

GOD WHO TRANSFORMS

Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16



SYNOPSIS

This past Sunday, Pastor Joe shared about the God who transforms through the storyline of Abraham. Even though Abraham received the promise from God, many years had passed without the fruition of this promise. He had spent many years following where God was leading with no son to carry on his family lineage. After many years of waiting, Abraham is convinced that he will not be able to bear children, and Sarah points him to Hagar, who ends up bearing him a son, Ishmael. Abraham is 99 years old and he has given up on the promise that God had told him. He's settled on the fact that his lineage will continue through Ishmael.

It is at this moment that God comes in and reminds him that He is El Shaddai - the God who is omnipotent, God Almighty. Abraham was in the midst of making peace with having a son through Hagar and not Sarah, and we can often be in a place where we let go of God's promise because we don't think it will come to pass, but God reminds us that He is able. He is powerful.

God shows up to Abram. Abram means "respected father" - and that's all that he really wanted. He never got that from his wife. However, God had something else in mind. By changing his name to Abraham, God was reminding him that he was to be "father of all generations." His plans and desires for Abraham far exceeded what he could even hope and imagine. In the same way, Sarai meant princess, but God changed her name to Sarah, which was to mean "respected mother of all nations." In doing that, God renewed and reminded them of His promise and covenant with them - that even in the impossible, God is El Shaddai, God Almighty.



OUTLINE

1 SETTling FOR LESS

Sometimes we can lose hope and settle for less than what we felt like was God-given promises and passions. We feel like we may have heard wrong and we try to justify why we are where we are. Abraham was certainly in that place - where he was trying to make sense of how this promise was supposed to come into fruition. Nevertheless - God reminds us that He is a God who is Omnipotent. He is El Shaddai, the God Almighty - the one who is able even when circumstantially, things look so hopeless. We can even look at this world and lose hope in a God who is mighty - but perhaps we need to be reminded of a God who is Able in the midst of impossible situations.

2 A NEW IDENTITY

God changed Abram's name to Abraham. He changed Sarai's name to Sarah. He gives new identities because we actually have very small hopes and expectations compared to what God has for us. We are very limited in the way we can imagine how God wants to bless us - but His plan and desire for us far exceeds all that we can think, hope, and imagine. Part of receiving a new identity is coming into agreement with it and hanging onto it even when things are not coming into fruition, believing that God is true to His word and true to His promises.



kairos church



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1

Icebreaker: What is the most outrageous/wildest dream or passion that you have for your life?

2

Abraham was surrounded by enemies and felt lonely and vulnerable until God showed up to remind him: "I am your shield, your great reward." Have you ever felt lonely and vulnerable before? Are you currently feeling this way? What is God saying to you?

3

Have you ever felt like God had given you certain passions and it never came to fruition and you feel like maybe you heard wrong or you justify and try to come to peace with it?

4

Is there a part of your life (or in this world) that you need to invite God into, to become El-Shaddai "the Almighty" in a difficult/impossible situation?

5

Have you ever experienced God exceeding your hopes and expectations compared to what you had hoped for? Do you find yourself limiting your expectations of what God can do?



BIG IDEA

When things that we thought we heard from the Lord don't come into fruition as we expected, we tend to justify why that may be the case. We feel like we heard wrong or we lose hope that God is able. May we be reminded again that our God has told us that He is El Shaddai, the God Almighty, the one who is able, even when we feel like the situation looks impossible.