**‘The Watch: Kingdom Joy for Waiting Hearts’  
Message #1 – ‘Kingdom Hope’**

**December 3rd, 2017**

**Text: Genesis 17:1-21**

Keith M. Doyle, Lead Pastor

Winnetka Bible Church

1. **Context/Intro: Advent Series…The ‘Watch’**
   1. **Walking before God (‘*Walk before me and be blameless…’*)**
   * Isa. 52:8; Ps.130:5,6…the next 4 weeks
   * **Illus.** Some things are too difficult to believe - a strange pizza order
   * A clear command – a radical change coming in Gen 17…
   1. ***God is a Covenant-keeping God***
   * His promises in Gen.12 and 15…**Kingdom Hope**
   * Ishmael…but Abram has taken matters into his own hands
   * But its been awhile…13 years
   * ***‘I am God Almighty’*** (17:1) – ***El Shaddai*** = The God of Infinite power
   * **Ques.** ***How do we embrace the hope of God’s promises when the surrounding evidence seems contrary?***
2. **When Tempted to Turn…Trust, (17:1-8)** 
   1. **Walking before God (‘*Walk before me and be blameless’* 1,2)**
   * As Enoch and Noah had
   * It was to be a ‘***blameless’*** walking (complete, whole, having integrity)
   1. **The God Who ‘Will’** (‘***I will***…’ 2)
   * ***‘I will establish My covenant…’*** (2); My covenant 9 times, covenant 4 times
   * Despite his ‘fleshly’ rendezvous with Hagar – God will keep His promise
   * Abram’s response, ***‘…fell on his face…’*** (3) – He meets God
   * Restatement of covenant - You will be the Father of many ***‘nations’;*** name change
   * Five ***‘I Will’s’*** (6-8)
   * **Apply:** Gospel promises for divided hearts
3. **When Tempted to Laugh…Listen*, ‘…Abraham fell on his face and laughed…Ishmael’* (17:9-21)**
   1. **God Calls Abraham to Obedience**
   * Through a sign (circumcision) – what did this mean? *‘Circumcision was not a condition of Covenant but a sign of participation in it’* – Piper
   * A reminder of God’s promises; Illustration of God’s way of dealing with the flesh
   * The covenant includes a promise to Sarah and a name change, ***‘contentious’*** to ***‘princess’***
   1. **A Petulant Prayer (*‘O that Ishmael might live before you!’*, 17-21)**
   * Increase descendants – respect

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   * Increase descendants – respect
   * How God will carry out His plan – laughter (17), ***‘O that Ishmael might live before you!’***
   * **Abraham’s Appeal:** 
     + What was God saying: ***‘No!..but Sarah your wife shall bear a son….’*** (19) ***-*** This is not the Covenant son! I will take care of Ishmael…
     + What was the promise? Isaac (‘laughter’) – Covenant with Isaac
     + The very existence of Ishmael – a memorial to sin
     + Promised joy is turned to ashes when we exert ‘our plans and preferences’
     + God loves us too much to answer all our prayers
   1. **Applying the Promises**

* True Surrender is Complete (23)
* True Surrender is Risky– Abraham’s obedience will leave his family vulnerable
* **Apply**: It comes down to what we believe about God; Your view of God will determine your response to God
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