Discovering and Applying Biblical Prayer Principles

 from Hebrews 11

Session Six: The Faith of Sarah: Praying in Hope

Hebrews 11:11, 12

(ESV) ***“By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised. Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as many as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore.”***

 “Hope” in the Bible refers to faith projected into the future. We know that God is with us now. That is faith. Knowing He will be with us tomorrow is hope. And that hope is based upon the certainty that God always, always, always keeps His promises. This hope enables us to wait for God to do what He has said He would do. Our trust in God does not obligate Him to us out of debt, as if He owes us something. But trusting Him *unites* us with Him in fulfilling His purposes.

1. We pray to express our faith in God’s equipping grace.

 Because of her age, conceiving a child would not be “natural.” But since God had promised, she (finally) began trusting God to act in His time and in His way. Prayer rehearses what we believe, and reminds us of Whom we have believed. Better to pray in hope than to act on our own, trying to fulfill God’s promises.

 Scriptures: 1 Samuel 2:1-10; Psalm 57:1-11

 Prayer prompts: Father, we hope in your word to forgive us our sins.

 Father, we hope in your word to protect us.

 Father, we hope in you to strengthen us to do your will.

 2. We pray to express our confidence in God’s unchanging faithfulness.

 Our hope is built upon God’s covenant faithfulness to His people. When, like Sarah, we “consider Him faithful who had promised,” we honor Him. Rom. 4:18-21

 Scriptures: Deuteronomy 7:7-10; 9:1-12; Lam. 3:19-25; Mal. 3:6, 7

 Prayer prompts: Father, great is Thy faithfulness!!!

 Father, help us hide ourselves in Your character.

 Father, help us remember your covenant love to your own.

3. We pray, knowing that God honors our honoring Him.

 Sarah believed God for one son, but God has given her innumerable descendants. God delights over His children as He does His Son.

 Scriptures: Luke 12:32; John 17:20-23; 1 John 3:1-3

 Prayer prompts: Father, help us not place our hope in uncertain things.

 Father, may I trust always in your covenant love.

 Father, help me never accuse you of evil in any way!

Let’s pray. . . A Model Prayer of Hope Psalm 147:1-11 (ESV)

**1**Praise the Lord!

For it is good to sing praises to our God;

for it is pleasant, and a song of praise is fitting.

2 The Lord builds up Jerusalem;

he gathers the outcasts of Israel.

**3** He heals the brokenhearted

and binds up their wounds.

**4** He determines the number of the stars;

he gives to all of them their names.

**5** Great is our Lord, and abundant in power;

his understanding is beyond measure.

**6** The Lord lifts up the humble;

he casts the wicked to the ground.

**7** Sing to the Lord with thanksgiving; make melody to our God on the lyre!

**8** He covers the heavens with clouds;

he prepares rain for the earth;

he makes grass grow on the hills.

**9** He gives to the beasts their food,

and to the young ravens that cry.

**10** His delight is not in the strength of the horse,

nor his pleasure in the legs of a man,

**11** but the Lord takes pleasure in those who fear him,

in those who hope in his steadfast love.