

WOMEN OF FAITH

1. Sarah

(Leader's Notes)



Who are the most beautiful women in the world? No doubt you can name some of them! The Bible also mentions women who were known for their physical beauty. However true beauty is deeper. God looks beyond the outward to what is in our heart. In 1 Peter 3 it encourages us to cultivate a beautiful spirit, and gives us the example of Sarah to follow.

This may surprise us! Sarah was the one who suggested Abraham take Hagar and have a child through her, and then later sent her away. But let's look a little closer at Sarah's life and see what we can learn from her.

Scripture Reading: Genesis 20:1-16, 21:1-2

❁ Why was Sarah taken by Abimelech, the King of Gerar? Genesis 20:1-2, 11-13

(Sarah was taken by Abimelech because he thought she was unmarried. Abraham had said she was his sister. He was afraid he would be killed if they knew he was her husband, so he asked Sarah to show her love for him by saying he was the brother.)

This was not the first time Sarah had been taken by another man! Years earlier the Pharaoh of Egypt had brought Sarah to his palace. The reason Abraham was so afraid was Sarah was very beautiful. We see this in Genesis 12:14.

❁ How do you think Sarah would have felt in this situation? Put yourself in her shoes!

- (1. No doubt she felt hurt that her husband did this, leaving her very vulnerable. By this time Hagar had a son and so it would look like she was Abraham's wife and Sarah was only the sister.*
- (2. She may have been angry that Abraham was more concerned about himself, not considering that he was putting her in a fearful situation.*
- (3. She was afraid. What would happen to her? Abimelech was a pagan king.)*

❁ If you were Sarah, what would you have done? Share your thoughts.

What you would do may be very different to Sarah! We need to remember though, that she lived at a different time and possibly in a very different culture to ours. However we can all learn from Sarah's response.

❁ How did Sarah respond according to 1 Peter 3:5-6?

(Sarah submitted to her husband and honoured him, even though it put her in a difficult situation. She didn't give way to fear, but trusted God.)

❁ How did God rescue and vindicate Sarah? Genesis 20:3, 8-9, 14, 16

- (1. God spoke to Abimelech in a dream to warn him that Sarah was married.*

- (2. Abimelech told his officials about the dream and then called Abraham.
- (3. Abimelech gave gifts to Abraham, including 1000 shekels (11.5 kilograms) of silver to clear Sarah's name.)

✿ What blessing did Sarah receive after this ordeal? Genesis 21:1-2

(God gave her the son he had promised her.)

Our husbands are not perfect! Even Abraham, who is called the 'friend of God' made mistakes and let Sarah down. Women can be affected by what their husbands do. We can't control everything they do, nor can we control every situation. In 1 Peter 3 we are encouraged to learn from Sarah's example.

✿ What have you learnt today and why is that meaningful to you? Share.

Conclusion

Whether you are married or not, we all face difficult situations that can easily cause our hearts to fill with fear. There isn't always a clear-cut answer and sometimes there is no way out. However our God is greater! He can fulfil his purposes for our lives despite the situation we are in, if we trust him. Let's follow Sarah's example. 1 Peter 3:6 says that we are her daughters if we do what is right and don't give way to fear. And that makes us beautiful in God's sight.