

# From Creation to New Creation

Genesis 16:1-16

"Wavering Faith"— July 24, 2022



## Introduction

Fill in the blank: "I'd be happy if \_\_\_\_\_." The things you write down might be the things you think will make you happy. It could be money in the bank, friends, well-behaved kids, comfort, pleasurable experiences, etc. What's on your list? What gets you out of bed in the morning? What animates you? What keeps you up at night?

Many take their list to God for help. You may try to "follow the rules" and be a good person thinking God will be obligated to give you what is on your list. Yet, He doesn't take orders from us. He calls us to trust Him and obey Him. While He is committed to our joy, what is on His list may be different than what is on our list. Having faith and trust in Him could feel dangerous.

Being a Christians means repentance and faith. Christian obedience means trust. What if God, in His providence says, "no" to some of the things on our list? What if God wants us to wait? Do you like waiting? Waiting for what matters to you is hard!!

How can we wait on God when taking a sinful shortcut seems reasonable?

## Sermon Outline

1. See how sinful shortcuts to God's promises are dead ends. Vs. 1-6
2. Look to the God who sees you. Vs. 7-16

## Read & Discuss

### 1) Read vs. 1-6

Verse 1 is a reminder that Sarai had not borne Abram children. Children carried on the family name. They were a badge of honor. Sarai would have been humiliated by being barren. So, she took matters into her own hands and gave Hagar to Abram. Hagar didn't have a say - she was a slave.

In Abram's day, this was a common, socially acceptable practice, and Sarai sees this as a solution. But this is in contrast to what God sees. Just because something is legal or socially acceptable doesn't mean that God is okay with it. Marriage is between one man and one woman and sex is good within the bounds of marriage. (Gen. 2:24) What Sarai sees as a solution was wrong, and it would be harmful to her whole family.

Sinful shortcuts are always dead ends. Hagar conceived and was filled with pride. She looked down on Sarai. When Sarai couldn't get what she wanted, she responded with envy. She had bitter anger with God and Abram, and then she blamed God and Abram. The shortcut that they thought would lead to life and joy led to death and chaos.

As God hears us in our affliction, and as we walk from point A (life now) to point B (eternity with the Lord), there are things we don't know or understand. We must wait on God. There is a lot of sin and brokenness in the world, and it can seem unbearable to wait. But, we must remember, this is not the end.

Is there currently some difficult circumstance in your life to which God has you waiting? How have you been tempted to take matters into your own hands? What does it mean to you to know that God sees you in your affliction? How have other brothers and/or sisters in Christ been a help as you wait? Have you been able to help another believer?

**Additional Reading:** Revelation 2

### 2) Read vs. 7 - 16

In the eyes of the world, Hagar was unimportant. When she fled, we may think that we won't see her again in the pages of scripture. Yet here, the spotlight turned to Hagar. She was alone, in the desert, pregnant,

discouraged. The angel of the Lord, God in the flesh, came looking for and finding Hagar. This is the first time in scripture that God appears in human form. Hagar thought she was forgotten, but God went after her as a shepherd goes after a lost sheep. He drew her out so He could speak to her heart. Do you ever feel like God has forgotten about you in the midst of your trial?

God told her to return to her mistress and submit to her. Sometimes God's plan doesn't include taking us out of a really painful situation. Sometime He calls us to stay - wait - trust. When has God led you to stay – wait – trust?

How could Hagar return? We need to see God's provision for her. Hagar's status has changed. Every culture assigns roles that define success. Freedom isn't found when we seek to define our identity by what the world calls success. It causes us to swing to one side with pride, looking down on others or to the other side of envy and depression. Do you want off the rollercoaster? God promises us Himself. If our joy is in God, it is untouchable. The living God is the Living Bread who provides, and the Living Water who satisfies.

God is attentive. He listens. God had heard Hagar in her affliction, and He would take care of her. How does knowing that God sees your affliction help you to trust and obey Him? After Hagar saw the God who sees her, she was transformed. Her strength and courage came from the Lord. She wasn't afraid of Sarai anymore. Just as God is a God of seeing for a lowly servant girl, He is a God who sees us.

This points to a future hope. God saw our plight because of sin. In His grace, God took on flesh in Jesus. He came for us, and He found us. God's rescue plan doesn't involve our help. We have everlasting life because Jesus died in our place. When we trust in Him, His righteousness is credited to our account. When Satan tries to tell us otherwise - we must remember that he is a liar.

Are you wrestling with guilt, shame, feeling overlooked, discouragement while waiting? God sees. God hears. He may call you to wait longer. This is why we have each other. Is there someone you know who is wrestling with these things? How can you encourage them to keep trusting God?

**Additional Reading:** John 1; John 3:16; Exodus 2:24-25

#### **Prayer of Response**

1) After hearing God's Word, what sin do I need to confess? From what do I need to repent?

2) How should my life be lived this week based on what I have heard? What should I *understand, believe, desire, or do*?

Spend time praying together in response to God's word asking for His help and greater faith to follow Him in the week to com.

If you missed the sermon on Sunday or would like to listen again, visit our website at <https://fbcum.org/sermons-new/>

<b>*Next week's sermon text:</b> we turn to <a href="#">Genesis 17:1-27</a> "The Son of Promise"
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