The Death of Sarah

I recently read about a couple in their early 70’s who were both sick from the Coronavirus. They had been married for 51 years and died together in the hospital within 6 minutes of one another. Although their deaths were tragic, there is also beauty in the story since I am sure that neither would want to live without the other. Chapter 23 of Genesis is devoted to the death of Sarah and Abraham’s purchase of a burial site for her. While we are not told how old Abraham and Sarah were when they married, some speculate they were married for over 100 years which is certainly possible since Sarah was 127 years old when she died. In chapter 25 we see that Abraham was 175 years old when he died and since he was 10 years older than Sarah, he lived 38 years after her death. Although he took another wife who ironically bore him 6 sons, one would think Abraham missed Sarah terribly since they had matured together in their relationships with God. Abraham was the exception as widows were and are far more prevalent than widowers. Consider Anna who lived with her husband only 7 years before becoming a widow. Deacons were originally called to serve in the early church with ministering to widows being one of their duties and that obligation still continues. I am thankful that we have faithful members in our church who call and visit our senior members. I read recently that widows represent about 75% of the residents of assisted living facilities. This is due to a longer life span for women and the fact that husbands are frequently older than their wives. Although the age at death of many men is recorded in the Bible, Sarah is the only woman whose age at death is mentioned. God himself cites Sarah’s righteousness in Isaiah as he says that those who would seek the Lord should look to Abraham and Sarah as examples.

Another irony is that Abraham, who’s descendants would inherit the land in Canaan, did not own any land himself. Despite living in Canaan for many years, Abraham still considered himself a foreigner for Ur. David Guzik points out that Abraham knew that his real home would be in Heaven, a belief that we should all cling to. Hebrews 11:13 cites Old Testament patriarchs who died without having received the promise meaning they did not see the Savior. Abraham did not receive the land, it was reserved for future generations just as Moses did not reach the promised land. These 2 men and others mentioned in Hebrews still had faith in the promise of the new covenant. Abraham inquired with the Hittites about the purchase of a field with a cave in which to bury Sarah. While it might seem that the owner was willing to give the land to Abraham, the exchange between the 2 men was actually a negotiation with the owner stating the value of the land. The property became the family burial plot as Abraham, Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob and Leah were buried there. According to his instructions, Joseph’s bones were carried back to Canaan by the Israelites and buried on the land purchased by Abraham.