**‘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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