

3 Visitors

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Preacher: Rob Attridge

[0 : 00] It's great to see you all this morning. This morning we're going to be continuing our series in the book of Genesis. So we're going to continue to look at the life of Abraham for a little bit longer.

And this week we're going to pick up from where Andrew left off last week. So this week we're coming to Genesis chapter 18. And we're going to be looking together this morning at verses 1 to 15.

So Genesis chapter 18 verses 1 to 15. I'm going to read the passage for us now. The Lord appeared to Abraham near the great trees of Mamre while he was sitting at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day.

Abraham looked up and saw three men standing nearby. When he saw them, he hurried from the entrance of his tent to meet them and bowed low to the ground. He said, If I have found favor in your eyes, my Lord, do not pass your servant by.

Let a little water be brought, and then you may all wash your feet and rest under this tree. Let me get you something to eat so you can be refreshed, and then go on your way, now that you have come to your servant.

[1 : 14] Very well, they answered, do as you say. So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah. Quick, he said, get three sillas of the finest flour and knead it and bake some bread.

Then he ran to the herd and selected a choice tender calf and gave it to a servant who hurried to prepare it. He then brought some curds and milk and the calf that had been prepared and set these before them.

While they ate, he stood near them under a tree. Where is your wife Sarah? They asked him. There in the tent, he said. Then one of them said, I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah, your wife, will have a son.

Now Sarah was listening at the entrance to the tent, which was behind him. Abraham and Sarah were already very old, and Sarah was past the age of childbearing. So Sarah laughed to herself as she thought, after I am worn out and my Lord is old, will I now have this pleasure?

Then the Lord said to Abraham, why did Sarah laugh and say, will I really have a child now that I am old? Is anything too hard for the Lord?

[2 : 34] I will return to you at the appointed time next year, and Sarah will have a son. Sarah was afraid. So she lied and said, I did not laugh.

But he said, yes, you did laugh. Lord, I pray that you would use your word this morning to encourage us, to strengthen us, to challenge us, as we look to you together.

In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. Well, when someone calls to the house, or when a car or a van that you don't recognize pulls up outside, what is the first thing that we all try to establish?

Who they are. Who is it? I think it's fair to say that if a van pulled up outside, or a car, or someone came to the door who we don't know, or who we don't recognize, we try to get our bearings in relation to who it is.

I know for us at home, when a car or a van might pull up outside, or someone's at the door, Amy would often say to me, you know, there's someone outside. And what is the first thing I always say without fail?

[3 : 52] Who is it? As if she could look through walls and kind of see who it is. But it's what we say. When someone calls to the house, when someone visits, we try to establish who it is.

And then I think a very close second thing that we try to establish is, what do they want? Why are they here? You know, are they here to visit us, which is great?

Are they here to chat with us? Or do they need to tell us something? Or do they need something? Do they want something? Or sometimes are they trying to sell us something? I think it's fair to say that in most cases, when people come to the house, especially if we don't know them, we try to establish who they are and why are they here.

Well, these are the two very same questions that come to my mind when I look at these three visitors here who came to visit Abraham and Sarah in our passage this morning.

Who are they and why are they here? In verse 1, we see that Abraham is sitting at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day.

[5 : 04] Some translations say in the hottest part of the day. So we can picture Abraham, can't we, sitting at his tent in the hottest part of the day.

We can picture him, you know, taking some shade, relaxing, maybe resting for a little while. When suddenly, verse 2, he looks up and what does he see?

He sees these three visitors, these three men standing nearby. Now we're not told where they come from or how they got there.

We're just told they're there. They appeared, they showed up to Abraham's place. And I would like us to consider briefly who they are and why did they come.

So first, let's just look briefly at who they are. Who are these three visitors that have shown up at Abraham's tents? Well, incredibly, when we look at these verses, we see that these three visitors, or at least one of them, is actually the Lord himself appearing to Abraham and Sarah, visiting Abraham and Sarah in a very special and unique way.

[6 : 25] And there's at least three things in this passage that highlight to us that this is the case. There's at least three things that highlight to us that at least one of these visitors is the Lord himself appearing to Abraham and Sarah.

And the first one of those things is this. In verse 1 and verse 13, we see in these verses that at least one of these visitors is referred to as the Lord.

Looking at verse 1, we read, The Lord appeared to Abraham near the great trees of Mamre. And then looking at verse 13, we read, The Lord said to Abraham, Why did Sarah laugh?

The word that is used for Lord here in these verses is the word Adonai. So we see in these verses, in verse 1 and verse 13, that at least one of these visitors is referred to as the Lord, is referred to as Adonai.

This is the Lord himself appearing to Abraham and Sarah. Number two, to add to that, a second thing that shows us that this is the Lord appearing to Abraham and Sarah is we see in these verses that Abraham responds to these men, these visitors, or at least to one of them, as his Lord.

[7 : 53] In verse 3, Abraham said to these visitors, If I have found favor in your eyes, my Lord, do not pass your servant by. Abraham referred to these visitors, or at least to one of them, as his Lord.

And when we look at what Abraham did, we see in verses 2 to 8, that he bowed low before them, he fell before them, and he gave them the very best of what he had.

So it's almost like with what Abraham said, with what Abraham did, he responded to these men, these visitors, or at least to one of them, as his Lord.

Number three, the third thing that shows us that these visitors, or at least one of them, is the Lord, is the omniscience that is displayed in these verses.

Basically, omniscience is knowing all things before they even happen. To be omniscient is to be all-knowing before things even happen.

[9 : 02] Well, only the Lord is truly omniscient. Only the Lord is truly all-knowing. Omniscience is an attribute of the Lord.

Well, we see in these verses that at least one of these visitors displayed omniscience. Looking at verses 10 and 14.

Verse 10, one of them said to Abraham, I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah, your wife, will have a son. And then looking at verse 14, I will return to you at the appointed time next year, and Sarah will have a son.

Well, these two statements here incredibly happened. These two statements came to be, so in order to make these two statements, omniscience was displayed.

In order to make these statements, several things needed to be pre-known in order for them to be made. Number one, to make these statements, it needed to be pre-known that Sarah would conceive.

[10:16] Number two, to make these statements, it needed to be pre-known when Sarah would conceive. Number three, to make these statements, it needed to be pre-known that Sarah would conceive a son.

Number four, to make these statements, it needed to be pre-known that these visitors or at least one of them would come back. Not a, Lord willing I'll be back. No at the appointed time we will be back. It was pre-known that they would be back. And then number five in line with being all-knowing it was known that Sarah laughed to herself in the tent when she heard about all of this. To make these two statements here in verse 10 and verse 14 and to also know that that Sarah laughed to herself in the tent omniscience was required. This is the Lord here who visited Abraham and Sarah. At least one of these visitors is the Lord Almighty visiting them and he is speaking to them from a place of omniscience, from a place of all-knowing. At least one of these visitors is the Lord himself appearing to Abraham and Sarah. Now were these three visitors the Lord and two angels? Or were these three visitors somehow symbolizing our triune God and somehow the three of them together symbolized our triune God?

Or were these three visitors the Lord appearing with two prophet-like figures like something like we saw with the transfiguration? Well believe me when I say all of these things are suggested by various different scholars and commentators and so on. But I think that the truth is we're not exactly told who each of these three visitors are. So we won't get too caught up on that. But what we do know for certain is this. What we know for sure is this. That at least one of these visitors is the Lord himself appearing to Abraham and Sarah. Our Lord here in a very special and unique way in order to visit and speak to Abraham and Sarah. Incredibly this is the Lord himself showing up at Abraham's tents.

I mean could you imagine what that must have been like? I mean in terms of getting visitors it simply does not get any better than that. This is the Lord himself appearing to Abraham and Sarah. Well would it kind of established who it is that has shown up at Abraham's place? I think the next natural question to have is why? Why did the Lord visit them at this time and in this way? Well I think in a nutshell the Lord visited Abraham and Sarah at this time in this way to remind them of a very simple but hugely important truth.

[14:02] That nothing is too hard for him. That nothing is too difficult for our Lord. When Sarah heard about all of this, when she heard about her having a son in a year's time, she simply did not believe that it was possible. She simply did not believe that it could happen or it would happen. We're told that she was old and beyond the years of childbearing. In fact we see in verse 12, don't we, that at the very thought of it she laughed to herself. A very human response. She kind of laughed to herself, that's never going to happen. Well it was in response to Sarah's laugh that the Lord said to Abraham, verse 14, is anything too hard for the Lord? I will return to you at the appointed time next year and Sarah will have a son. The Lord visited Abraham and Sarah to remind them that nothing is too difficult for him. He would come back in the in a year's time at the appointed time and she would have a son. He came to remind them that nothing is too hard for him. And through this passage, that is the very thing that I believe the Lord wants to remind each one of us of here this morning.

That nothing is too difficult for him. You know I think sometimes we just need to be reminded of very simple truths that we already know. Well I know I do anyway. I need to be reminded so often of very simple things that we've heard so many times. Like things like nothing is too difficult for our Lord. And I suppose in the Lord's timing this is the passage that we're coming to this morning. And I do think that this is the big encouragement in this passage. The reminder that nothing is too difficult for our Lord. And I just trust the Lord that this is what we need to be reminded of this morning. You know maybe you're here this morning and you're looking at your situation and it's just looking pretty, it's looking pretty challenging. And maybe you just need to be freshly reminded this morning that nothing is too difficult for our Lord. No trial is too great for him to handle. No problem is too challenging for him to solve. No obstacle is too large for him to remove. No promise is too big for him to keep. No trouble is too hard that he cannot bring us through. Nothing is too difficult for our Lord. And this is a truth that has been understood right throughout the Bible. In Job 42 verse 2, Job said to the Lord, I know that you can do all things and that no plan is impossible for you. The prophet Jeremiah said in Jeremiah 32 17, O sovereign Lord, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power an outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you.

[17 : 47] The angel said in Luke 1 37, for nothing will be impossible with God. Mark 10 27, Jesus said, with man this is impossible, but not with God. All things are possible with God. Nothing is too difficult for our Lord. Creating the universe out of nothing was not too difficult for him. Parting the Red Sea was not too difficult for him. Feeding the 5,000. Whatever miracle we can think of was not too difficult for him. Rising people from the dead was not too difficult for him. Going to the cross, paying the price for our sin. Rising from the grave himself, victorious over sin, death, and the enemy was not too difficult for him. Nothing is too difficult for our Lord. So I just want to encourage us to ask you to ask us this morning. Do you have a family member who you would love to see come to know

Jesus? Or do you have a family member who you would love to see restored? Or do you somehow have a career path or a job that needs to be extended or confirmed or something like that? Or do you have a decision to make? Or a move to make? Do you have a trial that you need to face? Do you have treatment that you need to take and endure? Do you have a worry or a fear that you would just love to be set free from? Or do you have a hurt, a painful hurt that you would love to be healed of? Do you have a problem that seems impossible to keep going? Or do you have a sin that you would love to be set free from? None of these things things or anything else is too difficult for our Lord. Touching the hardest heart is not too difficult for him. Reconciling the most difficult of relationships is not too difficult for him.

Fulfilling all of his promises is not too difficult for him. Giving peace to our deepest worries and fears is not too difficult for him. Healing our deepest pain and bringing us through our greatest problem is not too difficult for him. Whatever is ahead of us or whatever is behind us, this passage this morning is reminding us that nothing is too difficult for our Lord. There is nothing that he cannot bring us through.

Nothing is too hard for him. So you know you might be looking at something in your life at the moment. And you might be looking at it. Or maybe it's in the life of another.

And when you look at the issue or whatever it is, it might just seem so difficult and so challenging. Almost like you're looking at a wall that cannot be climbed over or broken through and you're kind of feeling pinned in. Well, if you can relate to that in any way, I want to encourage us to take heart in the reminder that there is nothing too difficult that our Lord cannot bring us through.

[21 : 21] There is nothing he can't bring us through. So whatever problem it is we're facing or whatever issue we have or whatever is ahead of us or whatever is behind us, we can take comfort, we can take encouragement knowing that our Lord is with us and he will bring us through it.

So just to finish, whatever it is that seems impossible to us at the moment, whatever it is that is on our minds that is just very, very difficult, let us take this to the Lord. Let us take these things to the Lord, trusting and knowing that one step at a time, he will lead us on, he will lead us through, he will lead us home because we are his precious children and he is holding us in his hands. He's holding us in his hands.

We can often be like Sarah. We can look at our situation and we can almost laugh to ourselves.

You know, from a place of hopelessness that what's going to happen here? You know, nothing can happen here. But let us look to the Lord and let us be reminded that we have a God who can do all things.

And not only can he do all things, we have a God who loves us more than we could ever know, who is for us more than we could ever know, who knows what's best for us more than we could ever know.

Who cares for us more than we could ever know. So we can totally depend on and trust in him.

Because not only can he do all things, he's the one who loves us and cares for us more than we could imagine. So I just want to encourage us, whatever it is that is challenging us, whatever it is that is weighing us down, let us bring it to the Lord and rest in him and trust in him and look to him.

[23 : 18] Let's pray together. Lord, sometimes we, I think, just need to be reminded of very simple things that we might have heard so many times before. But we thank you that each time we come to your word, it's a fresh reminder.

And we just thank you that in your timing, as we come to this passage in Genesis on this week, Lord, that we have this reminder that nothing is too difficult for you.

So Lord, I pray you'd help us to bring whatever issue or problem that we have, help us to bring it to you. And Lord, thank you that we can totally depend on you. We can totally trust in you, knowing that you love us, you care for us, you want what's best for us, you're for us, knowing that you can do

all things. So Lord, we thank you that in you, we have a living hope. And because we have a living hope, Lord, it means that we can face tomorrow. Lord, thank you that you're living, you're alive. And Lord, thank you that because you're living and alive, we can press on, knowing that you're with us and you're for us. So Lord, help us to now, just in response to your word, to worship you and to thank you for who you are and what you are like. In Jesus' name, amen.