

## Introduction

- Jesus discussed the Old Testament with two men on a road outside Jerusalem, after his resurrection. "And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself" Luke 24:27. Wouldn't you like to have the audio of that sermon? Though we don't know exactly what Jesus said, we all agree that He is the goal of the Old Testament.
- We are also taught in 1 Cor. 10 that the stories in the Old Testament are given to us to be an example. **6** Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.
- So our game plan for this passage will be simple and straightforward. We will see the example it offers us in making decisions during a time of doubt and what we will learn of Jesus Christ from this passage in the New Testament.
- "One of the deceitful things about sin is that it promises freedom but only brings slavery." - Wiersbe

## I. That Moment of Doubt

**1** Now Sarai Abram's wife bare him no children: and she had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar. **2** And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the Lord hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai.

### A. Abraham is called a "friend of God" James 2:23

1. He was blessed by God Gen. 14:18-19
2. He worshipped God Gen. 21:133
3. He had faith in God. Gen. 15:6. Heb. 6:15
4. He was obedient to God. Gen. 12
5. He is a prophet and intercessor. Gen 18
  - a. As a prophet God reveals His will to Abraham
  - b. As an intercessor we see Abraham brings the revelation back to God and pleads with Him.

## **B. BUT over Ten years have passed since the promise**

1. When our obedience to God doesn't produce our desired result we grow weary in well doing.
  - a. We are never told on what side of eternity we will reap.  
Galatians 6:9
  - b. Illustration: Tinsley and Bryce wanted the Freeze Pop just minutes after putting it in the freezer.
  - c. Illustration: How many times have you abandoned instructions on a project men or ladies or began to make a recipe and realize you didn't have all that you needed and decided you could just make due.
2. God had made the covenant, and God would fulfill it. All Abraham and Sarah had to do was wait by faith (Heb. 6:12).
  - a. Faith in the waiting room. And so a lot of time has now passed. Ten years have come and gone, and still no child. What seemed unlikely and impossible ten years ago, seems even *more* so now. And with the loss of that ability often comes a certain loss of *identity*.
  - b. They wanted their identity in what God PROVIDED not just in what God PROMISED to them.
    - i. "Problems" with a Promise
      - A. You can't rock a promise to sleep.
      - B. You can't watch a Promise grow up and help give you grandkids like the sands of the sea.
      - C. You can't set up shop in the Promise Land. Until the Promised Land because Your Land!!
    - ii. Maybe Asaph dealt with this problem 73:1-3
    - iii. The promises of God are just as real while we are waiting as they are when they are realized! Find your identity in joy in all that God has promised to you!

- iv. Don't just thank God for your house in Cumming, but your home in Heaven.
- v. Don't just thank God for your family, but for your place in the family of God.

**C. Let's take a quick look at the Faith Report Card of Abraham up to this point.**

1. His venture into Egypt showed unbelief in the way he treated his wife, Sarai.
2. Then in Genesis 13 Abraham passes a test with flying colors. And we see him part ways with Lot, trusting in the Lord to provide him a good land, even though Lot had chosen the better place.
3. Then, in Genesis 14:1-21, the hero, Abram, rescues Lot and then refuses to be rewarded by the wicked king of Sodom and gives an offering of thanksgiving to God via Melchizedek, the priest king of Jerusalem.
4. **Sidenote from Sunday AM:** Gen 15 - In response to Abram's question how shall I know that I am going to receive these promises, we see God confirm that covenant by a blood sign.
5. That brings us to Genesis 16:1-16. Our text for tonight and unfortunately we are here at another low point in the life of Abram. **WE FIND THEM IN A MOMENT OF DOUBT**

**II. The Motivation behind the Poor Decisions**

**3 And Sarai Abram's wife took** Hagar her maid the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife. **4** And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived: and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes. **5** And Sarai said unto Abram, My wrong be upon thee: I have given my maid into thy bosom; and when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes: the Lord judge between me and thee.

A. And Sarai Abram's wife took (control of the situation)

1. We often OBEY to try to control the OUTCOME. That is not the intended purpose of our obedience as believers. Obedience is about HIS GLORY not our goals!!
2. We have seen that "faith is living without scheming," but at this point both of them tried to help God accomplish His plan.
3. She got tired of the fact God is in control and we are not!
  - a. In Genesis 16:2, Sarai says to her husband, "Behold, the Lord has prevented me from bearing children." Now that's not just a figure of speech. I want you to notice that that assertion is never corrected anywhere in this passage
  - b. Their actions were right in the eyes of their contemporaries, but it was wrong in the eyes of God.
  - c. I want to scream into the Bible: Oh Abraham you may have thought of a way in the flesh to have a child.. how do you expect to accomplish all that was made to you in the Promise. It would be a life long pursuit that would leave you falling very short of your goal - or the glory of God!
  - d. God is in control. That's not the problem. The problem is when God being in control conflicts with our desires.

B. Faith to stay still, the faith to continue the course. **Galatians 6:9**

1. It was not as if Abraham was doing nothing everyday he waited patiently. He was being obedient and that is big! - As a teenager I felt field goal kicker. All I could do is mess up and if I didn't it wasn't a big deal.
2. Faith often times requires bold action. We must fight to take the promise land given to us. We must work towards the evangelization of the world.
3. Sometimes faith requires bold, scary action and other times it requires bold, scary waiting.

C. Faint yet pursuing verses Faith and persuaded

1. There comes a time in the battle where you will become faint.  
**Judges 8:4** And Gideon came to Jordan, and passed over, he,

and the three hundred men that were with him, faint, yet pursuing them.

2. Our faintness of flesh should cause us to rely more upon our God and not move away from His plan for our lives.
  3. Abram's faith is challenged by breaking the ties of nature by leaving his father's house and country; his faith is tried by his childlessness and age; his faith is tried by the forces of nature with the famine in the promised land; his faith is tried by the fear of man; his faith is tried by wealth and his nephew; his faith is tried by combat; his faith is tried by the King of Sodom's offer; and now he is tried by his own wife and a temptation to do God's work man's way. AND HE FALLS.
    - a. Wives I do not know if you know how powerful your words are to your husbands.
    - b. Just because we are able to so easily tune you out doesn't mean your words don't have weight when we hear them.
    - c. If the one closest to you doesn't want to go down the path of obedience with you - you fully realize how lonely that path will be. Good men will compromise.
- D. I am not proposing passivity, but passivity of the flesh.
1. The path of spiritual growth in the riches of Christ is not a passive one. Grace is not opposed to effort. It is opposed to earning. Effort is action. Earning is attitude.
  2. You have never seen people more active than those who have been truly understand the grace of God. Paul, who perhaps understood grace better than any other mere human being, looked back at what had happened to him and said: "But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. (I Cor. 15:10)

### III. A Method that is in rebellion to God's Desire for their Lives

6 But Abram said unto Sarai, Behold, thy maid is in thine hand; do to her as it pleaseth thee. And when Sarai dealt hardly with her, she fled from her face.

A. Anyone's plans are found if God doesn't have a purpose.

1. Remember Abram was supposed to be a blessing to the nation, and now for the second time in the book of Genesis, the first time at the end of Genesis 12 (Abimelech), and now here in Genesis 16, Abram has been anything but a blessing for a poor Egyptian. The first time it was Abimelech.
2. But this whole passage reminds us that it is nothing in ourselves that evokes God's love for us. God loves us, draws us to Himself and it is because He loves us that goodness flows from our hearts. It is not because of our goodness that His love is drawn towards us.

B. They did not move any closer to the promise.

1. At the end of the chapter, Abram is right back where he started from. He has not taken one step forward towards the fulfillment of God's promises towards him since the beginning of the chapter. Many troubles, many sorrows, but not one step forward in the progress of redemption because God is going to do things His way
2. Can you add anything to your height by worrying? **Matt. 6:27**
  1. Has your nagging or manipulation changed your marriage?
  2. Has your bribing your kids changed their hearts for the better?
  3. Has your business satisfied your desire for real purpose in life?

## IV. The Mercy of our God

**7** And the angel of the Lord found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness, by the fountain in the way to Shur. **8** And he said, Hagar, Sarai's maid, whence camest thou? and whither wilt thou go? And she said, I flee from the face of my mistress Sarai. **9** And the angel of the Lord said unto her, Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands. **10** And the angel of the Lord said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude. **11** And the angel of the Lord said unto her, Behold, thou art with child and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael; because the Lord hath heard thy affliction.

### A. God "sees" Hagar

1. Hagar learns of the omniscience of God. And she says, 'How can it be that I can live after I have seen a glimpse of the one who sees me?' The name that she gives to this God is the one who sees.
2. God - The Angel of the Lord - God in Flesh - Jesus shows up on the scene to help the helpless.
3. And as you know, the idea of God 'seeing' in the Old Testament is identical with the idea of God 'caring.' If He sees, then He cares. And this woman feels cared for by God, the God of Abraham, even if she is not cared for by Abram himself.
4. This should bring excitement to those of think our own experiences seem marginal to God's purpose in this story - HE SEE'S US
  - a. This should bring courage and conviction.
  - b. This should bring encouragement to move forward and patience to wait when we are supposed to.

### B. Abraham recognizes God is in the story.

1. Abraham allowed Hagar to name her son after the name the Angel has given her. Gen 16:15
2. Maybe this was a reality check to Abraham that he was not the wisest or most capable person in the story.
3. His sin - reminded Him is His Savior.

C. God is faithful despite the faithless actions of so many.

1. For 7 verses we will see that God will care for the helpless. Even we are unfaithful God is faithful. Sarai is playing the "blame game". Abraham is being complacent. Hagar is bitter. God is faithful!

2. By the way there's a parallel to this in the book of Joshua. Joshua 9 *Remember God's people entering into a covenant with the Gibeonites. They failed to ask God where these Gibeonites were from and they made a covenant with them. And then they found out that they were part of the Canaanites. And the people immediately wanted to break that covenant, they wanted to break that treaty, that contract that had been made with the Gibeonites. But God told Joshua and the leaders of Israel, 'No. These people had been brought into a covenant with me, and I will protect them.'* And even 400 years later when Saul attempted to persecute the Gibeonites, God remembered and he sent a plague against Israel because of the persecution of the Gibeonites. Even though God's people failed to live up to the covenant, God is faithful. - *internalize and erase*

## V. The Meaning that the New Testament gives to this nonsense

**12** And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren. **13** And she called the name of the Lord that spake unto her, Thou God seest me: for she said, Have I also here looked after him that seeth me **14** Wherefore the well was called Beerlahairoi; behold, it is between Kadesh and Bered. **15** And Hagar bare Abram a son: and Abram called his son's name, which Hagar bare, Ishmael. **16** And Abram was fourscore and six years old, when Hagar bare Ishmael to Abram.

- A. When we read the Old Testament let us explore its caverns with the torch of the New, with the message of the gospel.
- B. Abraham the promise is going to be fulfilled in a much more amazing way than just 2 senior citizens having a child.. from your offspring God will be born in flesh.
- C. Sarah pictures the New Covenant and Hagar the Old Covenant.

### **Galatians 4:21–31**

**22 For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. 23** But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. **24 Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. 25** For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. **26** But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. **27** For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband. **28 Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. 29** But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. **30** Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. **31 So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.**

A.Hagar was a slave, and the Old Covenant enslaved people **Acts 15:10**

Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?

B.Sarah was a free woman and Christ makes us free **Gal. 5:1**

Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

D. Ishmael was born of the flesh and Isaac of the the promise.

A.Ishmael was born of the flesh and could not be controlled.

Likewise, the Law appeals to the flesh but cannot change it or control it.

B.Isaac was born of the Spirit, a child of promise who enjoyed liberty.

**Gal 5:1**

## Conclusion

- We all relate with those “moments of doubt” and those time we are “faint yet pursuing”. Are you there tonight?
  - ➔ Maybe you have given up on praying for someone because you do not see it yielding anything for you expect heart ache.
  - ➔ Maybe you are living a compromised life at work because you can’t trust God to provide for you if you live a life of integrity.
  - ➔ Maybe you are not submissive to God’s lordship in our lives as it pertains to the way we spend out money.
  - ➔ Maybe you are about to give up on a marriage because God’s plan seems to have broke.
  - ➔ Maybe you are a ministry leader who lays in bed at night scheming about how you can grow your ministry because we believe the simple plan God outlines in His Word is no longer effective.
  - ➔ Maybe you have up giving out tracts and sharing the Gospel years ago because you constantly felt rejected.
  - ➔ What do you do with those moments? Do you trust His promise and continue in obedience or begin to scheme up a “short cut”

➡ Maybe you thought "faith" was only needed for your entrance into Heaven but didn't realize we must live everyday with it.

- Are God promises enough to establish your identity or are you demanding something from Him now for your self worth.
- Sinner: Isaac and Ishamael may have looked alike from the distance. From the choir loft, as you sit in your seat, as you feed the poor.. but only one was a child of promise. If you never gave up on your ability to secure the Promise you have never received it as a gift.