



## Hebrews 11:11-12, 17-19

<sup>11</sup>By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised. <sup>12</sup>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... <sup>17</sup>By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son, <sup>18</sup>of whom it was said, "Through Isaac shall your offspring be named." <sup>19</sup>He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back.

### **SUMMARY**

Abraham's faith was demonstrated in his obedience to leave everything behind and follow God to a land yet to be revealed: "he went out, not knowing where he was going" (Hebrews 11:8; Genesis 12:1).

But God's calling of Abraham did not just include land. It included descendants: "And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing." (Genesis 12:2) And this is where Abraham's faith shone most brightly.

For starters, Abraham's wife, Sarah, was unable to have children (Genesis 11:30). From the beginning, Abraham's trust in God to have children involved believing the impossible. Additionally, his trust had to endure the test of time. It would be over two *decades* before Abraham held baby Isaac in his arms.

With that wait came an additional layer of impossibility. Even if Sarah hadn't been barren, she was far past the age of childbearing when the time came for her to conceive and give birth. Nevertheless, she "considered him faithful who had promised", and her faith and Abraham's was rewarded (Hebrews 11:11-12; Genesis 21:1-2).

All of God's promises to Abraham now rest on Isaac, which makes it all the more shocking when Abraham is told to sacrifice "his only son" (Hebrews 11:17). Remarkably, Abraham obeyed. By faith he held two truths in tension: "I'm going to sacrifice this promised child" and "God will fulfill his promises to me through this child". He figured that if Isaac died, God would simply raise him up again in order to be faithful to his promises (Hebrews 11:19; Genesis 22:5).

At the last moment, God stopped Abraham from sacrificing Isaac, and even though Isaac didn't die, Abraham "figuratively speaking...did receive him back" (v 19). To offer up his only son was a task God had reserved for himself to one day do through Jesus.

## **DISCUSS**

Sometimes God accomplishes his good plans in unusual or counterintuitive ways. In Acts 2:22-24, 32-36, how does God accomplish his plan of salvation through Jesus? What is unusual about how he accomplished this plan?

How have you seen God use difficult circumstances to produce good things in your life?

What does Abraham's willingness to offer up his son teach us about his commitment to God? What does God offering up his only Son teach us about his commitment to us? (See Romans 8:32)

Abraham's life reminds us that God keeps his promises. What are promises God has made to us as Christians? How can the story of Abraham encourage you to keep believing those promises?