

REDEMPTION, HOPE & HEALING



questions for reflection

series: "Redemption, Hope & Healing"

The Bible tells the stories of many broken, damaged and dented people. Some were murders, thieves and liars, while others were prostitutes, cowards and hypocrites. The Bible recounts the stories of people whom, despite their failures and faults, God still loved and used in order to tell his story of grace, mercy and forgiveness. This summer we are going to retell these stories and seek to understand how God can bring redemption, hope, and healing into our own lives.

part 3:

"Sarah: God's Faithfulness"

by Chip Anderson on Tuesday June 23, 2009

What makes you laugh?

Have you ever laughed at God?

- What was the situation?

Have you ever read something in the Bible or heard something about the Christian faith that makes you laugh?

- Explain.
- What is it about what you read or heard that made you laugh?
- Why do you think that God did not punish or discipline Sarah for her laughter and disbelief?

There are times when we can see that the facts of our faith don't match up to the facts of life, time when our faith tells us God loves all of humanity, but we see epidemic poverty and hunger, times when our faith tells us God will provide for those who love him, but we see Christ followers losing their jobs and homes every day, times when our faith tells us God is all powerful, but we see the existence of evil in our world.

- Can you remember a time when you realized the facts of your faith don't match up to the facts of your life?
- How did this affect your faith?
- How did this affect your life?
- Were you able to settle the struggle between the two? If so, how?

In Genesis 18:14, Sarah laughed at God because he promised to do something for her she thought was impossible.

- What in your life do you think is too hard for God to do/heal/restore/save/forgive?
- What in your life do you think is too wonderful for God to do/heal/restore/save/forgive?
- What can we learn about God's faithfulness by reading this story (including Genesis 21:1-8)?
- Can you think of any other story within the Bible that highlights God's faithfulness?

Chip suggested three ways to handle our disbelief, questions and confusion when faith and life don't match up together:

1. Give a voice to your disbelief, questions and confusion.
 - Write down some questions you have about God or the Christian faith and share them with someone else.
2. Seek the good and be the good.
 - What parts of faith do you hold as most valuable? How are you allowing these aspects of the faith strengthen your faith?
3. Search for answers.
 - Make a list of people who can help you with your disbelief, questions and confusion. Share with them your list from #1.
 - Think through what would be the most effective tool to help you with your disbelief, questions and confusion? Commit to following through on your search. Here are a few ideas: read more of the Bible, have coffee with your pastor, take a class, or read a book.