

Hagar and Ishmael Not Forgotten

Aim for Change:

1. DISCOVER how God was with Hagar and Ishmael
2. BELIEVE that God is at work, even in the midst of hopeless situations
3. TRUST in God's presence and provision, even when experiencing injustice

Background:

- It was Sarah's idea first, to have Hagar produce a child (surrogacy, common practice in those times) since she was barren and impatient on waiting for God (Genesis 16:2-4)
- Sarah feels guilty after Hagar conceived a child and told Abraham, let God judge between you and me (Genesis 16:5)
- Not the first time Hagar has been out in the wilderness (Genesis 16:6-7)
- God heard Hagar's cry, gave her specific instructions, and gave her the necessary provisions (water at a well) to endure
- God also told Hagar to name her child "Ishmael" (God hears – Genesis 16:11)
 - Ishmael's seed will multiplied
 - Ishmael will be wild, against every man, and every man's hand against him (Genesis 16:12)

When and how has God unexpectedly shown up for you?

Focal Verses:

1. *The Cause of the Conflict (Genesis 21:8-10)*

- a. Ishmael had lived a privileged life as Abraham was wealthy and powerful, now has a little brother to share all his entitlements with
 - i. *Do we see teenagers mocking toddlers, today? Is mocking someone giving glory to God?*
- b. God told Abraham that Sarah will bare him a child and he's too call him Isaac (Genesis 17:19)
 - i. Isaac – one who laughs/rejoices
 - ii. Ishmael mocking Isaac confirms God's just order of doing things (*Galatians 4:29*)
- c. God promised to bless Ishmael because he is part of Abraham's lineage; however, God's covenant is with Isaac (Genesis 17:21)
- d. Sarah was upset again, as any parent would, and asked Abraham to cast out not just Hagar, but Ishmael too (*Galatians 4:30*)
- e. Abraham tried to put the responsibility back onto Sarah because Hagar was her maidservant
- f. Sarah's motivation was wrong, but she knew that Ishmael was not the promised seed as he was born out of flesh and not the divine intervention of God as Isaac was God's choice (*Romans 7:19; Galatians 5:17*)

Are there any family members, friends, coworkers, or even other church members who interfere or cause conflict somehow in your own relationship with God? How do you manage such conflict?

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2. *The Comfort in Conflict (Genesis 21:11-13)*

- a. Abraham was grievous (trembling, shaken, displeased) by Sarah's request to cast out (drive out forcibly/divorce) not just Hagar but Ishmael
 - i. Unlike most, Abraham went to God in prayer to determine what he should do in this trying situation
- b. God reminded Abraham of the promise of the covenant He has with Isaac (claimed by the Jews)
 - i. Abraham then instructed to follow his wife's direction (happy wife, happy life)
 - ii. God also promises His blessing upon Ishmael will mirror that of Isaac (Genesis 17:20)
 1. The difference is the nation of Ishmael will be born into conflict, destined to wage war with Israel throughout much of both biblical and modern history
 2. Ishmael is the father of the Arab nations

*****Nation (Hebrew) in the OT meaning a group of people with the same ethnic family who speak the same language; usually with overtones of territorial or government unity*****

- c. Like Abraham, we must develop a Spirit of obedience, even during trying times
- d. If we are to triumph in difficult challenges, then we must remember that it's His perfect will and not our own understanding.

Has there been anything difficult that God has asked you to do? Did you, do it? If you didn't, do you wish you had?

3. *The Cost of the Conflict (Genesis 21:14-16)*

- a. Abraham, followed God's instructions and rose up early in the morning and provided provisions (bread and water) to Hagar and Ismael prior to their departure
 - i. Abraham had already learned the rewards of faith, trust, and obedience
- b. God is preparing Abraham for a similar event yet to come when he's asked to sacrifice his son Isaac (Genesis 22:1-19)
- c. To truly grow in understanding, we need to learn to be thankful for God's humbling and trust His hand even in our darkest hour (***Deuteronomy 8:2; Daniel 4:37***)
 - i. Christians aren't exempt from hopeless situations; however, knowing, and believing God will deliver us should give us strength to endure
 - ii. We were born into the slavery of sin, but God still hears our cries when we call out to Him and responds with His forgiving love and merciful grace

4. The Provision in the Conflict (Genesis 21:17-20)

- a. God addresses her by name (Hagar)
 - i. *Have you ever had a moment in prayer where you have heard God call you out by name?*
- b. If Hagar would've remembered the first time God provided when she was cast out, she might've not been so quick in despair
 - i. Hagar's comfort was not based on faith, but on God's mercy and grace
- c. Christ disciples today, need to trust and believe in the promise that God hears, is not empty piety but a powerful reality
 - i. *Obedience to God's word can provide more than just water. Are you willing to listen?*
- d. Even the smallest amount of faith can make it possible to hear God's voice and see His provision (*Matthew 17:20-21*)
- e. Know the scriptures; they're not a list of case studies, short stories, analogies, etc.
 - i. Scriptures are the divine revelation of God about Himself to His people
 - ii. The Christian walk should be of integrity and standing up for the less fortunate
- f. God fulfilled His promise to Abraham to make a nation of Ishmael
 - i. Ishmael's descendants were antagonistic throughout history toward God's chosen people
 - ii. Continue to cause dissension within the family persecuting both the Christians and Jews

Liberating Lesson:

- The God we serve is omniscient (know everything), omnipresent (widely or constantly encountered; common or widespread), omnipotent (having unlimited power; able to do anything)
 - Remembering these attributes will bring us comfort in times of feeling isolated, victimized, distressed, etc.
 - Christians are not immune or exempt from trials, tests, and tribulations, or dysfunctional families

Scriptures on Trust:

- 2 Samuel 22:31; Proverbs 3:5-6, 16:20; Psalm 4:5, 7:1, 18:2; Isaiah 26:4, 50:10; Jeremiah 17:7; Nahum 1:7; Hebrews 2:13