture

I Thank God by Maverick City (a little long, so probably needs to be cut)