

The All-Sufficient One

Genesis 17:1, Genesis 18:14, Luke 1:37

Slide 1

Abraham sits outside his tent at ninety-nine years old. He stares across the desert sand. Thirteen years have passed since God last spoke to him.

His body grows weaker each day. Sarah passed childbearing age long ago. The promise of a son seems impossible.

Then God breaks the silence. He appears to this old man and declares something that echoes through history: *"I am El Shaddai [God Almighty]."*

Genesis 17:1, *"When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to him and said, 'I am God Almighty [El Shaddai]; walk before me faithfully and be blameless.'"*

The God who revealed Himself to Moses as "I AM WHO I AM" now shows Abraham another dimension of His character.

This Hebrew name, *El Shaddai*, means *"God Almighty or God of the Mountains or The All-Sufficient One or God of more than enough."*

He is the all-sufficient One. The God who possesses unlimited power to accomplish His purposes.

Today, as we face our own impossible situations, we wonder if God's promises apply to our specific problems.

We question whether we've waited too long for a breakthrough, but El Shaddai's revelation to Abraham speaks directly into our impossibilities.

Abraham's story teaches us about God's unchanging nature; His ability to accomplish what seems utterly impossible through human strength.

When we finally grasp who El Shaddai really is, we begin to understand something transformative.

We begin to see that our limitations are actually the stage where God's unlimited power displays itself most clearly. We begin to understand that El Shaddai specializes in impossible situations.

It when human resources are exhausted that He works best. He displays His greatest power through our greatest weakness.

Slide 2

Genesis 16:16 tells us Abraham was eighty-six when Ishmael was born through Hagar. Genesis 17 opens with Abraham at ninety-nine. Thirteen years have passed without a single recorded word from God.

Think about this silence. Thirteen years without hearing from the One who promised to make Abraham a great nation and we struggle when God doesn't answer our prayers in thirteen days.

During this time, he watched his body deteriorate. He observed Sarah move further beyond any natural possibility of pregnancy.

Every sunrise reminded him that God's promise seemed more impossible than the day before.

This silence was not punishment. God uses seasons of quiet to deepen our dependence on His character rather than His communications.

Abraham learned to trust not what God had said, but who God is. The silence taught him that God's timing doesn't match our expectations. God's faithfulness transcends our understanding.

God often remains silent when we need Him most. We interpret His silence as absence. Abraham learned to interpret God's silence as preparation.

These quiet seasons are to prepare us to receive what seems impossible.

Abraham faced the mathematics of impossibility at ninety-nine. In fact, even Paul described Abraham's body as *"good as dead"* for fathering children.

Romans 4:19, *"Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead—since he was about a hundred years old—and that Sarah's womb was also dead."*

Sarah's eighty-nine. She's decades past menopause. From every human perspective, the promise of a biological heir had become a biological impossibility. It's at this precise moment that God chose to reveal His nature.

He doesn't appear as *"God the Encourager"* though He encourages. He doesn't come as *"God the Comforter"* though He comforts.

Instead, He reveals Himself as *"El Shaddai,"* the all-sufficient One whose power operates without limits.

This timing teaches us something crucial about God's character. El Shaddai doesn't work alongside our strength. He specializes in working through our weakness.

When Abraham's strength was gone, when Sarah's womb was barren, when human possibility was exhausted, El Shaddai stepped forward. He demonstrated His unlimited power.

Our weakness doesn't disqualify us from God's power. Our weakness positions us to experience His power. When we reach the end of our resources, we arrive at the beginning of His.

Abraham's story mirrors our own impossible situations. You face a marriage that seems beyond repair despite years of prayer.

You watch a child walk further from faith with each conversation. You battle an illness that has exhausted medical options. You struggle with financial pressures that have no earthly solution.

You wonder if God's promises in Scripture applies to your specific situation. The enemy whispers that your circumstances are different. Your problems are too big. You've waited too long.

But El Shaddai's revelation to Abraham teaches us something different. Impossible situations are not obstacles to God's power. They are opportunities for God's power to be displayed.

In 1 Kings 17, the widow of Zarephath had oil and flour for one final meal before death. Her impossibility became the stage for God's miraculous provision.

In Matthew 14, the disciples faced 5,000 hungry people with five loaves and two fish. Their inadequacy became the platform for Jesus's multiplication miracle.

Our impossible situations serve the same purpose. They strip away our self-reliance. They create space for El Shaddai to demonstrate His all-sufficiency.

When we exhaust our resources, strategies, and strength, we position ourselves to experience the unlimited power of the all-sufficient One. Our emptiness becomes the container for His fullness.

Slide 3

When God declared, "*I am El Shaddai*" in Genesis 17:1, He revealed something profound about His essential nature.

El Shaddai doesn't just possess enough power to handle our situations, El Shaddai possesses more than enough power to exceed our greatest expectations.

God doesn't barely manage to fulfill His promises, He does "*immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine.*"

Ephesians 3:20, "*Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us.*"

The Hebrew concept behind El Shaddai carries the idea of inexhaustible resources.

El Shaddai has more than sufficient power for every promise He makes. His resources are never depleted, never diminished, or never insufficient for the task at hand.

This revelation transformed Abraham's thinking. For thirteen years, he calculated the impossibility of God's promise based on his own diminishing resources, but El Shaddai's declaration shifted the equation completely.

The question was no longer whether Abraham had enough strength to father a child. The question became whether El Shaddai had enough power to fulfill His promise. The answer is that El Shaddai always has more than enough.

Our situation never depletes His resources. Our problems never exhaust His power. Our circumstances never overwhelm His ability to act.

El Shaddai's power is not abstract. His power is purposefully directed toward fulfilling His promises.

Genesis 17:2 immediately connects God's self-revelation as the all-sufficient One with His commitment to multiply Abraham exceedingly.

Genesis 17:2, *"Then I will make my covenant between me and you and will greatly increase your numbers."*

God's unlimited power is covenant power, promise-keeping power, and purpose-fulfilling power. Every promise God makes in Scripture is backed by the unlimited power of El Shaddai.

When God promised to supply all our needs according to His riches in glory, El Shaddai's all-sufficiency guarantees that promise.

When God promised that all things work together for good for those who love Him, El Shaddai's unlimited ability to orchestrate circumstances secures that promise.

This connection between God's power and His promises should transform how we read Scripture. We're not reading wishful thinking or motivational speeches. We're reading declarations backed by unlimited power.

When Jesus said, *"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,"* El Shaddai's ability to provide guarantees that invitation.

Understanding this principle helps us to distinguish between claiming God's actual promises and attempting to manipulate God through presumption. El Shaddai's power is directed toward fulfilling what He has promised.

Knowing that God's power isn't directed toward granting our every desire should keep us anchored in God's revealed will rather than drifting into presumptuous demands.

Slide 4 - Strength in Our Weakness

Paul understood El Shaddai's nature when he wrote about God's response to his thorn in the flesh.

2 Corinthians 12:9, "But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me."

This principle reveals how El Shaddai's all-sufficiency operates in our life. His strength doesn't supplement our strength; His strength is made perfect in our weakness.

This paradox challenges our natural thinking. We typically view weakness as disqualifying us from God's use or blessing, but El Shaddai's revelation teaches the opposite.

Our weakness becomes the perfect backdrop for displaying His unlimited power. When we're weak, then He's strong. When we're insufficient, then He is all-sufficient.

Abraham's experience illustrates this principle perfectly. His aged body and Sarah's barren womb weren't obstacles to overcome. They were the precise conditions that would make El Shaddai's power undeniable.

When Isaac was born to a one-hundred-year-old father and a ninety-year-old mother, no one attributed the miracle to human strength. El Shaddai alone received the glory.

This same principle operates in our life today. The areas where we feel most inadequate, most hopeless, most weak, become the areas where El Shaddai's all-sufficiency displays itself most clearly.

This is illustrated by the movie, *Inn of the Sixth Happiness*. It's the story of Gladys Aylward, a maid in England who heard God's calling to go to China as a missionary. Through her weakness God used her mightily.

Your weakness doesn't disqualify you from God's power. Your weakness qualifies you to experience His power.

Stop hiding your weakness. Start bringing your weakness to El Shaddai. He specializes in making His strength perfect through your insufficiency.

Slide 5

When El Shaddai revealed Himself to Abraham in the first few words of Genesis 17:1, He immediately followed that revelation with an instruction: *"Walk before me faithfully and be blameless."*

Understanding this command, in light of El Shaddai's all-sufficiency, prevents misinterpretation. This is not a call to moral perfection through human effort. This is an invitation to complete dependence on His unlimited power.

The Hebrew word for "blameless" doesn't mean sinless perfection. The word means "wholehearted devotion or integrity."

This is the same word used to describe animals offered in sacrifice. They were not morally perfect, but they were complete, without defect for their purpose.

Abraham was called to walk in wholehearted dependence on El Shaddai's all-sufficiency rather than relying on his own strategies.

This distinction transforms how we relate to El Shaddai today. He's not calling us to achieve perfection before we access His power.

He's calling us to abandon our self-sufficiency and walk in complete dependence on His all-sufficiency.

The "blamelessness" He desires is found in our uncompromising trust in His unlimited power, not in our flawless performance through human effort.

Abraham's "blamelessness" was not demonstrated through sinless living as scripture records several failures in his walk with God.

His blamelessness was demonstrated through his ultimate trust in El Shaddai's promise, even when circumstances made that promise seem impossible.

Romans 4:20-21, *"Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised."*

Living in El Shaddai's sufficiency means shifting from self-reliance to God-reliance in every area of our life.

This isn't a spiritual principle only for "religious" activities. This is practical reality that transforms how we approach work, relationships, finances, health, and every other aspect of human experience.

In Philippians 4:13, when Paul says, *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."* He's not claiming unlimited human ability through divine enhancement.

He's declaring complete dependence on Christ's unlimited sufficiency for whatever circumstances he faces.

The context shows that Paul learned to be content in plenty and in want, in comfort and in suffering, because Christ's strength was all-sufficient for every situation.

This means bringing our inadequacies to El Shaddai rather than trying to overcome them through human effort.

When facing a difficult conversation, we should acknowledge our insufficiency and depend on His wisdom instead of preparing arguments.

When confronting financial pressures, we should confess our limitations and trust His provision instead of strategizing solutions alone.

When battling sin patterns, we need to admit our weakness and rely on His transforming power instead of exerting willpower.

Living in His sufficiency also means accepting His methods and timing rather than insisting on our own. Abraham had to abandon his plan to make Ishmael the heir and trust El Shaddai's plan to provide Isaac.

We must release our strategies for accomplishing God's purposes and trust His all-sufficient power to work in ways that exceed our understanding.

Our job isn't to figure out how God will fulfill His promises. Our job is to trust that El Shaddai has more than enough power to fulfill what He has promised, because no aspect of trusting El Shaddai challenges us more than accepting His timing.

Slide 6

Abraham waited twenty-five years from the first promise to Isaac's birth.

During those years, especially the thirteen years of silence, trusting God's timing required extraordinary faith in El Shaddai's character.

God's timing often seems inefficient from a human perspective. We wonder why He doesn't answer immediately when His power is unlimited.

But understanding El Shaddai's all-sufficiency helps us recognize something important. His timing is always perfect, not just His power.

He delays not because He lacks power to act, but because His wisdom determines the perfect moment for His power to be displayed.

Abraham's story illustrates this beautifully. Had Isaac been born when Abraham was seventy-five, the miracle might have been attributed to natural causes.

Had he been born when Abraham was eighty-five, observers might have credited good health and favorable circumstances.

But when he was born to a one-hundred-year-old father and a ninety-year-old mother, Isaac's birth could only be attributed to El Shaddai's supernatural power.

Our impossible situations often follow similar patterns. God allows circumstances to reach the point where only His intervention brings resolution.

This is not divine cruelty. This is divine wisdom ensuring that when breakthrough comes, His unlimited power receives undivided glory.

Trusting El Shaddai's timing means continuing to obey His revealed will even when His promised outcomes seem delayed.

This is why we must trust His character when His methods are mysterious. We must believe His all-sufficient power is actively working even when we see no immediate evidence of that work.

Our timeline is not God's timeline. Our understanding is not God's understanding, but His power is always sufficient, and His timing is always perfect.

Slide 7

Conclusion

Abraham sits outside his tent at ninety-nine years old. What changed in that divine encounter was not Abraham's circumstances.

He was still old, Sarah was still barren, the promise still seemed impossible. What changed was Abraham's understanding of who God is and what God does.

El Shaddai's revelation to Abraham continues to speak to our impossible situations today.

The God who possessed unlimited power to give Isaac to elderly parents possesses unlimited power to address whatever impossibility we face today.

The God who fulfilled His covenant promise to Abraham, despite insurmountable obstacles, is the same God who stands ready to fulfill His promises to you despite your current circumstances.

This doesn't mean God will remove every difficulty or grant every request.

This means El Shaddai's all-sufficient power is available to accomplish His perfect will in your life, regardless of how impossible that will might seem from human perspective.

His power is not limited by our age, our resources, our past failures, or our present circumstances. The cross of Jesus Christ stands as the ultimate demonstration of El Shaddai's all-sufficient power.

When humanity's situation seemed hopeless, when sin created an impossible chasm between us and God, when death reigned supreme, El Shaddai's power accomplished the impossible.

Through Christ's death and resurrection, He provided salvation that no human effort could achieve, forgiveness that no human merit could earn, and eternal life that no human power could secure.

Living in light of El Shaddai's revelation means approaching each day with confidence in His unlimited sufficiency rather than anxiety about our limitations.

Bring your impossibilities to Him in prayer, knowing He specializes in accomplishing what seems utterly impossible through human strength. Walk in wholehearted dependence on His power rather than struggling in self-reliant effort.

The same El Shaddai who appeared to Abraham in his impossibility appears to us in ours. He hasn't changed. His power hasn't diminished. His commitment to His people hasn't wavered.

What seemed impossible to Abraham became the foundation of God's covenant people. What seems impossible to you today may become the platform for God's greatest work in your life.

Whatever your impossibility, remember that you serve El Shaddai, the all-sufficient One whose power knows no limits.

Bring your impossibility to Him not as a burden to bear, but as an opportunity for His unlimited power to be displayed.

Trust His timing, depend on His sufficiency, and walk in wholehearted faith that what He has promised, He is also able to perform.

El Shaddai is more than enough for whatever we face today. His sufficiency is our security, His power is our peace, and His faithfulness is our foundation.

Walk forward in confidence, knowing that the all-sufficient One goes before you, works within you, and will accomplish His perfect will through you.