



Sarah's Beauty

"Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes. Rather, it 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. For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to adorn themselves. They submitted themselves to their own husbands, like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her lord. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear."
1 Peter 3:3-6

Do you know any beautiful women with amazing, deep faith? Sarah, the wife of Abraham, was a woman like that. The Old Testament book of Genesis records her life of faith, and attests that she was "a very beautiful woman." (Genesis 12:14)

But it is Peter's epistle 2,000 years later that directly speaks of her as someone to emulate. She was a remarkably beautiful woman, but God wants us to see her faith and hope! He inspired Moses to share her story with us: barrenness, the maidservant catastrophe, "she's my sister" disasters, and a husband who was tested by God in a way we cannot imagine. Scripture records so much of Sarah's life that we can see her as a sister in faith, rather than an ancient woman we can't relate to. As we dwell on Sarah's struggles, failures and blessings, we see a mighty God with saving grace.

And now God calls us to listen carefully as he uses Peter's words to tie together Sarah's hope, beauty and submission to her husband. Scripture is teaching us how they fit together.

Sarah trusted the LORD for righteousness and forgiveness. God was her hope and strength, giving her inner peace and a countenance of dignity. Peter calls that "the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit." Then, without skipping a beat, we hear of her submission flowing from a heart of faith. Do you see the connection? Sarah didn't trust that Abraham would always make the right decision—she trusted the Lord. She understood that God would lead their family through Abraham (and he did!), but her confidence was in God's faithfulness and power, not a flawless husband. The pattern of sinful human failure and God's saving grace reflects our need for a Savior and God's plan of salvation in Christ. Repeatedly, Sarah and Abraham both failed God, and they failed each other with great heartache and ugly consequences. But it wasn't Abraham's leadership or Sarah's obedience that got them through hardship—it was the grace of God and his patient forgiveness.

God blessed Sarah as she followed her husband, and he calls us to do the same. Not because any of us can live out God's calling perfectly, and not because our obedience is what makes our marriages or relationships work, but because our submission flows from a heart that trusts God above all things.

Finally, God tells us not to give way to fear. Women understand that concept. We understand fear as we follow leadership in a world of sin. We wrestle with insensitive leadership and our own vulnerability. We fear the outcome of decisions that seem incredibly wrong to us. We're afraid that our dreams and gifts won't be valued or supported by those who lead. We fear the intense pain of being unloved or feeling trapped and helpless. We know real fear—and God understands that.

So he speaks to us: "Don't give way to fear." Like Sarah, we put our hope in God. We are her daughters when we go through hardship and difficulty. We are her sisters when we look beyond what is seen, to what is unseen. We are adorned with beauty when we trust that God will work all things for our good. Be beautiful and don't be afraid.

You *are* beautiful because God makes you his own through the Gospel and washes you with his Word. His perfect love will drive out your fear and his Sacraments will keep you strong. Let your faith and hope overflow with a quiet assurance as you trust him in all things. And that beauty will never fade.

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, when I look at beautiful, strong women of faith I am reminded of my own sin. I look at your plans for my life and relationships, and I see utter failure. The truth of your Word shows me what a hopeless sinner I am and bares the truth about judgment and eternity.

[You may add your confession of sins.]

But you have extended your hand of grace and brought forgiveness to me through Christ! Thank you for washing me clean and making me yours through his tremendous sacrifice. Your forgiveness renews me every day with hope and an unfading spirit of love. Thank you for planting faith in my heart and making me a new creation that wants to honor you.

[You may add your thanks for blessings of forgiveness.]

Thank you for the example and encouragement of women in Scripture who walked in grace with dignity. Keep me in the Word to strengthen my faith and fan into flame a desire to live for you. Teach me your ways that I may reflect your grace, righteousness and forgiveness to others. Lead me to show respect in a way that draws people to you.

[You may add your personal requests and petition for godly living.]

I pray this in Jesus' name, for his glory. Amen.

For Further Reading:

Genesis 11:27-Chapter 23

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