

The background of the slide is a light gray gradient with several realistic water droplets of various sizes scattered across it. The droplets have highlights and shadows, giving them a three-dimensional appearance. The main title is centered on the slide.

HEROES OF THE FAITH - SARAH

HEBREWS 11:11-12

INTRODUCING THE FIRST HEROINE

[HEBREWS 11:11-12](#) BY FAITH EVEN SARAH HERSELF **RECEIVED ABILITY TO CONCEIVE**, EVEN BEYOND THE PROPER TIME OF LIFE, SINCE SHE CONSIDERED HIM FAITHFUL WHO HAD PROMISED. **(12)** THEREFORE THERE WAS BORN EVEN OF ONE MAN, AND HIM **AS GOOD AS DEAD** AT THAT, AS MANY DESCENDANTS AS THE STARS OF HEAVEN IN NUMBER, AND INNUMERABLE AS THE SAND WHICH IS BY THE SEASHORE.

- Sarah is the first female to make the Hebrews hall of faith.
- The only other female in the list is Rahab
- What other females, especially of the Old Testament would you add to the list?
- ????????
- Sarah, who, scripture says, received ability to conceive through faith
 - By the time the promise of God was realized, both Sarah and Abraham were, as scripture states, 'as good as dead' in regards to having children.
 - At the birth of Isaac, **Abraham was 100 and Sarah was 90**. It was a God given miracle.
 - It wasn't just that they were old. Sarah had been barren her whole life. Even in her prime she did not have the ability to conceive.
- And yet the light of her faith didn't go out. Her faith not only remained, but it prevailed.

GODLY WOMEN WHO EXCEEDED THE EXPECTATION



Ruth



Esther



Hannah



Deborah



Jehosheba

2 Kings 11:2-3
2 Chronicles 22



Shiphrah

Exodus 1



Puah

Exodus 1



Priscilla

Romans 16:3-4



Lydia

Acts 16:14-15



Huldah

2 Kings 22
2 Chronicles 34:22-28

OVERVIEW OF SARAH'S LIFE

1. HER **BEAUTY** ('IF LOOKS COULD KILL!')
2. HER **BARRENNESS** (THE MAIN FOCUS OF HER BIBLICAL STORY – THE GOD WHO GIVES LIFE TO THE DEAD)
3. HER **BLESSING** (OR THE THREE LAUGHS...)

THE BEAUTY OF SARAH (65)

BACKGROUND - ABRAHAM HAS BEEN CALLED TO LEAVE HIS HOME AND GO TO A COUNTRY HE DID NOT KNOW.

LEAVING UR WITH HIM, RIGHT AT HIS SIDE, IS HIS FAITHFUL WIFE SARAH.

AT THE AGE OF 65 SHE WAS STEPPING OUT INTO THE UNKNOWN AS WELL.

BY FAITH THEY MADE IT TO THE PROMISED LAND BUT SOON CAME THEIR FIRST TEST...

HOW WILL THEY RESPOND? WILL THEY SHOW THE SAME FAITH IN THE ONE WHO CALLED THEM TO THIS LAND?

[READ GENESIS 12:10-20](#)

- Have you heard of the saying 'She is so beautiful, this will only lead to trouble'?
- Or 'if looks could kill' Abraham could definitely have applied this to hi
- In scripture, Egypt is a type of the world
- As Abraham leaves the land that God has called him to and goes down to Egypt, we have a picture of the believer looking back to the 'richness' of the world when the going gets tough in the paths of God.
- This story does of course highlight Sarah's beauty
- Peter uses Sarah as an example of this when he writes that beauty: '*... should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. (5) For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to make themselves beautiful. (*
[PETER 3:4-5](#))

THE BARRENNESS OF SARAH (75)

- [HEBREWS 16:1-5](#) NOW SARAI, ABRAM'S WIFE, HAD BORNE HIM NO CHILDREN. BUT SHE HAD AN EGYPTIAN MAIDSERVANT NAMED HAGAR; **(2)** SO SHE SAID TO ABRAM, "THE LORD HAS KEPT ME FROM HAVING CHILDREN. GO, SLEEP WITH MY MAIDSERVANT; PERHAPS I CAN BUILD A FAMILY THROUGH HER." ABRAM AGREED TO WHAT SARAI SAID. **(3)** SO AFTER ABRAM HAD BEEN LIVING IN CANAAN TEN YEARS, SARAI HIS WIFE TOOK HER EGYPTIAN MAIDSERVANT HAGAR AND GAVE HER TO HER HUSBAND TO BE HIS WIFE. **(4)** HE SLEPT WITH HAGAR, AND SHE CONCEIVED. WHEN SHE KNEW SHE WAS PREGNANT, SHE BEGAN TO DESPISE HER MISTRESS. **(5)** THEN SARAI SAID TO ABRAM, "YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE WRONG I AM SUFFERING. I PUT MY SERVANT IN YOUR ARMS, AND NOW THAT SHE KNOWS SHE IS PREGNANT, SHE DESPISES ME. MAY THE LORD JUDGE BETWEEN YOU AND ME."
- We've looked briefly at her beauty but when you read the biblical account, it is her bareness that dominates her story.
- The very first mention of Sarah in Genesis 11, after saying she was Abraham's wife, says: '*But Sarai was barren; she had no child.*' ([GENESIS 11:30](#))
 - Being barren was a massive thing back in those days.
 - It is not an easy thing now either for that matter but especially so in that time when it was seen as a **reproach**, a **disgrace** even, for a woman not to be able to **raise up a son** and **preserve the family name**.
 - Some in those days even thought that the barren woman was under the curse of God. So a massive social and religious stigma went along with being barren.
- It is interesting that the Bible lists many cases of barren women.

BARREN WOMEN OF THE BIBLE

**SARAH
ABRAHAM**

When God brings the promised child it is _____, one of the fathers of the Jewish race and faith.

**REBEKAH
ISAAC**

Genesis 25:21 She apparently had 20 years of infertility before the Lord enabled her to give birth – and out came twins,! _____

**RACHEL
JACOB**

Jacob when he had grown, loved Rachel. Leah her sister gave birth to 6 sons and a daughter but Rebekah couldn't manage any. It caused great friction in this marriage. Yet when the Lord opened her womb she gave birth to _____

**MANOAH'S
wife**

She could 'bear him no children' ([Judges 13:2](#)). Yet the Lord visited her and she gave birth to the highly prominent judge and deliverer _____

**HANNAH
ELKANAH**

She prayed year after year after year for children. She lived through years of ridicule and mocking by Elkanah's other wife Peninnah ([1 Samuel 1:1-10](#)). Then she made a vow that if the Lord gave her a child she would give that child back to the Lord for all his days. And the Lord heard her prayer and she gave birth to _____

**ELIZABETH
ZACHARIAS**

[Luke 1:6](#) tells us that Elizabeth and Zacharias were righteous in the sight of God, walking blamelessly, yet Elizabeth was barren and they were both advanced in age. They had been waiting, waiting,... walking with God, waiting... yet no child came. Yet when the right time came, God filled the child with the Holy Spirit right from the womb! And he would become

Isaac



Jacob and Esau

Joseph

the most important of the 12 sons of Jacob and a very clear type of Christ.

Samson

Samuel –a giant in Jewish history and an amazing man of God.

John the Baptist,

the messenger sent to prepare the way for the Lord!

THE BARRENNESS OF SARAH (75)

- THEY WERE VERY IMPORTANT, PROMINENT AND OFTEN GODLY WOMEN.
- SECONDLY, THEY ALL HAD TO WAIT A LONG TIME FOR A CHILD BEFORE GOD ENABLED THEM TO CONCEIVE.
- AND THIRDLY, WHEN THE GOD-GIVEN CHILD CAME, IT WAS ALWAYS SOMEONE PROMINENT. THERE IS A SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLE HERE FOR ALL THOSE THAT ARE WAITING UPON GOD FOR SOMETHING ONLY HE CAN DO. GOD OFTEN DOES SOMETHING SPECIAL WHEN A LONG WAIT FOR FULFILMENT IS REQUIRED.

What principles can we take from this story?

- Sometimes God gives us a promise, maybe for our own life or sometimes for another like the salvation of a loved one, and quite often the exact opposite of that promised seems to occur.
- God often makes us wait longer than we want. Not to be horrible but to strengthen our faith when the promise comes to fruition.
- It is not that the Christian life is passive. There are plenty of things that the Lord calls us to do and sometimes our inactivity is just **fear preventing us from acting**. The main point is this: whatever we do, whether it is waiting or acting, **it must come from faith**.
- **Sarah** and **Hagar** are also types of **Grace** and **Law**, the **promise** versus our **works**. After talking about this incident with Sarah and Hagar, Paul writes: [Galatians 4:21-26](#)

THE BLESSING OF SARAH (AND THE THREE LAUGHS) – (89)

[GENESIS 17:15-17](#) GOD ALSO SAID TO ABRAHAM, "AS FOR SARAI YOUR WIFE, YOU ARE NO LONGER TO CALL HER SARAI; HER NAME WILL BE SARAH. (16) I WILL BLESS HER AND WILL SURELY GIVE YOU A SON BY HER. I WILL BLESS HER SO THAT SHE WILL BE THE MOTHER OF NATIONS; KINGS OF PEOPLES WILL COME FROM HER." (17) **ABRAHAM FELL FACEDOWN; HE LAUGHED** AND SAID TO HIMSELF, "WILL A SON BE BORN TO A MAN A HUNDRED YEARS OLD? WILL SARAH BEAR A CHILD AT THE AGE OF NINETY?"

- Sarai gets a name change too. Names,
- Sarai means 'My princess' and Sarah means 'Princess of the multitude'.
- God is saying that Sarai is not just going to be **Abraham's princess** but the **Mother of the nation** – the **princess of the multitude** – she would have **descendants!**
- There are differences of opinion as to whether Abraham's laugh was one of initial shock and unbelief (as in 'yeah right! I'm an old man!) or whether it was joy and amazement that God would perform this wonder for a couple so old and well past child bearing age (as in 'Wow! I'm going to have a child at 100!)
- [ROMANS 4:19-22](#)

NOW ABRAHAM WASN'T THE ONLY ONE TO LAUGH... AND THIS ONE IS CLEARER...(89)

[GENESIS 18:9-15](#) WHERE IS YOUR WIFE SARAH? THEY ASKED HIM. "THERE, IN THE TENT," HE SAID. **(10)** THEN THE LORD 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. **(11)** ABRAHAM AND SARAH WERE ALREADY OLD AND WELL ADVANCED IN YEARS, AND SARAH WAS PAST THE AGE OF CHILDBEARING. **(12)** SO **SARAH LAUGHED** TO HERSELF AS SHE THOUGHT, "AFTER I AM WORN OUT AND MY MASTER IS OLD, WILL I NOW HAVE THIS PLEASURE?" **(13)** THEN THE LORD SAID TO ABRAHAM, "**WHY DID SARAH LAUGH** AND SAY, 'WILL I REALLY HAVE A CHILD, NOW THAT I AM OLD?' **(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." **(15)** SARAH WAS AFRAID, SO SHE LIED AND SAID, "**I DID NOT LAUGH.**" BUT HE SAID, "**YES, YOU DID LAUGH!**"

- This passage makes me laugh!
- 'Why did you laugh?' 'I... no, I didn't laugh'. 'Oh, you laughed!' – 'you did laugh'.
- But despite this initial shock and reaction, Sarah did believe - [Hebrews 11:11](#)
- And the Lord would get her to laugh once more, fulfilling what He promised.
- Read **Genesis 21:1-7 (90)**
 - Initial laughter of unbelief has now been replaced with the laughter of joy and wonder!
 - The name of the child, as instructed by God, is Isaac – which means 'he laughs'.
 - After all those years of confusion, despair and barrenness, now the promised blessing has come!

CONCLUSION

- We are spiritually barren without the Lord – we can't produce. We couldn't produce a single thing to save ourselves.
- 'In hope, against hope, Abraham believed.' ([Rom 4:18](#)).
- The New Testament leaves out all the missteps of Abraham and Sarah and just speaks of faith.