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I've always enjoyed a good (or a bad) knock-knock joke. Here's my current favorite.

P: Knock knock.

C: Who's there?

P: Amish.

C: Amish who?

P: Really? You don't look like a shoe.

Thankfully, there are no knock-knock jokes in the Bible. But there is a story in the Bible where God literally comes knocking on a man's door. He doesn't come with a joke, but God brings an incredible promise and a powerful secret. We read the story earlier of God visiting Abraham and Sarah.

To set the scene, Abraham and Sarah, at this point in their lives, are really struggling with faith. God promised they would have a son. But Abraham is now 99 years old, and Sarah is about 90. And God is still saying it's going to happen. Abraham and Sarah know they're supposed to believe whatever God says. But, right now, their journey of faith seems impossible.

Many of us have times when we struggle spiritually, when the journey of faith seems impossible. Your prayers all seem unanswered. Health problems multiply. Grief seems never-ending. Family troubles deepen. National problems pile up. Loved ones suffer.

Has there ever been a season in your life when you've wondered, "Where is God? Where is God's help? Where is God's love?" Have you ever been like Abraham and Sarah, questioning, "Can I really trust God's promise?"

What I love about this story is that God doesn't lose his patience with Abraham and Sarah. They're wavering, wobbling, and disbelieving like crazy; but God doesn't smite them. He doesn't reject them, or replace them.

What does God do? He visits them. God comes to Abraham and Sarah, in their struggles. He addresses their issues head-on, and shares with them an incredibly powerful secret to help them on their seemingly-impossible faith journey.

The story begins with this casual, offhand account of an extraordinary, jaw-dropping event (v. 1): "The Lord appeared to Abraham, as he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day." God appears to Abraham in human form! The Bible doesn't give us any details; but I can't help wondering, what did God look like? What clothes did he wear? What color was his hair? Did he wear a bandana? A back pack? A fanny pack?

And it wasn't just the Lord God. Abraham sees three men at his door. We learn later that the other two are angels. Abraham bows down, and humbly offers hospitality: "a morsel of bread," he says. But then he dashes into the tent, and tells Sarah and his servants to prepare an extravagant feast. He sets it before them, and then (v. 8), Abraham "stood by them under the tree while they ate."

Normally, the host would sit and share the meal with the guests; but Abraham knows he's not worthy. This is God, visiting his home. So he stands off to the side meekly. Is he worried that God is going to chastise and punish him? After all, Abraham has struggled to believe God's promise. What is God going to do to him, after he finishes his meal?

Do you ever worry about what God might do to you, when you waver in your faith? If God came knocking at your door on one of those days when you're questioning your beliefs or

doubting his promises, what would God say to you? Don't you deserve chastisement? Let's be clear. We all deserve punishment. After all, it's sin that creeps in and causes us to doubt God. It's sin that makes me think I know better than God. It's sin that causes you to not always trust his Word. And it's sin that was causing trouble between Abraham, Sarah, and their Lord. And sin is always serious, always abhorrent to God.

So Abraham has reason to worry, as he stands off to the side while God and his angels eat his food. "What is God going to do to me? What is he going to say?"

The divine visitor sets down his napkin, and the Lord addresses Abraham and Sarah's issues of disbelief head-on. He doesn't ignore their sin. He deals with it directly. God asks Abraham (v. 9), "Where is Sarah your wife?" "She's in the tent," he replies. And then God stipulates clearly (v. 10), "I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife shall have a son." God comes to them in the flesh, visits them in their disbelief, looks Abraham in the eye, and re-affirms his promise. "You will have a son."

Sarah, listening at the tent door, laughs to herself. "No way," she thinks, "My husband and I are old and worn out. There's no way." But the Lord says to Abraham, "Why would she laugh at my promise?"

And then he shares this incredible secret to help Abraham and Sarah on their faith journey. God simply asks them a profound, provocative, rhetorical question (v. 14): "Is anything too hard for the Lord?"

Remember that verse, Genesis 18:14. Remember that question. It may not seem like some big, important secret; but we get so easily caught up in our problems and struggles that we forget who God is. We forget what he can do. God

merely asks Abraham and Sarah to stop, to let go of their doubts and disbeliefs for a moment, and to reflect on this fundamental question. "Is anything too hard for the Lord?"

If you know who God is, if you know how strong and mighty and loving God is, then you know the answer. "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" If you know his Son Jesus, how he came to this earth to save sinners, then you know that God has come to visit you! "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" If you kneel at this altar rail today, as an unworthy, repentant, sinner, and take Christ at his Word, then you know that your Savior is truly present with you in this meal and on your faith journey.

Is anything too hard for the Lord? What he says he will do for you, he will do! What he promises you, he will deliver! What God plans and proposes for your life, he will bring about!

The God of Abraham visit you and bless you, today and always. Amen.