

- Maybe it's the creation of something miraculous, brand new and breath-taking.
- Maybe it's the sound of crying that signals the taking of that first breath.
- Maybe it's knowing the family tree will be extended for at least one more generation.

Whatever it is, there's something about the birth of a baby that makes everyone happy.

That's also part of what touches our hearts at Christmas time. There he is ... tiny ... tender and transported all the way from heaven above. Jesus' birth is unique, unlike any other birth. And so, today's lesson for our Christmas Day message is also rather unique. We read from Genesis 21, the first 7 verses:

**Now the LORD was gracious to Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did for Sarah what he had promised. Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the very time God had promised him. Abraham gave the name Isaac to the son Sarah bore him. When his son Isaac was 8 days old, Abraham circumcised him, as God commanded him. Abraham was 100 years old when his son Isaac was born to him. Sarah said, "God has brought me laughter, and everyone who hears about this will laugh with me." And she added, "Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age."**

By using the report of the birth of Isaac, one of Christ's ancestors, we realize that **"Christ's Birth Is Worth Our Mirth!"**

We notice that from what happened ...

- (1) 4,000 year ago at Isaac's time, which leads us to what happened
- (2) 2,000 years ago at Jesus' time, which applies to us at
- (3) Our time, on Christmas Day.

In our lesson, we meet a couple who never had children and now they're getting up in years. *"Getting up in years"* is a polite way of saying they're old. Abraham was 100, and his wife, Sarah, was 90. What were the chances of them having a baby?

Let's fast forward to our congregation today. We have one woman over the age of 100. Our oldest man is 96. Altogether, we have 12 people over the age of 90 - 3 men and 9 women. Why am I telling you this? Very few people even make it to 90, let alone 100. And certainly, none of those people are expecting a baby.

Back to Abraham and Sarah. Their baby-making equipment never worked, even in their prime. They couldn't have a baby. Yet 9 months before today's lesson, the Lord promised Abraham and Sarah they would be parents. They laughed too.

Did God live up to his promise? Listen in: **Now the LORD was gracious to Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did for Sarah what he had promised. Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the very time God had promised him. "Impossible!" you say. Yes! But the Almighty God is in the business of doing the impossible.**

Abraham named this miracle child *"Laughter."* And, as God commanded, circumcised him when he was 8 days old. That was the equivalent of our baptism – Isaac was adopted into the family of God.

For Abraham to become a dad when he's 100 – Wow! That's really special! But a mom's role in pregnancy is much more complicated. So, even more remarkable is that Sarah became a mom at 90. No wonder Sarah said, **"God has brought me laughter, and everyone who hears about this will laugh with me."** Her son's birth brought her so much mirth that she couldn't contain herself – she laughed with joy.

Every birth is a miracle of God's creative hand, a source of joy. So, when a 100 year old husband and his 90 year old wife have a baby, it's shocking, it makes us happy for them, and we laugh with joy, too.

But what really makes our hearts filled with mirth and relief is this: if Isaac wasn't born, we go to hell. For 4,000 years before Isaac was born, every man, woman and child - our ancestors - were sinning. During the next 4,000 years up to our time, nothing's changed - our ancestors continued to sin. And not a day goes by in our lives that the sinful infection we inherited from our parents, along with our own sinful words, actions and thoughts, brings us one step closer to death and eternal punishment for our sins.

But years earlier God did promise Abraham: "**All peoples on earth will be blessed through you.**" That meant that a solution to our sin and death problem rested in an offspring of Abraham. Abraham and Sarah had to have a son ..... who would have a son ..... who would have more sons ..... and so on down the line ..... until one of those sons would crush Satan's head while sustaining a combat injury - a bruised heel. That was all part of God master plan to save us.

That makes the birth of Isaac the story of our salvation. It was kind of a practice run for an even more breathtaking birth later. After all, if God accomplished the "*impossible*" using a 100 year old a dad, and a 90 year old a mom, he's capable of something even more impressive and impossible.

So, what about a Father who wasn't 100 years old, or even 1,000 years old, but eternally old? And, what about a mother neither old, nor barren, but a virgin? Eternally old Fathers don't have babies. Mothers without human partners don't have babies. But it happened! And it happened for our salvation! That's how Jesus was born and became the Savior we needed!

You see, to get to heaven, we needed to perfectly please our Heavenly Father by obeying his law. We couldn't do it, because of our sin. But our Substitute did it. Jesus had to be human to meet the demands of God's Law for us. And he had to be God so his perfect life could count for every sinner. Fully human, with a human mother, and fully God, with a divine Father - Jesus was the Savior we needed.

But there's more to it. To get to heaven, we also needed the penalty for every sin paid for. We couldn't do that either, because we're spiritually broke and bankrupt. Our Substitute paid the penalty for us. Jesus had to be human to die. And he had to be God for his payment to cover a planet of transgressors. Fully human and fully God - Jesus was the Savior we needed.

That's why we celebrate Christmas! And Abraham and Sarah give us a wonderful pattern to follow. In celebration of the birth of baby Jesus - our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, we need to smile and laugh ..... like Abraham and Sarah.

At Christmas, you can smile and laugh with a joy because you're loved by God, and you're so fortunate to have a Savior like Jesus.

- The days may be overcast, the nights long, and the weather cold, but that's only until Jesus brings you to the warmth and brightness of his glory.
- The future may be uncertain and the money tight, but that's only until Jesus gives you your share of your heavenly inheritance.
- Satan may plague your soul with guilt and your body with pain and sickness, but that's only until Jesus delivers you to perfect health and eternal happiness.

So you see, **Christ's Birth Is Worth Our Mirth!** And when we say "Merry Christmas" we mean it!