

Abraham: Life of Faith

Week 6 – Genesis 16

Ice Breaker Question:

What examples can you think of where trying to rush something to completion or short-circuit a process ends up damaging or destroying it?

Going Deeper from Sunday

Sermon Synopsis

God promised descendants to Abram and Sarai. In their old age they struggle to know how God could fulfill this promise. Sarai comes up with a plan, which on the surface seems to offer a reasonable solution: she gives her Egyptian servant Hagar to Abram in order to bear her a child. Her solution to the problem backfires, however, and strife arises between Sarai and Hagar. When Sarai complains to Abram, he basically tells her: “You deal with it.” Sarai deals with Hagar by mistreating her until she runs away. God finds Hagar and sends her back to Sarai, promising to bless her child and make him into a great nation.

Key Application

When we don't trust God we can often make a mess of things. Yet God hears and sees us, finds us in our mess, and shows his mercy.

Follow-up Questions

Read Genesis 16. What tensions, conflicts and emotions did you observe as you read this passage or listened to the sermon?

Focusing on Verses 1-8

Abram and Sarai had waited ten years for God to give them children. What did Sarai see as the reason God's promise had not been fulfilled? Why are we tempted to blame God (v. 2) and assume he has said “no” when, in fact, he has said “wait”?

What do you think of Sarai's scheme to take things into her own hands to ‘help’ fulfill God's plan?

Why do you think Abram, the man of faith, agreed to this scheme (vv. 3-4)? How might Abram have responded differently? Consider his response to the consequences: i.e. Hagar began to despise Sarai. How might he have responded differently to the strife in his household?

What must it have been like for Hagar to be caught up as a pawn in Sarai's plan? How might Hagar have felt (about herself/about Sarai) after conceiving what she (and everyone else) assumed was the ‘child of promise’? How would Hagar's pregnancy have made Sarai feel?

Personal Application:What potential dangers do we face when we stop trusting God and try to take matters into our own hands?

Focusing on Verses 7-13

What is the angel of the Lord telling Hagar to do in verse 9? How do you think the promise of v. 10-12 will help her?

Who does Hagar consider this angel of the Lord to be (look at v. 13)?

(Note, this is the first appearance of “the angel (lit. “messenger”) of the Lord” in the Old Testament. This character is not simply “an angel” but is an actual appearance of God).

What do verses 7-13 reveal about the Lord?

Read either Exodus 2:23-3:7 or John 4:1-26, 39

How many parallels can you see between these verses and Genesis 16:7-13?

How does either of these passages help you to know that the Lord sees, hears and responds when you suffer?

Application questions

In what areas do you need to learn to wait more patiently for God to work?

Close in prayer

Take some time to share your needs with each other and pray for each other.