

Abraham: The Father of the Faithful

Lesson 10: Faith for the Next Generation: A Burial and a Bride -- Genesis

23:1–4; 24:1–9, 62–67

Sarah is dead. The woman who laughed behind the tent flap, who waited a quarter century for a son, who walked beside Abraham across deserts and through famines and failures, is gone at a hundred and twenty-seven. And the great man of faith does what faithful people do in the face of real loss: he weeps. Scripture does not rush him past it. Abraham mourns for Sarah and weeps for her, and there is no rebuke in the text, no suggestion that grief is a failure of faith. Faith does not make us numb. It makes us hope, even while we cry.

Then comes a detail easy to skim past but quietly staggering. Abraham, to whom God had promised all this land, owns none of it. He has to approach the Hittites and ask, as “a sojourner and foreigner among you,” to buy a single field with a cave so he can bury his wife. The man God promised an entire country dies owning one grave. He held the promise his whole life by faith and never saw it fulfilled with his eyes, and he was content to be a stranger and exile, because the homeland he was really looking for was one no earthly deed could give him.

And then, growing old himself, Abraham turns his attention to the future. He calls his most trusted servant and makes him swear a solemn oath: do not take a wife for my son Isaac from the Canaanites among whom we live. Go back to my own people, my own kindred, and find a wife there, someone who will not pull the son of the promise away from the God of the promise. The faith that had carried Abraham across his whole life now reaches forward, past his own grave, to secure the faith of the generation coming after him.

The chapter ends with one of the tenderest scenes in Genesis. Isaac is out in the field at evening, and he looks up and sees camels coming, and on one of them a young woman named Rebekah, brought across the miles by the providence of God. The servant tells him everything. Isaac brings Rebekah into his mother Sarah’s tent, takes her as his wife, and loves her, and the text says he was comforted after his mother’s death. A grave and a wedding. An ending and a beginning. This is what it looks like when faith refuses to stop with one generation and hands the promise, carefully, to the next.

Group Discussion: Abraham, an old man, spent his energy making sure the faith and the promise would carry on after he was gone, securing a God-fearing future for his son. Why do you think it is so easy for us to focus only on our own walk with God and neglect the deliberate work of passing faith on to the next generation? Whose faith are you responsible to help carry forward?

Personal Reflection: Abraham faced both deep grief and the end of his own life with the settled confidence of a man whose hope was anchored beyond this world. As you think about loss,

aging, and death, where does your hope actually rest? What would it mean to live, grieve, and plan as someone whose true homeland is with God?

Read Genesis 23:1–4; 24:1–9, 62–67

Study Questions

1. When Sarah died, Abraham mourned and wept, yet he described himself as “a sojourner and foreigner among you” and had to purchase a mere burial plot in the land God had promised him (23:2–4). What does it reveal about Abraham’s faith that the man promised the whole land died owning only a grave, and how does Hebrews 11:13 explain the hope that sustained him?
2. Abraham grieved honestly and deeply, yet as one whose hope was anchored beyond this life. How does your faith shape the way you face grief and loss? What would it look like to grieve genuinely and yet “not as others do who have no hope” (1 Thessalonians 4:13)?
3. Abraham insisted that Isaac not marry among the Canaanites but find a wife from his own God-fearing kindred (24:3–4). What does this concern reveal about the importance of godly, spiritually compatible marriage, and how does it connect to the New Testament’s call to marry “only in the Lord” and not to be unequally yoked (1 Corinthians 7:39; 2 Corinthians 6:14)?
4. Abraham took with utmost seriousness the spiritual direction of his son’s closest, most shaping relationship. How seriously do you weigh the spiritual influence of your own closest bonds, your marriage, your dearest friendships, the voices you let shape you? Where do you need to guard your own faith, or your family’s, more carefully?
5. Abraham sent his servant out in confidence, saying, “the LORD... will send his angel before you” (24:7), trusting God to guide the search for Isaac’s bride. What does this teach about trusting God’s providence in the major decisions of life, and about the balance between active responsibility and resting in God’s guidance?
6. Abraham acted wisely and also trusted God to direct the outcome. In your own big decisions, do you tend to lean on anxious scheming and control, or on prayerful trust in God’s providence? Where do you most need to take responsible action while genuinely entrusting the result to God?
7. Though old and grieving, Abraham deliberately planned for the next generation, securing a God-fearing future for Isaac and refusing to let the son of the promise be drawn back to the old land and life (24:6–8). What does this teach about a generational vision of faith, the duty to hand it on intentionally to those who come after (Deuteronomy 6:4–7; 2 Timothy 1:5)?
8. Faith is meant to be handed forward, not hoarded. What are you actively doing to pass faith on to the next generation, whether your own children and grandchildren or younger believers around you? What is one specific, intentional step you could take to invest in someone else’s faith?
9. Across these chapters, Abraham dies in faith still holding promises he never fully received, carefully secures the covenant line, and watches God’s providence carry the promise into

the next generation through Isaac and Rebekah. How does this passage show that God's redemptive purpose marches faithfully across generations toward Christ, that believers are "strangers and exiles" seeking a better, heavenly homeland (Hebrews 11:13–16), and that the line preserved here leads at last to the Savior of the world?

10. Look back across these chapters. You have seen faith face death with hope, guard the next generation's walk with God, trust His providence, and hand the promise forward. Name one specific way Jesus is forming you through this part of Abraham's story. What is the single truth about hope beyond death, godly relationships, or investing in the next generation that you most need to carry into this week?

Now or Later

Reflect on these passages: Hebrews 11:13–16, these all died in faith, strangers and exiles seeking a better, heavenly country; 1 Thessalonians 4:13, do not grieve as others do who have no hope; 1 Corinthians 7:39 and 2 Corinthians 6:14, marry only in the Lord and do not be unequally yoked; Deuteronomy 6:4–7, teach God's words diligently to your children; 2 Timothy 1:5, the sincere faith that lived first in Timothy's grandmother and mother