

Minster Bethel Congregational Church (MBCC)

27/09/2020 - Genesis 18 - 21

Laughter of Disbelief becomes Laughter of Joy



All lockdown services can be found at: www.mbccs.co.uk

“Now Sarah said, “God has brought laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh with me.”

Genesis 21:6

Good morning and welcome to this week’s look at Genesis.

Today we have two hymns

“Beauty for Brokenness” & “Jesus Put This Song Into Our Hearts”

God of the Poor

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3kVHKuldZvw>

Beauty for brokenness
Hope for despair
Lord, in the suffering
This is our prayer
Bread for the children
Justice, joy, peace
Sunrise to sunset
Your kingdom increase!

Refuge from cruel wars
Havens from fear
Cities for sanctuary
Freedoms to share
Peace to the killing-fields
Scorched earth to green
Christ for the bitterness
His cross for the pain

Shelter for fragile lives
Cures for their ills
Work for the craftsman
Trade for their skills
Land for the
dispossessed
Rights for the weak
Voices to plead the
cause
Of those who can't speak

Rest for the ravaged earth
Oceans and streams
Plundered and poisoned
Our future, our dreams
Lord, end our madness
Carelessness, greed
Make us content with
The things that we need

*God of the poor
Friend of the weak
Give us compassion we
pray
Melt our cold hearts
Let tears fall like rain
Come, change our love
From a spark to a flame*

Lighten our darkness
Breathe on this flame
Until your justice
Burns brightly again
Until the nations
Learn of your ways
Seek your salvation
And bring you their praise

Jesus Put This Song Into Our Hearts:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QC8rpIIAc4w>

Jesus put this song into our hearts
Jesus put this song into our hearts
It's a song of joy no one can take
away
Jesus put this song into our hearts

Jesus taught us how to live in
harmony
Jesus taught us how to live in
harmony
Different faces, different races, He
made us one
Jesus taught us how to live in
harmony

Jesus taught us how to be a family
Jesus taught us how to be a family
Loving one another with the love
that He gives
Jesus taught us how to be a family

Jesus turned our sorrow into
dancing
Jesus turned our sorrow into
dancing
Changed our tears of sadness into
rivers of joy
Jesus turned our sorrow into a
dance

Our reading today is Genesis 18: 1-15 & 21: 1-7

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+18&version=NIV>

Knock, knock. Who's there?

Banana. Banana who?

Knock, knock. Who's there?

Banana. Banana who?

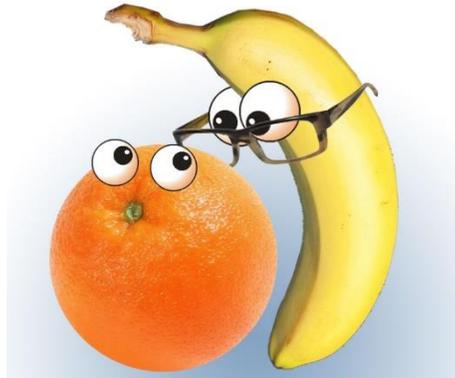
Knock, knock. Who's there?

Banana. Banana who?

Knock, knock. Who's there?

Orange. Orange who?

Orange you glad I did not say "banana" again?



In our reading today we hear about laughter and joy. I am sure that Abraham and Sarah thought that God was having a joke, he promises time after time that they will have a child and by now they were laughing still uncertain that this could/would now happen.

Abraham and Sarah received the Lord in the form of three visitors. Abraham was sitting at the entrance of his tent in the middle of a hot day in the desert when the Lord appeared as three men. Abraham ran to greet the visitors and immediately bowed down to the ground. He exclaimed that water and bread should be brought to them, showing his hospitality. Then he proceeded to hurry into the tent to get Sarah and the servants moving on the preparations for an abundant feast. While hospitality was an integral part of his culture, Abraham's energetic efforts in fulfilling the visitor's needs is often seen as a response to God's incredible promises.

All of God's promises are fulfilled even in the midst of uncertainty. When Sarah heard that she would, indeed, have a son, she burst out in laughter. It was such a crazy idea! Yet God has the last laugh when Isaac was born. Sarah's laughter of disbelief morphed into laughter of joy. God keeps every single promise made to God's people. The point God gives us joy when God fulfills promises. In this account, the Lord appears to Abraham and Sarah in the form of three human men who are warmly welcomed with incredible hospitality. A more specific promise is also delivered: Sarah, herself, will have a son. This promise seems not simply unlikely, but impossible. Sarah emits a great big laugh at the very thought. Yet even in the midst of her uncertainty, God's promises come to pass.

Abraham and Sarah were able to speak to the Lord in wonderful ways. We have that opportunity as well by engaging in prayer. Prayer can involve speaking, action, listening, movement and creativity. Prayers might include thanksgiving, praise, confession, and supplication (asking for something on someone's behalf). Let us remember to pray especially as the disbelief of what is happening around us can become overwhelming and let us give this to God so he can turn our disbelief into joy.



Let's pray.

We thank you Lord for the many ways you are part of our lives, just as you were with Abraham and Sarah. We thank you for joy and laughter you bring us each day. Help us to trust your words and promises. We know that they are true and that your love for us will never end. In your name we pray. Amen.



The visitors said to Abraham, "Your wife Sarah will have a son." Sarah was listening inside the tent, and she laughed when she heard this.

May God's blessing surround you each day.

As we trust in and walk in His way;

May His presence within,

Guard and keep us from sin;

Go in peace, go in joy, go in love.