

Genesis 16:1-16 - Elementary

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Preacher: Pastor Jared Bromka

[0 : 0 0] Lord, we just want to offer up this time to you. We ask you to speak to us through your word. Lord, that you would bring out the things in the text that our hearts need to process, that we need to work through with you. But again, Lord, that it be by your spirit. Lord, I'm convinced the more I go on in my short life that this life of faith is just how quickly we can get to the place of surrender. The sooner we can get to a place of surrender in each moment, the sooner we will be at a place where we're walking in the spirit. In Jesus name, amen.

So today's theme is elementary. I didn't draw that. I put the words, but I stole the logo. Elementary, where Sherlock Holmes says, elementary, my dear Watson. But if you read the books, he never actually says that. He does use the phrase elementary. He never says elementary, my dear Watson. But the phrase there is when we turn from God's grace to our own effort, the results are quite predictable. Pretty elementary, pretty basic things. When we turn from God's grace to our own effort, the results are very predictable. And we're going to see in this chapter, it is a hot mess of relationships and family and marriages. And they just turn from something so basic, God's grace, God's promise, to their own effort. And in the effort of man, when we don't see the timing of God, always results in a hot mess. The effort of man, when we don't see the timing of God.

Galatians 6, 7 tells us to not be deceived, that God is not mocked. For whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap. Very elementary, very basic. What you sow is what you reap. You sow the apple seeds. You don't get a peach tree. Right? What you sow, you reap. And you reap to the flesh. You shall, or sow to the flesh, you shall of the flesh reap corruption. He who sows the spirit, shall of the spirit reap everlasting life. And so as we get into this chapter, what's going on? So how old is Abram? Well, he's been in the land 10 years, we're told in this chapter. So if we want to be generous, and let's say he was down in Egypt, I don't know, maybe six months. He couldn't have been there very long, because Sarah's taken into the harem of Pharaoh. And but not long enough to really be part of his harem. He kind of realizes right away, hey, the Lord showed me this is your life. Get out of here, bum. So he heads back to Canaan. And then he's got all these riches, him and Lot from their time in

Egypt, and the strife happens. And then they separate. Then Lot is in Sodom long enough that he's, you remember, he looks towards Sodom, he pitches his tents towards Sodom, we find out he's dwelling in Sodom. So he's there long enough to dwell in Sodom, that when Chateleomer comes and takes Sodom and Gomorrah, Lot's living there. So even if we want to say five years, let's say you were generous and say, all right, he's been there all of five years, it could have been less, it could have been two or three years. By the time chapter 15 comes, and God says, here's the unilateral covenant, right? How long was he there? Let's say five years. God tells Abram, you're going to have a child.

Right from the beginning in Genesis chapter 12, when he says, get out from your family, out from your country, out from your kindred, because I'm going to make you a great nation. I'm going to have a child. Okay, all this stuff happens. And then God comes again and reiterates that to him. And we saw in chapter 15, what do you think he's going to do? He goes home and says, honey, come here, look at the stars. I want to tell you something. And then he thinks, and we're going to have a baby. The one month goes by. Okay, well, maybe next month, another month, six months, a year. And so now we're 10 years in Canaan. So let's say it's five years that he has been waiting for this promise since chapter 15, when God says, hey, you're going to have, you're going to have a child. And here now we're going to see where Sarai, she kind of gets burned out in the waiting. She doesn't see God's timing in this. And what we don't understand many times about God's timing and God's promises, whatever promise God gives, he will bring to the point of impossibility so that he can fulfill his promise. He will never fulfill his promise in the realm of possibility, like our possibility.

So if he promises something, it's not like, well, this, I can totally see the path. I'm going to do this. I'm going to do this. I'm going to do this. Now God could show you the path. We will always bring it to a place of impossibility so that he can show himself strong because God's promise is something that only he can fulfill. And so that's where we find ourself.

[4 : 48] And in chapter, I mean, verse one in chapter 16, the pressure is getting too great for her. For Sarai, the pressure was just too great to bear. And she says to Abram, says Sarai, Abram's wife, remember all of this account of Abraham and Abram, everything goes back to promise and everything goes back to the person of promise. Those who go through this, it's all relates back to, oh, Abram's nephew. Oh, Abram's wife. It all goes back to him. Oh, Abram's son, because this is the one to whom the promise was given. Now Sarai, Abram's wife, bear him no children. And she had a handmaid, an Egyptian whose name was Hagar. Psalm 37, verse five, one of my favorite scriptures.

Probably said that an awful lot during these five months, but this is one. I love Psalm 37. I go there a lot. But verse five says, commit thy way unto the Lord. Trust also in him. He shall bring it to pass. It's one of my favorites because when you look in the literal translation, it says this, roll on Jehovah your way. Trust upon him and he works. I like that. Commit your way unto the Lord.

Roll upon Jehovah your way. Man, whatever it is, roll it off onto him. Roll it onto him when the pressure is too great. Trust in him and he works. So Sarai is carrying this and the pressure is becoming too great. And it tells us in verse one, something interesting about her that points out to us that she's got a handmaid. So what? An Egyptian. Well, what does that mean? I mean, she got her in Egypt and they were sojourning in Egypt. This is some leftover baggage that was acquired while sojourning in the world. But it makes me think of Romans 13, verse 14. Paul admonishes us. He says, but put you on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh to fulfill the lust thereof. Like don't have anything in your life that can give you an out into the flesh. Don't make provision for that.

Like to make provision, what does that mean? It means you're going out of your way to set up an area of providing, to set up something that's going to feed the flesh. And so here we have, there's something here at hand. There's something of the flesh, something from the world that Sarai is looking at and going, you know what? Hey, this might not be such a bad idea. And in verse two, she gets this, this amazing idea. And she said unto Abram, behold, now the Lord has restrained me from bearing.

I pray thee, go in unto my maid. It may be that I may obtain children by her. So here, that word thou, where it says, behold now, that's one of those phrases you think, well, it could just say, and she said to Abram, the Lord has restrained me from bearing. Why is that put in there? That's kind of like an exclamatory remark. Point is there. She's, she's, she's upset.

[7 : 34] She's, she's intense about this. She's like, behold, this is the Lord's fault. He's restrained me. The word restrained literally means to shut, hold back, or halt. So Sarai is effectively saying, the Lord is withholding his promise. God didn't keep his word. Abram, God withheld his promise.

This is not what I expected. You see, Sarai's expectation of God's promise was for the fulfillment of her desires, was to build up self. Literally here, uh, this, where she'll say that I may obtain children by her. The phrasing there literally means to be builded by her. Hey, maybe I can turn to Hagar, to the flesh, to the world, to my own effort. Maybe I've got an idea because Abram, remember what God promised? He said, you'll have a son. Well, maybe I wasn't included in that.

It's like, no, wait a minute. You're his wife. How old is he going to have a child by, if not by his wife? Right? The flesh gets these ideas to kind of like do an end around of God's word. And when we walk in the flesh, we're always going to have to set aside some part of the word of God to fulfill the desire of the flesh. You have to, because you can't please the Lord in the flesh. That which is not of faith, the scriptures say, is sin. So if we're in the flesh, we have to set aside some part of God's word. And so she's kind of like blurring the lines here, like, well, I'll give her to you.

This is a, this is a common practice. And it was, and it's weird. It's kind of like when we're going to get to Leviticus and it says that, Hey, your brother dies and his wife hasn't had a child yet, well, take his wife to you and then to raise up children. I mean, that's just bizarre. I'm glad I don't have a brother. Sorry for all those who do. I mean, could you imagine it's like, Oh, Hey, you know, we've got a plan for this. Well, this was kind of like the surrogate, the way they would do surrogate parentage. It was the same thing. It was a little creepy, but it wasn't uncommon in this time. And so Sir Eyes is turning to what is at hand instead of trusting what the Lord is, has promised. And as we

looked at in the beginning, Galatians 6 verse 7, the rest of that scripture says, for he that sows to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption, but he that sows to the spirit shall of the spirit reap life everlasting. And what's verse nine? And let us not be weary in well-doing for in due season, we will reap if we faint not. So what does that mean? Well, it means sowing to the spirit and get wearying because I don't see the harvest as quick as sowing to the flesh. You say, don't be weary in doing well. Don't turn to the flesh because you think it's going to be quicker. And here, Abram and Sarai, I mean, you just look at Abram's response. He's just like, whatever, honey, I'm up for it. Let's just try it. He's growing weary. And so she says, it may be that I may obtain children by her. I might be builded up by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai. Where did we see that praising before? Genesis, we turn back to Genesis chapter 3.

When the Lord comes and searches for them in the garden to walk with them. And then he says, have you eaten of this? And then he pronounces the curse. In verse 17, he says unto Adam, because you have hearkened under the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you saying, you shall not eat of it. So what's the key there? Don't listen to your wife. [11:24] Right? Don't hearken. No, no. It's finished up with, you hearken to your wife instead of what I commanded you. There was a command. And then there was another voice that said to go another way. And he hearkened to that. We see the same thing with Abram. Did Abram have a command from the Lord? Essentially the God's word. He did. He had the promise. He listened to another voice that said, we're not going to go with the promise. We're going to go with something else.

But there's just this picture to me here of, to me, it just screams of bitterness. When I look at Sarah, she seems just so embittered. And unfortunately, as we go through the scripture with her, we don't get a great picture of her. Now we're going to find out from Hebrews that she's in the hall of faith. Fantastic. You know, we're going to, Paul's going to like it and say that the faithful faithful women in the church are like the faithful women of old, like Sarah, who called her husband, you know, Lord, trusting in the promise of God. But her attitude just, it seems very disgruntled and very bitter. And I was thinking of that. What is bitterness? And in my own heart, I'm thinking, well, I've always heard it said that, well, it's unforgiveness. And it can stem from unforgiveness.

It can. So forgiveness means what? Literally means to release someone. When you forgive, the wording means to release. So when Jesus says, forgive 70 times seven, he's like, you keep releasing. Release that person. Don't hold on to that. But there's this picture of bitterness. I don't think it necessarily indicates unforgiveness. But it does indicate that the pain and circumstances that led to that bitterness have not been released to the Lord. So what does bitterness mean? It means keenness of reproach, sharpness, keen sorrow, painful affliction, vexation, deep distress of mind. It's like this very pointed, like you think sharp edge. Keen means like the knife is keen. It's a sharp edge, a sharp, painful thing. And the reason I think it's different from unforgiveness is from searching my own heart. And as the Lord is taking me through this, he was kind of like, hey, putting his finger on things where I'm like, well, Lord, I forgave that person. I don't hold anything against them. I don't hold on to them. He's like, yes, but you haven't released me the pain. You haven't released to me the emotion from that. You haven't released to me the circumstances and the source of that. And so I've been noticing that in my own heart and dealing with that with the Lord that I can forgive, but I can still have a sense of bitterness. I can still have this like this pain from there. It's almost like a lingering effect from a wound in a sense. I can forgive the person who wounded me, but man, the wound still, it just, it kind of lingers. Why do I think bitterness does not necessarily come from unforgiveness? Well, Proverbs 17, 25 says, a foolish son is a grief to his father and bitterness to her that bear him. So does that mean a mother does not forgive her foolish son?

[14:32] I can't forgive you. I don't think so. I think it's talking about there's a pain, a very keen pain there that results from a son who's a fool and was a fool. One who said in their heart, there is no God.

Paul tells us in Ephesians 4, 31, he says, let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and evil speaking be put away from you with all malice. Was that specifically saying all unforgiveness that always leads, always comes from unforgiveness? I don't think so. I think he's saying there can be bitterness. There can be this carryover effect from things that you've not let go of, hurts and wounds in your life. What does bitterness do? Bitterness causes my hurts to rule over me instead of the Lord.

Bitterness focuses me on the pain and that now directs my actions instead of the Lord. We're going to see that because that was Sarah. Sarah's bitter at the Lord. I think she's bitter at Abram and then she's going to be bitter at Hagar. Hagar is going to be bitter at Sarah. Abram, he's just, he's not bitter. He's just totally blowing it as the seed by just standing by passively by letting his home be torn apart by bitterness. So what am I defining bitterness as? I guess as I look, I didn't have any other better word from the interaction of what I'm seeing happening here. In searching my own heart, searching the scripture, I don't think it always means unforgiveness. This is what I think it is. Bitterness results from an unrealized, unacknowledged, or unrepented hurt. Usually the hurt is committed by a person that should have known better or who we expected better of.

Because when someone hurts you who should not have hurt you, who should have known better, and yet they don't realize it, or they don't acknowledge it, or they don't repent of it, and it just leaves this lingering kind of pain and wound. You can forgive them, but it just continues to linger. You see with Sarah, she's bitter at the Lord because she did not expect the Lord to hurt her in that way. She thinks it's unacknowledged, or unrepented, or unrealized, where of course the Lord didn't. It's just she's not walking in the promise right now. She's going to be bitter at Hagar. Hagar's going to be very bitter at Sarai because she said, we've been together. I'm your handmaid. And as we see, there's sometimes no closure with bitterness. That on your part, you're going to have to release that hurt to the Lord. You have to release that circumstance to the Lord, and there may not be closure with the other person. Bitterness expresses itself in anger, frustration, and resentment.

And one of the key signs of bitterness is avoidance. A desire to remove myself from contact with the source of my hurt and disappointment. So I can forgive that person, but I kind of want to avoid them because that hurt comes up, because the unresolved situation is there. And this chapter is a hot mess of that. And as I search my own heart and recognizing that there's things where the Lord's like, you're just avoiding that because of the pain. Yeah, you've forgiven that person. You released that person, but will you release me? And that's where I think that scripture in Psalm 37 is so apt. It says, roll upon Jehovah your way. Sarah had not yet released this to the Lord, and she's holding on to this.

[17:57] She said, the Lord has done this. He's restrained this from me. She's going to blame Abram eventually and say, you did this. And then she's going to blame Hagar. And bitterness also always blames. And that's where I think these people are at right now as we go through this. In verse two, and it says, and Abram hearkened, and as we saw in Genesis there, he hearkened to Sarai because he was not hearkening to Adonai. Remember, he said, Lord Jehovah, Adonai Jehovah. He was no longer listening at this time to the Lord. If you look over in chapter 21, they're having the feast for Isaac when he was weaned. He was essentially at the stage of life where he's, hey, he's kind of no longer in the authority influence of his mother. It's kind of like Abram's taking him like, now it's my turn to start walking with you and training you. In verse nine, it says, and Sarah saw the son of Hagar, the Egyptian, which had been born unto Abraham, mocking.

Wherefore, she said unto Abraham, and this is the way you can see kind of this bitterness just continues to carry on. Cast out this bondwoman and her son, for the son of this bondwoman shall not be the heir with my son, even with Isaac, the son of this bondwoman. I didn't even call her by name. The thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight because of his son. And God said unto Abraham, let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad and because of thy bondwoman. And all that Sarah has said unto thee, do what? Hearken under her voice. For an Isaac shall thy seed be called.

But there you see, what are the two things together? Yes, Abraham, you're hearkening to me, and I want you to hearken to the voice of your wife. This is in line with my will. It might not be in line with your heart, with your emotions, your desire, but it's in line with my will.

But right now, Abraham's not doing that. He just is passive through this whole thing. And so we're always going to listen to someone's voice, right? But which is it? And so Sarai takes matters into her own hands, and whenever we take matters into our own hands, we just increase what?

The burden, because we've taken more into our own hands. It's just going to get heavier, guys. And she said to Abram, take him, take her. And so Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar, her maid, the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt 10 years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband, Abram, to be his wife. This isn't actually like a covenant of marriage. In other words, to act after the manner of a husband and wife so that they might have children. This is no romance here. This is all utilitarian. Poor Hagar. And so Sarah, walking in the flesh, and after her own effort, and after her

own desires, she's totally wrecking her marriage now. She's compromising in her marriage, and she's bringing Abram along with her. And I think right away, she realized this was so stupid, because guess what happens? Everybody who might have wondered, well, is it Abram, or is it Sarai? Poor Abram and Sarai, they've never had children. Abram says, as God has promised, and I don't know, he's just withholding, and what's going on? And I wonder where the problem is. And oh, guess what? We know where the problem is now. It's Sarai. She can't have kids. And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived.

[21 : 20] And when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes. So what's worse than failing in the flesh? Succeeding in the flesh? Nothing worse. Because then we think, oh, well, it worked. Then maybe next time I'll try, and it'll work. Success of the flesh lead to distress.

And she was despised. The word there, despised, means to be slighted, to be slighted, or to be diminished, diminished in her eyes. Like all of a sudden, it's like, oh, you're nothing, and I'm much, is the idea. And so Sarai said unto Abram, it's your fault. My wrong be upon thee. I've 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. Look at this twist. This is what I mean. We move from the simple, basic things of walking in the spirit, of trusting God to fulfill his promises. Look at this mess. Well, the Lord's withholding. Abram, I got an idea. Oh, it didn't work out? Well, now it's your fault, Abram. And the Lord, who was withholding this from me, now he's on my side. He's going to judge between me and you. It's just a mess. Sarai correctly charges Abram with standing by and doing nothing to help. However, she incorrectly refuses to accept responsibility for her actions that directly led to the problem that Abram is avoiding. Is Abram avoiding this problem? Is he avoiding conflict? Do guys generally avoid conflict? No. Yes.

Right? The sad thing is Sarai expected Abram to fulfill what only God could. She was expecting that, Abram, you've got to fix this. You've got to do something about this.

And I think there's two things we can see here with husbands and wives. We've got a little bit of marriage counseling right here and relationship counseling happening that they've got to work through. Abram's failure as a husband was to allow his wife's emotions and desires to be the ruling factor in his home. That was a failure on his part. He allowed his wife's emotions and desires to rule in his home because he didn't want conflict. He abdicated authority and by doing that, he was not actually helping her emotionally by hindering her. What's authority? We've talked about that before. Authority is not, I'm in charge, woman. No, authority is that the people, I'm responsible for the ability of those within my authority to thrive. Authority is like boundaries. Think of it like a field with sheep in it. You're the shepherd. You set boundaries. You set a fence and then your sheep know within these boundaries you can thrive. It's my responsibility within my authority. I only have so much authority. So much is within my boundary. I don't have authority over your field. I can't go and tell you what to do over there. But within my authority, those who are within my boundaries, it's my responsibility they thrive. They should be thriving. It's not for me to thrive off of them.

[24 : 25] It's the reverse. And so the responsibility of the husband is that those within his authority, they are thriving and he sacrifices to them. So he abdicated his authority. And I was thinking back to the beginning where we just looked. And this is what I came up with. That Eve, being more emotion driven, needs Adam to help anchor her in God's word. Right? Eve turned from God's word very quickly when the serpent deceived her. Look at Sarai. Who's helping her be anchored in the word of God?

What should Abram have said when she's like, I got this idea. This is the Lord's fault. So let's help him out. I'm going to give you Hagar to be your wife. Abram should have been like, whoa, whoa, baby.

You're the only one for me. This is not going to work. We're going to trust the Lord. Just wait. He's got this. Let's go out and look at the stars again. But Eve being more emotion driven, she needed Adam to help anchor her in God's word. Adam, what's his weakness? So these are weaknesses and frailties because one have become two. This is not sin. This is before the fall, right?

That Eve's weakness is there and Adam's weakness is there because God has taken one and made them two. So Adam's not complete without Eve. He's not complete without Adam, right? But the fall hasn't happened. When Eve is needing Adam to anchor her in God's word and he's not there and then she falls, that wasn't sin until she fell. The weakness is not sin. God doesn't hold our weaknesses over us as sin.

Adam then, he's prone to avoid conflict at the expense of God's word. Guys, you ever done that? Maybe. And he needs Eve to be a support to him in his role of dominion and leadership.

[26 : 09] So Eve needs to support him and say, honey, you're doing great. Keep following God's word. No, no, no, no. Follow God's word. You got this. What's Eve's tendency? Well, God said you want to rule over your husband. Eve's tendency is to say, I got this. You just sit there passively. I'll take care of this.

You know, what she should have done in this instance, instead of Sarai stepping in and going, I'm going to take ownership of this. I've got an idea. She needs to recognize her tendency in the fall and her frailty and gone to Abram and said, hey, what I'm, I'm really struggling. What do you think we should do? I want to give up. I want to find another solution. And he could have been like, let's go back to the word, right? Or when she came to him, he should have been like, honey, no, no, no, no. This is not for you to worry about. This is on my shoulders. God gave me the promise. I'm going to go to the Lord and seek him. You, you don't worry. When I talk to those that are, I only talked to a few that are going to get married. Okay. My daughter and son, and son-in-law.

When I talked to Keller, when we talk and I've talked to others, you know, in, in situations like that. And it's like, as guys, as husbands, you need to always be a little bit bigger than as big as your wife can get, like as, as, as crazy as she might be like at times. And I mean, like, you know, just emotional or, or worked up or whatever. Your wife needs to see men that you are always a little bit bigger that you can contain it, not in yourself, but in Christ, in the authority he's given you and the role he's given you. Your wife needs to know that no matter how many times I bounce off the wall, it's not going to affect you. You're okay in the Lord that you're not going to be like, oh man, I don't know what to do. This is like really nuts. Uh, yeah. Whatever you want to do to make this stop.

Right? Guys, you know, your wives need you to be that anchor. And ladies, when you feel like I'm just going to step in and take this because I don't think he's doing a good job. Don't, you know, that's when you go to him with the word and like, Hey, this situation is, I don't know.

What do you think we should do? What do you think the Lord would have you to do? And, um, and your husband will probably be like, oh, glad you asked. I haven't read my Bible in three weeks. I'll go do that. And so this is the conflict that's going on when we move from the basic elementary things. Like I said, I think, I think the walk of faith, the more I do it, it's just, the Lord is like, how quick are you going to get to surrender? I think even Sunday morning when we start worship, it's almost like the Lord's like, how quick are you going to get to surrender and just start worshiping me? Well, I got to work into it, Lord, you know, raise this hand, raise this hand. Okay. The Lord is just like, just surrender.

[28 : 51] And that has bred this, it just feeds this bitterness that's happening because any of the two parties now going back and forth, Sarah's blaming Abram. Abram's just like, I need to do whatever I can to, to fix the situation. Now he's got two crazy women going at it.

And she conceived and she was despised in her eyes. And Sarai said unto Abram, my wrong be upon thee. She was right in one sense. He should have been there. The Lord judged between me and thee.

But Abram said unto Sarai, behold, thy mate is in thy hand. Do to her as it pleases thee. And when Sarai dealt hardly with her, she fled from her face. And so here we see, again, Abram's not really stepping up and helping her through this. He's like, just do whatever is going to make you feel better. Do whatever pleases you. Flesh uses God for the sake of self. Whatever will please me. And so then what happens? Sarai then gets, she reacts in her bitterness and in her frustration towards Hagar. And she begins to take it out on her and treat her. It literally means to be dealt hardly with means to be afflicted. She afflicts her. And so she fled from her face. And so now Hagar is in the place where she has this, this like unresolved, unacknowledged and unrepented of hurt by this person who should have been there for her. I mean, Sarai and her, it's been her maid. It seems like they were close. They'd been together for a while. And so bitterness does what? Drives her back to the world.

And the angel of the Lord found her where? By the fountain of water in the wilderness, by the fountain in the way to Shur. Shur is a part of the desert. Nobody knows for sure where it is.

[30 : 35] I just made that one up on the spot. That was the Holy Spirit. No one knows where it is, except that it's on the east side of Egypt. So she's come from Hebron and she's made her way, making her way back to Egypt. I don't know how many days this is into this journey. She's with child and she's heading back. She's being driven back to the world. And so it says the Lord found her

there, the angel of the Lord. I don't know if this is actually the Lord or an angel, because she says, I've seen the Lord, but she may just think that. But it also says in verse 10, I will multiply your seed exceedingly. Well, an angel can't do that. This seems like the Lord has, has visited her here.

And he said unto her, Hagar, Sarai's maid, asked her two questions. Whence comest thou? And whither wilt thou go? So God meets Hagar where she's at to do what? Bring perspective and direction.

And Hagar is willing to be honest about her situation because she said, I flee from the face of my mistress Sarai. And she was able to be honest, which allowed then the Lord to redirect her. She didn't say, well, you know, make some excuses. She was mean to me. You wouldn't believe what happened. I mean, I was taken from Egypt as it was. Essentially anybody who was part of Abram's household when, remember Pharaoh gave Egypt, gave Abram all those riches and cattle and donkey and maidservants and menservants. So when he says, get out of here, out of Egypt, they're stuck and they're part of his household now. They have to go too. So there's a number of Egyptians who have come with him. But she doesn't make excuses and she doesn't blame. She just said, I'm just, I'm running away from her. I don't want to be there anymore. I don't want to be part of that. It's too hard. And the angel of the Lord said unto her, return to thy mistress. Repent 180 degrees, right? Return to thy mistress and submit thyself under her hands. That word submit thyself is literally the same word where it says Sarai dealt hardly. He's saying, you go back and afflict yourself under that. What does that mean? Well, it's humility. He's saying instead of, because remember she was despising her to her face and she was not working with her. He's saying, you go back and submit yourself in humility. Hagar's willingness to be honest about her condition allowed the Lord to redirect her life into humility and service. Hagar was no longer bitter because Hagar had a new master. So she's going to go back. And do you realize it's going to be 13 years before Isaac is born? And then they're going to be there however many more years longer until he's weaned, which could be five, six, seven, and then they're sent out. So we could have 13 to 20 years that Hagar is going to live with Sarai. And as we just saw from Genesis 21, it doesn't seem like Sarai's view of Hagar has improved much over those years, but she's going to be able to live there. And she's not going to be needing to run away and avoiding. And so that's what I mean. We may not have closure and it's sad because there's no closure with Hagar and Sarai. And yet Sarai, Hagar is able to go back. And so I think the picture for us is that when we're honest with the Lord about where we're at, and then we respond in humility, he's going to make it so it's like, hey, you go back because now you're going at my word. It's not Sarah telling you submit. It's the Lord saying, you do this as unto me. And when we do, when we serve as unto the Lord and we love as unto the Lord, then we don't have that, those feelings of angst and bitterness. We see three things as we go through this. The cure for bitterness is realizing verse eight and nine, God knows. Verse 11, God hears.

[34 : 34] Verse 13 and 14, God sees. That is the cure. It's also the cure for this marriage kerfuffle that's happening is to recognize God knows Sarai. So Abram should have said, God knows. He hears and he sees where you're at. He knows. He's not holding out on us. And so the angel said, return and submit yourself under her hand. So God knows. And the angel of the Lord said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly that it shall not be numbered for multitude. Hagar, you're going to partake in the promise. And the angel of the Lord said unto her, behold, thou art with child and shalt bear a son and shall call his name Ishmael because the Lord has heard thy affliction. Literally Ishmael means God will hear. The Lord has heard your affliction. Affliction means misery or poverty. The Lord sees it. He's heard it. He knows. And he will be a wild man. Imagine being told this about your son. That must have been a lot of fun when he was like three or four. 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. What does that mean? Well, it's kind of predicting what he'll be, right? Because

Hagar and Ishmael, this is not a very good situation that they're in that Abram's put them in. But God doesn't hold them responsible. Abraham's failure in allowing and following God, Abraham's failure in following God's promise, it's going to have lasting implications is what God's saying here. But neither Hagar nor Ishmael are held responsible for what's to come. They're going to be responsible for their own choices, but they're not responsible for this. God is simply telling Hagar what will be.

This is what it's going to be. You will partake in the promise. This is what it's going to be. When we get to Genesis 25, eventually when Abram dies, Abraham, Isaac and Ishmael come back together at that time to bury their father. So it doesn't seem like Ishmael is just out to kill Isaac, where today Ishmael is, where you see that, the sons of Ishmael. And so then what does she do?

She calls the name of the Lord that spake unto her, that God, thou God, seest me. For she said, have I also here looked after him that sees me? And so Hagar saw in the wilderness what she'd never been able to see anywhere else. She could only see this in the wilderness. She had not seen it in Egypt.

[37 : 06] She had not seen it in the good times. She didn't even see it in the bad times. It wasn't until she was into the wilderness. Hosea chapter 2, verse 14 and 15, we probably all know this. It says, therefore, behold, I will allure her, speaking of Israel, and bring her into the wilderness and speak comfortably unto her. Now give her her vineyards from thence and the valley of Achor for a door of hope. And she shall sing there as in the days of her youth. And as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt, like that. It's the picture with Hagar here. But it's God who allures into the wilderness. We will all have wilderness experiences. Go through how many of God's people end up in the wilderness. And what happens when they're there? It's the Lord that brings them there. So in this moment, Hagar saw that the Lord had always known, always heard, and always seen her.

She says, okay. Okay. Yes, Lord. I can submit to that. Wherefore, the well was called Bir Lehorai. Behold, it is between Kadesh and Bered. Literally, the Bir Lehorai means well of the living one seeing me. Well of the living one seeing me like that.

He's continually seeing me. And Hagar bare Abram a son. And Abram called his son's name, which Hagar bare, Ishmael. Of course, she goes back and says, I've met Jehovah. And he's like, tell me about it.

Yep, that was him. That was him for sure. He said, call his name Ishmael. He's like, okay. What does Sarah think of that? This is supposed to be my kid. Surrogate. I'm supposed to name him. But Abram called him that. And you can almost see Abram coming back around to like, man, God's so good. And it's God's grace, isn't it? What did verse seven say? The angel of the Lord found her. It's his grace. And here we see at the end, it's his grace. Abram recognizing God has a plan, even in my mistake here, that God has brought now Hagar and Ishmael into the promise. And he has a plan. And even though it looks like at times, what is going on? You think of the nation of Israel. But look at what God has used.

It's sons of Ishmael in the sons of Isaac. You know, God is able to show his strength and his faithfulness that Israel is going to be there. And Abram was 86 years old when Hagar bare Ishmael to Abram. Galatians 2.21 says, I do not frustrate the grace of God. For if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain. And frustrate means I do not set aside. I do not nullify. I do not disregard it.

[39 : 48] And here, Abram did. He disregarded that. He disregarded God's promise and God's grace. And he set it aside. And he tried through another means, through the law, through effort. And he got Ishmael.

I like this. Faith always advances towards further dependence upon God's grace. Always. As you walk in faith, it'll take you further away from your own effort, further away from the flesh, and more dependent on God's grace.

What does that mean? It means you become less and less effective in your own life and own walk. And God becomes more effective. We frustrate, we nullify, we set it aside, when we think there's some part that we're going to do instead for the Lord.

So sadly, for Sarai and Hagar, there's no closure. But for Hagar, what was she able to do? She was able to release. She was able to roll upon Jehovah her way and release that.

And as Isaac comes on the scene, as the Lord shows up to faithfully fulfill his promise in his timing, we will see how he will minister to Sarah. And we'll see her respond. And it's wonderful.

[40 : 57] And again, like I said, she's going to be in the hall of faith. But what that also shows is, man, there can be some junk in our hearts. And God can use us mightily. And we can even be heroes of the faith, in a sense.

And we can still go through life with that junk. And for myself, this week, God has been cleaning it out. Even this morning, I woke up with a lightness in some areas of my life that were just like, why you took that? Thank you.

Because I recognized I couldn't. I've been trying to deal with things like, well, if I can just think this way and act this way and read this and do this, I'm gonna. But I couldn't. Only the Lord could. So what's the solution for you and I? Because what did we find out? The solution is what? That God knows, and God hears, and God sees. You say, well, what if I don't? Because what do we need to do?

I need to know God's promise. I need to know and hear God's voice. And I need to see God's hand in my life. What if like Sarai, I can't? What if I'm at a point where I'm like, I just, I can't see it.

[42 : 04] I thought God had a plan, and I can't figure this out. If you remember in Matthew, the disciples came to Jesus in chapter 13. They're like, why do you speak to all the people in parables?

Just tell them plainly like it is. And he said, I speak to them in parables because they seeing, see not. And hearing, they hear not. Neither do they understand.

In other words, I could speak as plainly as can be, and they're not gonna receive it. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, which says, By hearing, you shall hear, and shall not understand.

Seeing, you shall see, and shall not perceive. Those are three things, understanding, the hearing, and the seeing. For this people's heart is waxed gross. Not like disgusting gross, but hard.

And their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed. There's the heart which understands, the ears which hear, and the eyes which see. Lest at any time they should see with their ears, and hear with their eyes.

[43 : 01] I'm sorry. See what the Lord does. Lest at any time they should hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

Another who's quoting Isaiah, further on is Isaiah 35 says, Do you need God to save you?

I do. I can't save myself from sin, and I sure can't save myself from unforgiveness, bitterness, marital issues. I can't.

I can't do it. I can't. He'll come and save you. And then, what does he say to the disciples? He said, Blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear.

Yeah, I had it in my closing slide. There it is. So he said to them, Your eyes see, and your ears hear. Why? Because Jesus has opened their eyes. He's opened their heart.

[44 : 13] And so God sees, and God hears, and God knows all the junk. He knows your hurts, and your frustrations. He knows when we are jaded, and just become despondent, because of the lack of what it seems to be God moving in our life, and the lack of promise taking effect.

But God sees, and hears, and knows. And so, my part, will I confess to the Lord, Lord, I just, I can't see it right now. I'm having a hard time hearing your voice.

And I just don't know what you're doing. Can I roll that onto him? And I'll roll upon Jehovah your way. So this morning, as we close, I know for myself this week, it's just been the Lord's like, just release that.

Release it to me. Just don't try and fix it. Just let it go, and I'll take care of it. And you know what? He is. And I have absolutely, I have no system I can tell you.

I can't tell you how he did it. I can't say, oh, well, Lord, just because as I prayed for three hours. It's just as I continually was like, Lord, I can't do this. You have to. I just need to go back to the basics.

[45 : 16] It's your grace, and it's by your spirit. Would you do this? And he does, and he did. He's doing it. Now, is that perfectly happening? No. But I know he's able. He's got big enough shoulders.

Roll upon Jehovah your way. He'll work. He'll do it all. It's very elementary, right? Faith. Faith will always advance us towards further dependence upon God's grace.

Father, thank you so much for the reality of a sinful life, but a redeemed sinful life, Lord.

To see Abram receive this unilateral covenant in chapter 15, to be at the heights of his relationship with you. You've promised to do everything.

He's believing God, and it's counted to him for righteousness. We hang our faith upon that. Our relationship with you is hung on that peg. And then in the very next chapter, he's just gone.

[46 : 19] He's just not even present in what's happening in his home. Lord, thank you for your grace, because your grace is going to bring Abram back. And he's going to right the ship.

Lord, I think what you wanted to show us, ultimately, was that covenant you made. You're like, hey, watch it get tested. Abram can't mess this up. Even when he goes and has a son with someone who's not his wife.

He can't even mess up the covenant. So, Lord, what amazing grace that I cannot mess this up. And what insane obligation that puts upon me.

Not a burden, but a blessing. That I can come back again and again and again, because you're never going to give up. You're never going to quit. So, Lord, I just thank you for my brothers and sisters, and I pray for them this morning.

Lord, I pray they were blessed by your word, by your Holy Spirit. And I pray, Lord, as they hear your voice saying, release that. Don't try and figure it out. Just let it go. We just trust, Lord, that you'll take that.

[47 : 20] In Jesus' name, amen. Quick thought. As you decide in your life to take further steps towards greater dependence upon God and upon his grace, that's going to be tested.

But don't pull back from that. Be excited about that. God's going to want to show you that he's strong. So, as we take steps to lean upon him and roll things off onto him, that will be a point of testing.

Maybe, you know, a situation or a person or a feeling or whatever. And it will be your tendency that you've always slipped into to deal with that. Because God wants you to see that, no, don't do that. Rely on me. I've got this. He's going to prove himself strong. So don't fear that testing. von der■■ engineer■■ Liverpoolressing.