



# Sermon Discussion Guide

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## Theophany: Laughter

Genesis 18:1-15; 21:1-7

Ray Cortese, October 31 & November 1, 2015

### Step 1: Reflect on the Text

Why do we do this first? We always want to start with the Bible. The goal is to meditate on the Word and read it with an ear sensitive to the Holy Spirit's promptings. Look for words or phrases that stand out through logic, repetition, layout, etc.



Read Genesis 18:1-15; 21:1-7 What stood out to you? What did you find interesting and/or important? What was challenging or caused you to have questions?

### Step 2: Reflect on the Sermon

#### INTRODUCTION

1. What makes you laugh? Why does having laughter in your life matter so much? Why can it be a sign of deep health and flourishing?
2. What was your one big/main takeaway from the service? If someone had arrived as everyone was leaving, and they stopped you in the parking lot and asked, "What was the sermon about?" what would you have said?

#### I. THE LAUGHTER OF PURSUIT

3. God comes to Sarah. God wants to meet with her. Sarah does not believe. Sarah has "second-hand faith". What is second-hand faith?
4. How can we (or others) be deceived by second-hand faith?

## II. THE LAUGHTER OF CYNICISM

5. Sarah is worn out and feels useless. Sarah laughs in God's face. Sarah is filled with a cynical view of life. How do you feel like Sarah?
6. What do you do to fill yourself when you feel your sorrow of futility or anger at God? (Ray mentioned several examples: Golf, shop, stay busy, Drink).
7. "The sin of insufficient wonder." Sarah lived in this downward cycle of "no awe and no wonder" at what God could do. "Is there anything too hard for God?". How are you guilty of the sin of insufficient wonder? What would be the signs of this being an issue in your life? (cynical, grumbling over the same things year in and year out, discontent, no expressions of bubbling thanksgiving in your life, etc.)

## III. THE LAUGHTER OF WONDER

8. Jesus comes to restore the Laughter. Why does Sarah name her child Isaac? What does his name mean? Why does his name both remind her of her shame but also express the gospel to her?
9. Ray mentioned 3 indicators that the laughter is being restored to your life:
  - A. You are amazed that you are a child of God. How can this or does express itself in your life?
  - B. You are not crushed by others "laughing" at you. Duck story- "We take God seriously, but we don't take ourselves seriously." What do we need to have for this to be true?
  - C. Grace prevails over our shame (example Peter's denial). Our past failures do not own us but only serve as a joyful reminder of gospel joy and rescue. How can this become more a reality in our lives?

## Step 3: Final Reflections

- † How has your understanding, appreciation, and love for Jesus and the gospel grown as a result of this study?
- ♥ In what areas of faith and practice are you feeling convicted by the Holy Spirit to act as a result of this study?